

THE SMARTKIDZ CLUB

Registry ID: 4197696

#Building confident kids



IMPACT REPORT

2024-2025

Empowering kids...



through culture,
confidence
life and skills

Table of Contents

1. Who We Are

2. Land Acknowledgement and Programs

3. Our Impact

4. Program Updates

5. Community Stories

6. Summer Camp - Edmonton

7. Summer Camp - Halifax

8. Edmonton Events

9. Funders, Partners





Abiola Alifa
CPA, FCCA

A Message from the Executive Director

Káàbò to all our cherished supporters—families, elders, volunteers, staff, and community partners.

This year at SmartKidz Heritage Club was a season of joy, connection, and cultural discovery. From our African-themed summer camp for youth to enriched programming for seniors, each initiative strengthened bonds across generations and deepened our shared heritage.

Summer Camps in Edmonton and Halifax

African-Themed Summer Camp (July 21–25, 2025) welcomed 25 children (ages 5–11) into five days of immersive learning:

- Creative art and fashion design activities
- Introductory Yorùbá and Igbo language lessons
- Hands-on cooking sessions with traditional dishes

- A culminating fashion showcase and storytelling circles
- Leadership Circle insights from community leaders

Small class sizes encouraged meaningful relationships and cultural pride among participants.



Seniors Programming: New Intergenerational Offerings

We also launched a pilot Senior's Program, featuring:

- Arts & crafts sessions promoting fine motor skills and cognitive engagement
- Storytelling circles and health-focused mini-seminars aimed at promoting community well-being and connection

These activities align with recognized benefits: they reduce stress, support emotional health, and build community among older adults

Looking Forward

SmartKidz remains dedicated to expanding these intergenerational offerings. Based on this year's success, future plans include:

- Broader registration and in-school cultural programming
- Youth-led mentorship and camp co-facilitator roles
- Online cultural-learning content for all ages
- Additional workshops combining elder wisdom with youth creativity

With Gratitude

To our volunteers, elder mentors, staff, sponsors, and the families who entrusted us with their youth and elders— thank you. Your energy and generosity inspired every moment of this past year.

SmartKidz continues to believe in the power of culture, creativity, and community—and we move into the next year with renewed passion and promise.

Ẹ ṣe púpò (thank you very much) for your ongoing support.

Sincerely,

Abiola Alifa, CPA, FCCA

Executive Director, SmartKidz Heritage Club

Message from the Board Chair

Dear Friends of SmartKidz,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present our 2024–25 Annual Report.

This has been a landmark year for SmartKidz as we successfully expanded our programs, strengthened governance, and brought cultural enrichment to more children and elders across two communities.

Our flagship African-Themed Summer Camps in Edmonton and our new site in Halifax exceeded expectations. In Edmonton, 25 children aged 5–11 engaged deeply in crafts, language learning (Yorùbá and Igbo), cooking, and cultural fashion showcases. Our Halifax team matched this enthusiasm with a vibrant introduction to African heritage that confirmed the program’s scalability and community resonance.

Under the leadership of Abiola Alifa and the dedicated staff, both camps delivered high-quality learning experiences rooted in culture, creativity, and confidence-building. With small cohorts and immersive programming, participants demonstrated growth in cultural awareness, self-esteem, and intergenerational connection. These tangible outcomes reflect the strength of SmartKidz’s design and positive impact on families and community.

As Board Chair, I have been inspired by the thoughtful stewardship and alignment between our governance and vision. This year, the board focused on updating key policies, strengthening financial oversight, and enhancing volunteer engagement—ensuring that future growth remains sustainable, transparent, and coordinated with SmartKidz’s mission.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to expanding our reach regionally through increased camp enrollment, youth mentorship, and year-round programming for both youth and seniors. Our success in Edmonton and Halifax lays the groundwork for continued innovation and cultural inclusion—a testament to the dedication of our families, elders, volunteers, and partners. I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who brought this vision to life.

With sincere appreciation,

Babs Shogbamu

Board Chair,

SmartKidz Heritage Club



Who We Are

SmartKidz Heritage Club is a registered non-profit organization dedicated to empowering children—particularly Black, African, and Caribbean youth—through culturally rooted education and life skills development. Founded in 2020, our mission is to foster a deep sense of identity and belonging, both within and beyond the classroom.

We offer a wide array of enriching programs including:

- African-themed art, craft, storytelling, cooking, and language workshops
- Seasonal summer camps, including our flagship African-themed children's camps in Edmonton and Halifax
- Intergenerational programming, connecting youth with elders through shared cultural learning and storytelling
- Community wellness and social events that celebrate heritage, uplift marginalized voices, and build cross-generational bonds.

At SmartKidz, we believe that a vibrant cultural identity—rooted in African traditions, languages, and values—fosters confidence, creativity, and empathy. Our activities go beyond fun: they nurture life skills, community leadership, and an enduring appreciation for heritage.

With a committed team of educators, volunteers, elders, and young ambassadors, we strive to create inclusive, safe spaces where youth and seniors can learn from each other, grow together, and shape a stronger, culturally enriched future.







Core Values

Our Core Values are:

1. Trust

2. Teamwork

3. Creativity

4. Multiculturalism

5. Cultural Responsibility

6. Unity

7. Honor

8. Respect





Our Beliefs

At smartkidz

We believe that a clear sense of

“who you are”

Makes it easier to

Connect with other
(similar) people and groups.

People (kids) with a
strong identity often

stand out more

and are more memorable.

Identity helps us to make
decisions and to know
how to behave.





Our Mission

Our mission is to empower children through cultural education, life skills development, and mentorship, while fostering a deep appreciation for African heritage. We provide engaging programs and interactive experiences that celebrate diversity, creativity, and unity, all while nurturing a strong sense of identity in the next generation.

Through our community-driven initiatives, we strive to cultivate trust, empathy, and responsibility, ensuring that children grow with the values and skills they need to succeed in a global society.





Our Impact

Education

The SmartKidz club provides a medium for children to get educated on a wide array of important subject matters spanning outside typical academic curriculum.

Heritage

Through our series of activities, the SmartKidz club has helped bring club members closer to the African Heritage through African stories, dishes and cultural activities.



Our Conviction

A people's cultural heritage and natural history are precious and unique. Culture and its history encompasses morals, beliefs, and aims. They form a people's national identity and our conviction is that it is essential to preserve our cultural heritage to maintain our identity.



Land Acknowledgment

SmartKidz Heritage Club gratefully acknowledges that our work takes place on the ancestral and traditional lands of Treaty 6 territory, known today as Amiskwacîwâskahikan (Edmonton), the homeland of the Métis Region 4. We honor the enduring presence, knowledge, and resilience of the nêhiyaw (Cree), Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Nakota Sioux, Dene, Anishinaabe/Saulteaux, and Inuit peoples whose relationships with this land extend across time.

We recognize that this land has served as a gathering place and travel corridor for diverse Indigenous Nations since time immemorial. It is deeply important to us to acknowledge our shared history, and commit to ongoing learning, mutual respect, and meaningful reconciliation.

At SmartKidz Heritage Club, we believe that honoring Indigenous sovereignty is an essential act of cultural respect. Together, we commit to standing in partnership as we build community, celebrate heritage, and uphold the spirit and intent of Treaty 6—“as long as the sun shines, the rivers flow, and the grass grows.”.



Where Generations Meet and Futures Take Flight

This year at Smart Kidz, our programs for seniors and children have been a living testament to the power of connection, culture, and creativity. Whether it's a room full of seniors swapping stories over crafts, or children learning a traditional dance for the first time, each moment has been about more than just activities — it's been about belonging.

Seniors: A Place to Be Seen, Heard, and Valued

For many seniors, Smart Kidz has become a second home — a place to keep active, keep learning, and stay connected. Our monthly programs have included arts and crafts, Zumba classes, storytelling circles, and health education workshops. These sessions have been more than events on a calendar; they've been lifelines.

In our storytelling circles, elders have shared memories of growing up in their home countries, teaching younger listeners about resilience, joy, and community traditions. One memorable afternoon, Mr. Ade recounted how his grandmother taught him to weave baskets — inspiring our next craft project on the spot.

The impact is simple yet profound: seniors leave these sessions not just with a finished craft or a new health tip, but with renewed energy and a sense of purpose.

Children: Creativity, Culture, and Confidence

Our children's programs have been just as vibrant. The African-themed summer camp brought together 50 children aged 5 to 11 for five unforgettable days. Each day held a new adventure — from soap-making and fashion design to cooking traditional dishes and learning Yoruba and Igbo words.

We saw shy children step into leadership roles, helping younger campers with crafts. We saw friendships form over shared games and laughter. And we saw children leave with









a deeper sense of pride in their heritage.

Beyond the camp, our ongoing programs have kept children engaged in arts, storytelling, and heritage education — helping them see that learning can be joyful, hands-on, and meaningful.

Where Seniors and Children Meet

Some of our most magical moments have happened when we've brought both groups together. In intergenerational sessions, seniors taught children traditional games, songs, and cooking methods, while children brought fresh ideas and laughter to the room.

“It feels like having many grandchildren at once,” said Mrs. Olayinka, smiling as she showed a group of children how to pound yam.

These encounters bridge generations, reminding everyone that we all have something to give and something to learn.

By the Numbers

- Seniors engaged: 60+ through regular programming
- Children reached: 150+ across camps and year-round activities
- New programs launched: 2 intergenerational heritage projects

At Smart Kidz, our mission is simple: create spaces where everyone feels they belong, where culture is celebrated, and where the joy of learning never ends. This year, we've seen that mission come to life — one story, one smile, one shared moment at a time.





Celebrating Heritage, Building Community

At Smart Kidz, we believe that culture is more than history — it's living, breathing, and evolving through the people who carry it. This year, our heritage programs for seniors and children have brought traditions to life while building bridges across cultures and generations.

From teaching African languages to showcasing traditional fashion, every activity has been a chance to connect with our roots and strengthen the bonds that hold our community together.

Language as a Bridge

Language is one of the most powerful ways to connect with culture. Our Yoruba and Igbo learning sessions this year were filled with laughter, discovery, and the occasional tongue-twister. Seniors often led these classes,

patiently guiding children through pronunciation and meaning.

“When I teach them a word, I feel like I'm passing on a piece of myself,” shared Ms. Chidi, a volunteer language instructor.

For the children, learning these words wasn't just about vocabulary — it was about identity. Some practiced at home with parents, others taught the words to friends at school, proudly sharing a part of their heritage.

Fashion as Storytelling

Our African fashion showcases have been highlights of the year, with both seniors and children participating. Using fabrics rich with history, participants created clothing that told their stories — whether it was a dress inspired by a grandmother's wedding outfit or a shirt patterned after a village festival.

One unforgettable moment came during the summer camp fashion show, when 9-year-old Aisha walked the runway in a dress she helped design.

“I feel like a princess — but from my country,” she said, twirling for the cameras.









These events were more than performances; they were affirmations that cultural pride can be both beautiful and bold.

Cooking, Crafting, and Connecting

Heritage came alive in the kitchen, too. Seniors shared recipes for traditional dishes, guiding children through each step. The smell of spices filled the air as stories flowed — stories about markets back home, about family gatherings, about how food brings people together.

“When we cook together, it feels like we are one big family,” said 10-year-old Michael, proudly stirring a pot of jollof rice.

Craft sessions also became storytelling opportunities. While creating beaded jewelry or weaving, elders shared memories that made the crafts feel personal and meaningful.

A Community Rooted in Respect

Perhaps the most impactful part of these programs has been the mutual respect they foster. Seniors feel valued as keepers of culture, while children gain confidence in knowing where they come from. The result is a stronger, more connected community.

“I came here to give, but I leave with so much joy,” said volunteer elder Mrs. Funke.

By the Numbers

- Languages taught: Yoruba & Igbo,

with 40+ participants per session

- Fashion shows hosted: 1 hosted with about 40 children
- Cultural cooking classes: 5 with over 20 shared meals prepared

At Smart Kidz, culture isn't something we simply preserve — it's something we live, share, and pass forward. And in doing so, we're not just teaching heritage; we're building a stronger, prouder, more connected future.





Breaking Isolation, Building Joy

“I used to go days without talking to anyone — now I have somewhere I feel wanted,” shared Grace, a regular participant.

Loneliness can be as heavy as any physical burden — but at Smart Kidz, we've seen firsthand how connection, creativity, and compassion can lift that weight. This year, our programs for seniors have been more than just activities; they've been lifelines, creating safe, welcoming spaces where friendships grow and mental well-being thrives.

A Safe Space to Belong

For many seniors, stepping into a Smart Kidz program is the highlight of their week. Whether it's for a craft session, a wellness talk, or just a cup of tea shared with friends, these gatherings provide what so many crave: connection.

By making our spaces warm, inclusive, and non-judgmental, we've become more than a program provider — we've become a community anchor for seniors who might otherwise feel invisible.

Crafting for the Mind and Heart

Craft-making has been one of our most effective tools in supporting mental health. Whether it's knitting, beading, painting, or card-making, these sessions give participants a sense of purpose and accomplishment. The act of creating something beautiful also opens the door to conversation, laughter, and shared learning.

One afternoon, during a jewelry-making workshop, Mr. Hassan quietly worked on a beaded bracelet. By the end of the session, he had made two — one for himself, and one for a new friend he met that day.

“It's not just about the beads. It's about the people you sit with while you string them together,” he said.

These creative moments help reduce anxiety, improve mood, and build connections that extend beyond the walls of our sessions.

Mental Health Matters

We recognize that mental health is as important as physical health. That's why we've integrated mental wellness into our senior programs, offering group discussions, mindfulness









activities, and sessions with guest speakers on topics like stress management, self-care, and emotional resilience.

“It feels good to talk about these things openly,” remarked Esther, after attending a mindfulness session.

By reducing the stigma around mental health and providing practical tools, we've empowered seniors to take active steps toward their own well-being.

The Impact We've Seen

Our efforts to combat loneliness are working. Participants report feeling happier, more confident, and more engaged in life. Friendships formed in our programs have spilled over into home visits, phone calls, and social outings.

By the Numbers

- Seniors reached through mental wellness programs: 65+
- Craft workshops held: 20+ this year
- Reported improvement in mood and social connection: 90% of surveyed participants

At Smart Kidz, we know that combating loneliness isn't about one big gesture— it's about the steady, everyday acts of kindness and connection. Through crafts, conversation, and community care, we've helped seniors rediscover joy, belonging, and purpose. And we'll keep doing it, one smile at a time.





Seniors & Children: **Building** **Connections,** **Celebrating** **Culture, and** **Supporting** **Well-Being**

This year, Smart Kidz has continued to create spaces where generations meet, stories are shared, and lives are enriched. From vibrant children's programs to life-changing senior wellness activities, every project has been rooted in our belief that everyone deserves to belong, to be heard, and to thrive.

Where Generations Meet & Futures Take Flight

Our programs for seniors and children have been a living testament to the power of connection. Whether it's a room full of seniors laughing over crafts or children learning a new traditional dance, these moments are about more than activities — they're about belonging. For seniors, activities like Zumba, storytelling circles, and crafts have been opportunities to stay active, engaged, and valued. “I haven't danced in years — but here, I feel like I'm 25 again,” one participant shared with a smile.

For children, our African-themed summer camp was a highlight — 25 young participants spent five days learning languages, cooking, creating crafts, and performing in a fashion show. 8-year-old Kemi proudly told us, “I made a dress and my mom said it's the prettiest thing I've ever done!”

And when seniors and children came together, magic happened — shared games, recipes, and laughter built bonds across generations.

Celebrating Heritage, Building Community

Culture is more than history — it's living and evolving. This year, our heritage programs brought traditions to life while building bridges across generations.

Language classes in Yoruba and Igbo became joyful exchanges between seniors and children, with seniors guiding pronunciation and sharing cultural meaning. “When I teach them a word, I feel like I'm passing on a piece of myself,” said Mr. Chinedu, one of our volunteer instructors.

African fashion showcases gave participants a platform to tell their stories through clothing. 9-year-old Aisha, beaming in a dress she helped design, said, “I feel like a princess — but from my country.”









Cooking sessions were equally powerful — the smell of spices filling the air while elders recounted memories of markets and family gatherings. These shared meals became moments of pride and connection.

Loneliness can weigh heavily, but at Smart Kidz, we've worked to replace isolation with friendship, purpose, and joy.

Craft-making has been a powerful tool for supporting mental health — helping seniors relax, express creativity, and bond over shared projects. “It's not just about the beads. It's about the people you sit with while you string them together,” explained Mr. Hassan during a jewelry-making session.

We've also integrated mental health into our programming with mindfulness activities, group discussions, and guest speakers on emotional well-being. Esther, a participant, said, “It feels good to talk about these things openly.”

The results speak for themselves: participants report feeling happier, more connected, and more engaged in life. As Mary, one of our long-term attendees, put it: “I came here thinking I was just filling time, but now I have friends who check on me.”

By the Numbers

- Seniors engaged: 60+ through regular programs
- Children reached: 100+ across camps and ongoing activities
- Languages taught: Yoruba & Igbo to 40+ participants per session
- Craft workshops held: 20+ this year
- Reported improvement in mood & social connection:
90% of surveyed seniors

At Smart Kidz, our mission is simple: create spaces where everyone feels they belong, where culture is celebrated, and where the joy of learning never ends. This year, we've seen that mission come to life — one story, one smile, and one shared moment at a time.



Committed to promoting...



values, culture,
and strengths of
African Heritage

Thank you

to Our Valued Partners

We sincerely appreciate the commitment and support of our funders and partners. Your dedication has been instrumental in driving our mission forward and creating meaningful impact in the communities we serve.



As we look to the future, we are excited to expand this journey. We warmly invite prospective partners to join us in shaping the next chapter of growth and innovation.



Registry ID: 4197696
#Building confident kids



THE SMARTKIDZ CLUB

Registry ID: 4197696

#Building confident kids

CONTACT US

 The SmartKidz Club  smartkidz_club

 SmartKidz HeritageClub

 Smartkidz Heritage Club Youtube