



## Ten Reasons to take a gap year

### 10. What's the rush?

Many students are just not ready to jump right into college/university or the workplace right after high school. Taking time off gives them a much needed break. They return more focused, motivated and ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

"A gap year can prepare students for a more meaningful university experience" say Diane Crocker, Registrar and Director of Enrolment Management, University of Toronto

Harvard believes so much in the gap year that they encourage every enrolled student to consider a year off. Princeton has a program called the "bridge year" where students spend a year performing public service abroad before beginning their freshman year. York University announced their Bridging the Gap program that allows student to defer admission on the basis of a gap year.

"It's a time to step back and reflect, gain perspective on personal values and goals, or to gain needed life experience in a setting separate from and independent of ,one's accustomed pressures and expectations" – Harvard Dean of Admissions, - William R. Fitzsimmons

### 9. There is an increase in the drop out rate for Canadian universities.

Statistics Canada reports a drop out rate of 30% amongst first year university students at 13 Canadian universities. With costs for first year university ranging from \$6,000 - \$18,000, this is not only costly for everyone, it also leaves students with a sense of lack of accomplishment and confusion about their future choices. Taking a gap year is a much more cost effective alternative.

### 8. They will come back!

"Gappers" or students who take time off speak highly of their gap experiences. Many describe their year away as a "life-altering" experience or a "turning point," and most feel that its full value can never be measured and will pay dividends the rest of their lives. Many come to post secondary education with new visions of their academic plans, their extracurricular activities, the intangibles they hoped to gain in college/university, and the career possibilities they observed in their year away. Virtually all would do it again.

Many parents worry that their sons and daughters will be sidetracked from post secondary education, and may never enroll. Both fear that taking time off can cause students to "fall behind" or lose their study skills irrevocably. That fear is rarely justified. High school counselors, college/ university administrators, and others who work with students taking time off can help with reassurance that the benefits far outweigh the risks.

Taking a gap year can actually make young adults *more* focused and ready for the challenges of academic life.

### 7. The gap year is a proven successful concept-it works!

Taking a gap year is the norm and is encouraged in UK, Australia and New Zealand. In the UK alone, each year approximately 230,000 people take a gap year. Generally the gap experience includes mixing academics, volunteer

work and travel. The gap year is regarded as a chance for students to develop skills and to take personal responsibility as an adult. This is supported by British Universities and colleges where students with gap year plans are regularly granted deferred admission. The chief executive of the UK Universities and Colleges Admission Services, Tony Higgins says “we believe that students who take a well planned structured year out are more likely to be satisfied with, and complete their chosen course. The benefits are now widely recognized by universities and colleges.”

#### **6. Look what you can learn, - no classroom required!**

A gap year provides an unparalleled growth opportunity. A gap year enhances an application form/resume by developing work experience at home or abroad, skills that cannot be taught in a classroom, the opportunity to work with other cultures, the chance to perfect a foreign language, a break to serve others in a voluntary capacity, a time to grow and mature, and a chance to reflect on one's own personality, skills, values and desires before fully committing to a course or career. Learning outside the classroom gives young adults a greater understanding of the world around them.

#### **5. Parents support a gap year or gap experience if it is structured and time well spent.**

Creating a plan that provides opportunities for personal and professional growth has a significant correlation to future educational and employment success. A gap year provides an opportunity to strengthen soft skills and develop emotional intelligence. The experience improves decision making, relationship building, problem solving, communication, organization, team work, responsibility, independence and maturity. Parents will consider funding these activities if there are opportunities for personal development and responsibility.

#### **4. You can benefit by planning a gap year!**

Just planning a gap year can give you a maturity boost. Young adults can use this opportunity as a time to identify themselves as individuals, to make choices about what it is they want to do with their lives, - at least for twelve months, to take ownership of their planned gap year and in so doing grow and mature before making the transition to the next chapter of their lives

#### **3. There are so many cool things you can do!**

Gap experiences are plentiful, and varied. You can volunteer, travel and work or study all over the world and here in Canada. Creating a plan that suits your needs and budget is easy to do with the help of a gap year planning service. You will be amazed at the range of opportunities available!

#### **2. What if?**

Many parents, when asked the question– “what if you had the chance to take a year off all over again?” – say they would go. Ask them again if they would want to provide this opportunity for their children, and the response is a resounding YES!

#### **1. The time is now!**

There's never been a better time to take some time out. So often we rush by opportunities to regroup and reflect. Why not take that time now. There are big decisions ahead and doing something to develop your own insights and independence is time well spent, no matter what the current economic climate is. Gap years are becoming increasingly popular and accepted. Your gap experiences will ensure you have unique experiences to offer universities/colleges or employers