

Welcome to "Lettie's List of COOL THINGS"! This list has three sections...scroll down so you don't miss anything:

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**GETTING STARTED? CHECK OUT THESE SITES FIRST!**

<a href="#">Go Abroad</a>	This website features a large compilation of a variety of programs for study/volunteering worldwide. You can use this as your first step to exploring what you would most like to get out of your gap year!
<a href="#">Plan a Gap Year that works for you!</a>	This article from our friends at ALIS (Alberta Learning Information Service) answers many of your common questions surrounding the concept of gap years, as well as things to keep in mind as you start your planning process.
<a href="#">Canadian Gap Year Association</a>	Can Gap Association is a Canadian non-profit organization that supports families on their gap year journey and connects them with resources they need in order to make it a purposeful year.

**EDUCATION/STUDY PROGRAMS AND EXCHANGES**

PROGRAM	DETAILS	PARTICIPATE IF YOU ARE:
<a href="#">Alberta Community and Cooperative Association</a>	ACCA's Co-operative Youth Leadership Program provides an opportunity for youth (aged 11 to 18) to develop their leadership and teamwork skills. It is designed to give youth the independence and confidence in their abilities while creating lasting friendships. These seven day programs take place at Goldeye Centre, located near Nordegg, Alberta.	Interested in leadership and career development opportunities. Have access to funds to cover participant fees of \$262.50 and registration fees of \$756.00 (this fee is most often paid by a sponsor or multiple sponsors) and to cover transportation costs to the <a href="#">Goldeye Youth Centre</a> .
<a href="#">Alberta Education Student Exchange program</a>	Take part in this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live and attend school in another country! Improve your language skills in an immersion environment, discover more about yourself as you face new challenges, and develop new skills in living and working closely with people from a different culture.	Studying a second language (current exchanges are for students studying French, Spanish, German, or Japanese) and have completed up to the 20 level in that language course. Interested in travelling to another country during the regular school year (most often for grade 11). Open to hosting a student from your destination country at your own home. Able to pay your airline tickets and bring along some spending/travel money.
<a href="#">Blyth Academy summer programs</a>	With campuses specifically designed to inspire students from Grades 4-12, and classrooms that offer personalized learning environments, Blyth provides a unique opportunity for young minds to reach their fullest potential, and ultimately shape the world.	In grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 or 'gap year' students. Be able to meet tuition requirements for either online or in person programming.
<a href="#">Class Afloat</a>	"This unique program offers rigorous and internationally acclaimed academic programs for grades 11, 12, university and gap year students, while sailing aboard an historic tall ship and exploring over 20 ports of call worldwide". While at ports, you will be part of voluntary service projects and become an ambassador of broader global perspectives.	Desire for a life-changing experience taking you all over the world! Ability to meet the financial obligations of the program (\$42,500 CAD for one semester or \$62,500 CAD for one full year - scholarships are available).

<a href="#">Explore</a>	<p>Explore is a five-week intensive French-immersion bursary program that is offered during the spring or summer for people with any skill level in French. Explore participants are awarded a bursary (taxable income) that covers tuition fees for the course, instructional materials, meals, and accommodation. You will discover another region of Canada while learning French in classes adapted to your language level. Application deadlines are typically early February, however recently the application deadlines have been extended to May 31st to be included in a 'wait pool' and selected to programs based on availability. Basically, get your application in EARLY (early February each year) for the best chances to receive a spot.</p>	<p>Currently and have been a full-time student for at least one term between last September and next June. You do not have to be returning to school in the fall to be eligible. So, even if you have graduated or will graduate this year, you are eligible. You are either a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident, a convention refugee student, or a protected person; and meet the institution's minimum age requirement by the time Explore begins (13–15, 16–17, or 18+). There are no language-skill requirements. The Explore program provides full funding to cover the major expenses for your participation in the program. This funding is provided by the Government of Canada and is transferred directly to the institution you will be attending. The funding is taxable income for which you will receive a tax receipt. You are responsible to pay your travel expenses and spending money during your 5 week program.</p>
<a href="#">Forum for Young Canadians</a>	<p>"It's about giving smart, engaged and opinionated youth a chance to recreate parliament for a week. In Ottawa. On the Hill. With other equally ambitious youth. It's about learning how to collaborate and share ideas, then turn them into real community action." The participation fee covers travel costs, hotel accommodation (triple occupancy) at an Ottawa hotel, all meals, instructional materials and bus transportation within Ottawa. Current dates and fees are not listed on the website, but you are encouraged to join the mailing list to receive updates.</p>	<p>Between 15 and 19 years of age and a Canadian student interested in politics and leadership roles in his/her community. Able to be away from school for a week and still be successful!</p>
<a href="#">Global Summers Academy</a>	<p>Providing a safe and nurturing environment for students both academically and personally is key to Global Summer Travel Program summer study abroad programs. Students thrive academically and culturally when they study abroad with caring and supportive educators who promote experiential learning and individualized learning. You can complete high school courses (grades 9,10, 11, 12) in the Ontario education curriculum, while exploring in another country. Programming and costs vary by grade level and year and include locations in Europe, U.S.A. and Central America.</p>	<p>A grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 student who wants to study and live in another country for a unique summer experience! Costs include travel to and from Toronto, accommodation, most meals and courses (credits would count towards your high school education) and vary depending on the location (approximately \$7,000 - \$15,000).</p>
<a href="#">Howl Youth Programs</a> (Alberta, Yukon, Nova Scotia)	<p>All of Howl's programs explore the themes of reconciliation, citizen science, service learning and strategies for personal resilience. These are just a few of the things that you might do as part of your Exploration.</p>	<p>Howl is a non-profit. With their "sliding scale" or "pay-what-you-can" approach to program fees, Howl strives to make programs accessible to the youth who will benefit most from them, regardless of their financial circumstances. With HOWL's 10 day exploration programs for 17 - 30 year olds, you could be exploring Kluane National Park in Yukon or spending time on the Eastern Shore of Mi'kma'ki / Nova Scotia to gain an appreciation for the rich local cultures, histories &amp; ecologies of this land. The program will be based at The Deanery Project, an Environmental and Arts Learning Centre in Lower Ship Harbour, Nova Scotia. Program fees are \$250 - \$1000 inclusive, depending on your financial situation.</p>
<a href="#">iGEM - Main page</a>	<p>The iGEM Foundation is dedicated to education and competition, advancement of synthetic biology, and the development of open community and collaboration. The main program at the iGEM Foundation is the International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) Competition. Since 2004, participants of the competition have experienced education, teamwork, sharing, and more in a unique competition setting.</p>	<p>A high school student with strong interest in science and a willingness to learn, explore and work as a cohesive team. This program can introduce you to others who share your interest and expand your knowledge of careers in research science.</p>

<a href="#">Innovators Academy</a>	<p>Innovators Academy is a resource platform for young aspiring entrepreneurs and educators who teach entrepreneurial thinking. The Academy is part of the League of Innovators, a national Canadian charity that empowers young people to be their own bosses in life and career, supporting their growth as entrepreneurs, innovators, and changemakers.</p>	<p>Have an entrepreneurial mindset and an idea you would like to work on! Able to take advantage of FREE online modules to assist you in learning about entrepreneurship.</p>
<a href="#">IOOF/Rebekahs Pilgrimage for Youth Speech Contest</a>	<p>The IOOF (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) and the Rebekahs organizations host a speech contest every December for grade 10 and 11 students who are interested in participating. The winner of the contest is given a completely FREE 2 week trip to New York, Washington D.C., Ottawa and Niagara Falls where they will learn about the UN and the work they do nationally and internationally. The 7-8 minute speech should be memorized and engaging, about a topic of national or international concern.</p>	<p>Current grade 10 or 11 student interested in taking a FREE 2 week trip in summer following the speech contest. Further details are available through your school Career Practitioner in early November each year.</p>
<a href="#">Neuchatel Junior College</a>	<p>Every September, teenagers from across Canada and beyond choose to step outside of their comfort zones at NJC. While studying the Ontario Grade 12 curriculum and AP from their new home in Neuchatel, Switzerland, they explore a dozen countries, mature rapidly, and make the best friends of their lives. Academic preparedness and international exposure lead to acceptances from the finest universities. New independence enables them to understand who they are and realize how their passions and talents will one day contribute on a global scale.</p>	<p>Interested in studying in Switzerland for a semester or a full year, living in a French-speaking community while completing coursework where the language of instruction is English. Have the funds to pay the fees and have some spending money. The cost of one semester including tuition and room/board and some excursions offered by the school is roughly 45,000 Canadian Dollars.</p>
<a href="#">Oxbridge educational programs in U.S., U.K., France and Spain</a>	<p>Oxbridge Academic Programs has been welcoming intellectually adventurous high school and junior high school students to Europe for 30 years. You will have the opportunity to live and study in England, France or Spain.</p>	<p>Currently in grades 8 – 12, interested in learning and travelling to new countries. Access to funds (likely up to \$12,000 inclusive depending on your destination) or receive a full scholarship to cover all expenses.</p>
<a href="#">Semester at Sea</a>	<p>An opportunity to learn while onboard ship and explore new destinations worldwide! Check out their website – packed with detailed information (even a map of the ship!) to get you excited about this opportunity. Inclusive fees are approximately \$45,000 US and scholarships are available.</p>	<p>Students must be enrolled full-time in a degree granting program at an accredited college/university (domestic or international) and have completed at least one full term at the postsecondary level OR have graduated high school with a 3.25/4.00 GPA and are embarking on a GAP year!</p>
<a href="#">SHAD Canada</a>	<p>SHAD is a registered Canadian charity that empowers exceptional high school students to recognize their own capabilities and envision their extraordinary potential as tomorrow's leaders and change makers. Each year, SHAD provides the opportunity for 600+ students from across Canada and internationally to attend a month-long summer program, in-residence at one of 12 Canadian host universities focused on STEAM (science, technology, engineering arts &amp; mathematics).</p>	<p>A grade 10 or 11 student, open to every Canadian province and territory! Applicants are assessed on several factors including creating, commitment to excellence, engagement in extracurricular activities and a strong academic foundation. The average cost to attend SHAD is \$7000.00 dependant on which campus you are planning to call home for your time at SHAD. Financial assistance is available.</p>

<a href="#">Youth Ambassadors Program</a>	This three-week exchange takes place in Ottawa, Plattsburgh New York and Washington, D.C. There is NO APPLICATION FEE and all travel, meals and accommodation costs are covered by the Youth Ambassadors Program. Participants are responsible for personal spending money. Program themes include civic education, community service, youth leadership, social inclusion.	Between 15 – 18 years old with at least 4 month of high school remaining Interested in the U.S.A., committed to implementing community service projects Deadline to apply is in early April and programs run in July – August.
<a href="#">Youth Summits (Inside Education)</a>	These youth summits are an incredible opportunity for teams of 4 high school students and 2 supervisors to connect with industry members and other teams from around Alberta to focus on a central issue (forestry, agriculture, wildlife). All expenses are paid by generous sponsors for these 4 day summit experiences.	An Alberta high school student with an interest in solving problems related to energy, forestry, agriculture and wildlife. Work with your teachers/Career Practitioners to submit an application and earn your spot at the next summit!

### WORK AND VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	DETAILS	PARTICIPATE IF YOU ARE:
<a href="#">Animal Experience International</a>	AEI empowers animal lovers, students, professionals, and adventure seekers to travel and make a difference by volunteering with animals. Join this team of international volunteers and explore the world while doing what you love.	18 years of age for many of their programs, however there are opportunities for families to volunteer together, for post-secondary students, those taking a gap year and anyone with an interest in volunteering with animals. Program costs vary but are in the \$1200 - \$1700 per week range.
<a href="#">Au pair World</a>	This website has been recommended to us by those who have actually secured placements as Au pairs in Australia, France and Spain. As with any opportunity, it makes sense to check out your destination area and employer carefully to be sure it is a great fit for everyone. You will receive a modest wage, accommodation and meals with your family.	At least 18 years of age and available funds to pay for airfare; Interested in looking after young children, travelling and building/enhancing your second language skills!
<a href="#">Contiki</a>	Contiki brings together travellers from all corners of the globe to discover new cultures and a little part of themselves along the way. All of the details including group transport and accommodation, are arranged for you so travelling is made easier.	Contiki tours are designed for the 18-35 year old traveller. The cost varies depending on the location of your journey and how long you will be travelling. Costs include lodging, meals and transportation between sites. There are over 350 trips all over the world to choose from.
<a href="#">Discover Year (Ottawa)</a>	Discover Year integrates practical and interactive education, experiential learning, and skill development into a unique and meaningful year away from formal studies. The program follows a structured approach that blends skills workshops, work, travel, and community service, as well as ongoing mentorship and one-on-one career coaching throughout the year.	A high school graduate (by July of the year you enter the program) and between 18-23 years of age. The program combines two 5 month work terms with travel and community service projects. Discover Year is an innovative one-year career and life skills program that helps young adults better understand what they want and build the skills they need to go out and get it. Discover Year is a certified Canadian post-secondary program. Program fees are RESP-eligible, and can be claimed as a tuition tax credit, reducing the effective cost to most students and families.
<a href="#">Global Leadership Adventures</a>	GLA operates 1 to 6 week volunteer programs, especially designed for high school students to experience in the summer months. The work takes place almost exclusively in authentic, non-tourist communities. The GLA experience gives high school students the opportunity to step up in a global context and face real challenges in partnership with the communities they are serving. No summer is complete without adventure. Each country has its own treasures. Imagine exploring the ruins of Machu Picchu in Peru, zip lining through the pristine rainforests of Costa Rica, or taking a safari in Tanzania.	A high school student aged 14 – 18 years Able to pay the program fees, starting with a non-refundable registration fee and a refundable deposit. Program fees include all meals, in country accommodation and travel. You will need to pay your own airfare to and from your destination country. Program costs vary depending on country and length of stay, most are in the \$4000 - \$7000 range.

<a href="#">Go Eco</a>	GoEco was created by experienced volunteers for people who are eager to travel and contribute to the community, wildlife, and environment they visit. Based on years of practice and in-depth field reports, GoEco presents you with a careful selection of excellent yet affordable volunteer and ecological minded vacations.	Interested in adventure and making a difference! Able to pay the travel costs and associated fees (starting at approximately \$1300 CAD) depending on length of stay and program type.
<a href="#">GVI (Global Vision International)</a>	This link to the under 18 volunteer opportunities states: "With various options to choose from, our projects are varied, packed with adventure and cultural awareness to ensure students have an enriching learning experience and head home with a wealth of new experiences, friends and memories".	Between 15 – 17 years of age (for youth programs), interested in travelling and volunteering in a wide range of different environments (opportunities exist in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, Latin America and the U.S.), able to pay fees and travel costs (approximately \$5000 CAD for a 2 week adventure).
<a href="#">HYRS (High Youth School Researcher Summer) Program</a>	This is a paid (\$3000+) work opportunity for grade 11 students for 6 weeks in the summer (July - August). Students in Nanton apply to University of Calgary and those south of Nanton apply to the University of Lethbridge. This is an excellent opportunity for students to explore scientific study, learn about possible future careers and network with professors and researchers at Alberta universities.	A grade 11 student with at least an 85% standing in each of Math 20-1 or 20-2, Bio 20, and one other grade 11 science (grade 12 courses will not be considered for eligibility to the HYRS Program). An essay demonstrating an interest in biomedical and health research and three letters in support of an application are required.
<a href="#">International Experience Canada</a>	If you've ever dreamed of living and working in a foreign country, International Experience Canada may be the perfect opportunity for you to do just that! Through bilateral youth mobility arrangements and agreements with different countries around the world, Canadians and non-Canadians can travel and work in each other's countries for up to one year.	Interested in working and living in another country; planning to take a "gap year" after high school and are 18 years of age.
<a href="#">International Volunteer Headquarters</a>	Established in 2007, IVHQ is described as the world's leading volunteer abroad organization, offering a variety of projects in over 30 international destinations. The website describes in detail a wide range of opportunities if you are considering traveling abroad, taking a gap year, wanting to experience a volunteer vacation, or simply wishing to provide assistance in a community abroad.	18 years of age or older OR volunteering with a parent or other adult; able to fund the program fees that cover accommodation, breakfast and dinner for your stay (fees vary by length of program and location) as well as your transportation to your destination country.
<a href="#">Katimavik</a>	This unique program offers youth from across Canada the opportunity to work together on volunteer projects in small groups (30 hours per week) for the betterment of two separate Canadian communities.	FuturePerfect is a new 14-week employment training program for those looking to build up their employability skills. FuturePerfect matches youth from across Canada with real employers for 3 months of living, learning, and full-time work! Jump-start your professional aspirations, travel, and get support from amazing people along the way.
<a href="#">Kaya Responsible Travel</a>	When you volunteer with Kaya Responsible Travel you can choose between over 150 community development and conservation projects in countries in Africa, Asia, Central America and South America. This organization works with community projects and locally driven initiatives that utilize volunteer work and assistance to achieve their goals, provide valuable funding and promote responsible travel in developing countries and areas of environmental concern.	There are 30 programs for youth aged 16 - 17 to choose from and there is also a special summer volunteer program in South Africa for youth aged 13 - 15. Costs vary by length of program and location, for example, a 1-week reforestation project in South Africa is approximately \$1200 Canadian dollars and includes accommodation and meals. Transportation to and from the volunteering location is not included in the program fees.
<a href="#">Live Different Academy</a>	The Academy is for individuals looking for an experience unlike anything else. This organization supports projects in Haiti, Dominican Republic, Mexico and Thailand. You can spend one week or longer and participate in local community volunteerism, depending on your interests.	14+ years of age and able to commit to a volunteer program in one of the four countries, with the ability to fundraise for and pay applicable program fees, starting at approximately \$2000.00 Canadian Dollars.

<a href="#">Operation Groundswell</a>	From climbing to volcanic heights in Guatemala to engaging with the next generation of youth leaders in India, there are many options for backpacking enthusiasts to choose from. Use the site to search for trips by region, theme or date of departure.	Interested in small group travel experiences and opportunities to explore new places and cultures. Have the funds to cover the program fees which range with the length and location of the trip (approximately \$2000 for a 15 day excursion).
<a href="#">OYEP (Outland Youth Employment Program)</a>	OYEP is a six-week work experience providing training and education in a supportive space that replicates various work environments. The program takes an inclusive approach to Indigenous education, recruitment, retention and provides a safe and predictable learning environment that can be tailored to meet the needs of local communities and partners.	Indigenous youth aged 16 - 18 and eligible to work in Canada (with a Social Insurance Number)
<a href="#">Outward Bound Canada</a>	From canoeing in Northern Ontario to sea kayaking in British Columbia, no matter what you are looking for, Outward Bound will have a course for you. Youth courses begin at age 12, and range from five to 32 days in length. You can gain a high school credit, work towards your Duke of Edinburgh's award, and explore everything from mountains to ocean, rivers to forests.	Able to commit to the duration of the program you choose and pay the applicable fees (approximately \$2000 for a 7 day program - variable by destination and type of excursion).
<a href="#">Pueblo Ingles - Spain Immersion opportunity</a>	This is a program designed to help Spanish students practice English in a fun environment. There are many locations and program lengths to choose from.	Between 13 – 17 years of age AND an English as your first language speaker who wants to explore Spain (you do not need to speak Spanish, in fact it's preferred if you don't!)
<a href="#">Rotary Exchanges</a>	The District 5360 Youth Exchange Program coordinates exchanges in more than 20 different countries around the world each year. The year-long exchange is essentially a cultural, educational, personal growth and linguistic learning opportunity for high school students. This is an amazing opportunity, which is almost fully funded by the rotary group in our area.	On August 31 of the year of departure, applicants must be at least 15 ½ years old, but not more than 17 ½ years old. Above average academic performance with ability to express oneself clearly and effectively and adaptability are key for exchange participants!
<a href="#">Junior Forest Rangers</a>	If you are interested in environmental science, biology and ecology, this link will be helpful to you! The Junior Forest Ranger program has been operating in Alberta since 1965 and offers 7 weeks of paid employment and career development in Alberta's forests. Students need to be available for a 5 day overnight training program, starting in the first week of July, and be prepared to live and work in the outdoors for the 7 weeks of employment.	16 to 18 years of age as of July 1 AND a full-time student enrolled in grade 9 -12 at the time of application. Applicants must be in good physical condition - there is a minimum fitness standard that is part of the screening process (able to walk a flat 2 mile/3.2 km course with a 25 pound weighted backpack in 30 minutes or less).
<a href="#">Wild Outside (Canadian Wildlife Federation)</a>	WILD Outside is a national conservation-based youth leadership program designed for youth ages 15 to 18. The program is open to all regardless of physical or economic barriers; this is a no cost program with free enrolment that encourages people of all levels of physical capability to join. This program is currently suspended due to a gap in funding. Check the website for updates as hopefully funding will be restored.	A Canadian citizen, permanent resident or person who has been granted refugee status in Canada, aged 15 -18 years of age. WILD Outside provides an exciting way to have an impact on conservation in your area and fulfill any volunteer hours required by your school. There are also incentives you can earn as you complete various stages of the program, including an official certificate awarded to you from the Canadian Wildlife Federation. Participation also counts towards other youth achievement initiatives you may pursue like the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

<a href="#">WWOOF</a>	<p>Want to live and work on an organic farm somewhere in the world? This can be possible with WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms) organizations who connect you with hosts who offer food, accommodation and opportunities to learn about organic lifestyles. As a volunteer, you give your time and energy to help out on the farm. Check out the WWOOF site of the country you wish to visit and work in for specific information.</p>	<p>Able to handle the demands of the farming lifestyle; able to pay your travel expenses and WWOOF membership fees. Most countries require you to be 18 years of age and have applicable travel visas in place before you join WWOOF.</p>
<a href="#">YMCA Summer Work Student Exchange (SWSE)</a>	<p>The YMCA Summer Work Student Exchange is a unique national exchange program that brings together youth from various communities across the country. In 6 short weeks over the summer, participants go on a journey that will forever impact their lives. Learning more about themselves, discovering another part of Canada and the people that make up our great nation, taking on new challenges, making new friends and, having so much fun, participants agree this experience is THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME!</p>	<p>Living in a community that is participating in this exchange program and aged 16 or 17; interested in improving your second official language skills – you will be working in that language. Eager to gain employment experience through a work placement while on your exchange, and pay the \$200 participant fee plus on site transportation costs/spending money. Your food and accommodation is provided for you with your host family and you are paid minimum wage for the work you will be doing in your new community.</p>