



# Peer Educator Profile

## KINGSTON INITIATIVE



**NAME:** Halle

**YEAR:** 4<sup>th</sup> Year Kinesiology Major

**LOCATION:** Kingston, ON

### A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A PEER EDUCATOR

The most exciting aspect of the Kingston initiative is that we get to jump into the classrooms much earlier than the other initiatives, which gives us a different looking week than other PE's! Kingston PE hiring happens a bit earlier in the fall, so as to give us enough time to learn everything necessary to begin teaching in the classrooms. Near the beginning of the school year, we start with some Crash Courses, during which time we review topics such as cultural awareness in the Kingston community, where to access resources both for you and the students, and the specific terminology and language to use while speaking about QHO.



In a typical week as a Kingston PE, you will have either one initiative-specific meeting, where you meet with just the Initiative Directors and other Kingston Peer Educators to discuss issues pertaining only to the Kingston initiative, or you will have a QHO-wide education session, where the Education directors discuss broader QHO topics. During these sessions Kingston PE's also have the opportunity to share our experiences in the classrooms to guide the PE's preparing for their summer initiatives. Something else special about teaching in Kingston is that we have so many resources right here on Queen's Campus and in the broader Kingston community. We usually have guest speakers during our initiative meetings, such as professors, volunteers from the Peer Support Centre, and even other QHO executive members! The most exciting part of a typical week as a PE are the one or two 1-hour lessons you will teach in classrooms in the Kingston area. These classes are typically aimed at high school students, but we also teach in a few middle school classes and sometimes with older adults as well! You will also spend approximately 1 hour per week lesson planning, which becomes much easier as you become more familiar with the students and the classroom dynamic. Most Kingston classrooms respond well to something we call a Question Box, where the students can write down any lingering questions they may have on a topic, which will help guide your lesson planning for the following week, and inform you of what to teach about next. The final part of a typical QHO week will sometimes include an amazing fundraiser, either initiative-specific or QHO-wide. These fundraisers are both incredibly important for QHO, and they're also a lot of fun and great bonding opportunities for everyone.

### WHAT WE TEACH:

The topics we focus on in these classes are targeted at issues specific to Kingston, and will vary greatly between different classrooms! We will typically discuss with the teachers and the students which topics they think will be most useful to discuss, and will design lesson plans that are needs-based and relevant! In the past, this has included topics such as food insecurity, budgeting, hygiene, social media, goal-setting, and sexual health. There is lots of flexibility with how you teach this information, but it usually includes a combination of conversation style and hands-on activities. In my experience on the Kingston initiative, I was lucky enough to teach in one of the Kingston Youth Shelters, where we found that discussion style was the best tactic to engage the students, which lead to some incredible conversations regarding health and life in general! The group was comprised mostly of teenage boys, and they were very interested in learning about healthy fitness tips, and so we designed an entire workout class as a fun and interactive way to learn about fitness, while also staying active.



### AN IDEAL PE:

Some qualities that make for a great Kingston PE would include being open-minded, flexible, organized and dedicated. By exploring Kingston beyond the confines of Queen's you will become more aware of the lifestyles of those around you. By remaining open-minded and flexible, you will allow yourself to consider the similarities and differences between your own experience and your students', which will help you make the most of your time in the classrooms. Dedication and organization are also crucial for the Kingston initiative, since you will need to balance your own schoolwork, social life, and other responsibilities with your role as a PE.

### WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN QHO:

Joining QHO has truly been one of the most influential aspects of my university career thus far. I never expected how much I would learn from spending time in the classrooms, and how much of a greater appreciation I would gain for the Kingston community. I never left a classroom without a smile on my face, and I feel so lucky that I have been able to take part of such an important platform to discuss health-based issues, and learn so much in the process. I am a firm believer that if you want to affect change, you must start locally, which is why becoming a Kingston PE has provided me with such a unique perspective that I feel so grateful for.