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KRG Children's Charitable Foundation - Media Library

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History of Lake Joseph Centre

The CNIB Lake Joseph Centre was the result of a camping program initiated by CNIB in collaboration with the members of the Lions Family of Ontario.



Originally, a camp was rented for three weeks each summer to provide an outdoor experience and a social outlet for people with vision loss in Ontario. This site was located in Ancaster, Ontario, and was in operation from 1956 to 1959. The campers ranged in age from late teens to adults. Many were students from the school now known as the W. Ross McDonald School for the Blind, located in Brantford, Ontario.

In just three years, demand from the community exceeded the space available at the camp. The time had come to look for an alternate location. In October of 1960 the Lions, CNIB and the Canadian Council for the Blind found a small piece of paradise on Lake Jo in Muskoka. This beautiful property was purchased from Tom MacDonald of Foot's Bay, Ontario.

The original footprints of this heritage site are still visible in the layout of the present-day CNIB Lake Joseph Centre. The MacDonald Family Home was the only building on the land in 1960, and this original cottage is now used as

the manager's residence.

The same boat dock that is used today was once part of the old CNR/Steamship line that ran passengers throughout Lakes Joseph, Rosseau, and Muskoka from 1904 to 1948. The present site of the outdoor gazebo (at the far southeast point of the property) was a hotel from 1884 to 1910, first called Gordon House, then later Blackstone House. A visit to the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre is all you need to feel the rich history of the Muskokas come alive.

Throughout its extended history, members of the Ontario Lions Family have provided significant support to the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre. They have provided funds for capital improvements, sponsorships for campers, and direct equipment donations. The Lions, who are the largest service organization in the world, have made Lake Jo's continuing operation possible with their generous contributions. Lake Jo has honoured their support by proudly placing the Lions Friendship Arch in the front drive at the Centre.

Partners

The [Multiple District “A” Lions Clubs of Ontario and Quebec](#) have always played a very special role in the life of the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre since our humble beginnings in 1964. From volunteering to fundraising to subsidizing campers, our Lion and Lioness friends have worked tirelessly to ensure that



CNIB can provide a fun and safe camping environment for our many visitors.



The [Northern Ontario Heritage Fund](#) has partnered with the CNIB Lake Joseph Centre to ensure that our beautiful Muskokan Centre is safe, accessible and welcoming to guests of all abilities.



[KRG Children's Charities](#) has established a foundation for the Restoring the Spirit Campaign with a Cornerstone Gift to restore the buildings and grounds at Lake Jo. The brainchild of Steve Wise, Chairman and CEO of KRG Insurance Group, the Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness and much-needed funding for children facing challenges. Whether a physical challenge, mental disability, emotional or educational need, the KRG Children's Charitable Foundation is committed to enriching the lives and experiences of children.