



## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Donor impact update from the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka



### Update from the CEO

Spring is in the air and with it comes some wonderful lessons in commitment, patience and time. As perennial flowers begin to peek through the soil we can be reminded of our efforts in years past and celebrate the impact these efforts continue to make today. It helps to inspire the work of today, though you don't always get an immediate result from a Spring garden clean-up, it is reassuring to know that the seeds we plant now will someday provide a rich and vibrant ecosystem. I see these connections between past and present so much in our current work here at the Y. I am happy to share the following updates with you:

- After a long winter of quiet growth, our camping programs are also beginning to peak from beneath the soil as staff prepares for another exciting summer.

Registration is now open for YMCA Camp Kitchikewana and our Summer Day Camps. We are proud to welcome children from all across the region and to continue to provide financial assistance for campers when needed and are inspired knowing that the campers of today are the leaders of tomorrow.

- The return of warmer weather means more opportunities to get active outdoors and as our members embrace their favourite spring activities they start to feel the benefits of keeping active all winter at YMCA Health and Fitness Centres and through YMCA AT HOME+ virtual programs.

- We are proud to introduce the new Settlement Workers In Schools Program and the Y Mind Youth Mental Wellness Programs. These programs, detailed below, aim to support members of our community to establish deep roots and strong foundations so that they can flourish for years to come.

- We are remaining optimistic that our communities are continuing to recover from the effects of the pandemic and see so many more members choosing to return to our health and fitness centres and start to cautiously embrace social gatherings and opportunities to get together.
- With this in mind we look forward to bringing back signature YMCA events. Please mark your calendars for the 8th Annual Move to Give from Saturday, June 4th to Saturday, June 11th so you can join us in celebrating healthy and connected communities through in-person and virtual active challenges.

- Our Philanthropy team continues to plant seeds for the future of our communities as they approach the end of the Camp Kitchikewana 100th Anniversary Endowment Fund matching gift program, as well as launching a new Planned Giving Program, and continue to work towards building a new Barrie Y.

As always, our Y is thriving with activity. Your generosity continues to make an immediate impact, addressing the most pressing needs of our communities today, as we continue to recover from the effects of the last two years. With your support, our friends and neighbours can access financial assistance, employment supports, youth outreach, a sense of belonging and hope for the future. Thanks to donors like you that future is looking bright.

[Click Here to Learn How We Go Together](#)



**When asked to draw a picture for one of our donors this young man chose to draw a superhero because that's what he thinks of you. Y-Man is the kind of hero that makes sure everyone is included and he takes his job very seriously!**

## Settlement Worker In Schools Program Promotes Inclusivity

Inclusiveness is one of the core values of the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka. We believe that our communities are healthier when everyone feels welcome and belongs. As such, we are very excited to partner with the SCDSB on

the Settlement Worker in Schools Program. The program will allow us to support

newcomer students and their families as they integrate into their new school, and foster a sense of belonging as they settle into the Simcoe County community.

The SWIS worker will:

- Help students and their families adjust to the new school system and community
- Organize group information sessions, workshops and support cultural awareness activities
- Help in translation during Parent-Teacher Interviews
- Run Newcomer Orientation Week for newcomer high school students
- Support families to join parent councils and other similar activities at the school
- Continue to provide support to students and families throughout the school summer break

Parent(s) of elementary or high school students, children and youth in elementary and high schools or the school staff are welcome to contact a SWIS worker for services.

To learn more or make a referral click [here](#)



[Click to Watch This Video About Our Settlement Worker In Schools Program](#)

## Introducing Y Mind



Participants will receive:

- A \$25.00 gift card upon the start and completion of the program
- A copy of the book, "The Happiness Trap" for use in the program
- A two-month complimentary YMCA Health, Fitness & Aquatics Membership
- Access to technology to complete the program, if needed

We are proud to have launched Y Mind Youth, a free seven-week mental wellness program delivered online by trained local Social Workers. Y Mind Youth supports people ages 18-30 who are experiencing symptoms of anxiety to learn and practice evidence-based strategies to increase coping. This group is led by trained mental health professionals and gives young adults the chance to connect with others who are experiencing similar thoughts and feelings.

Made possible through our funding partners.

The next Y Mind Youth programs will be starting Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup> 2022, from 1:30-4:00pm

[Click to Learn More About Y Mind](#)



## **Health and Healing; This is Serena's Y Story**

When I first joined the Y I was a little nervous. It had been a long time since I had been to a gym, I felt out of shape and self-conscious. It wasn't long though before I felt right at home. The staff and volunteers at the Collingwood Y are amazing, they took the time to learn my name, to show me how to get set up for classes and individual workouts, and helped introduce me to other members. I made friends, grew

confident and got a little stronger every day. I started to really enjoy working out - I never thought that was possible! I was sad when the YMCA closed in the pandemic and worried I would go back to old sedentary ways. It's amazing though how the habits I formed at the Y stayed with me. I went for walks and tried online classes even though the old me would have loved the excuse to skip my workouts.

Thank goodness I had been getting stronger pre-pandemic and that I kept going online because in the fall of 2020 a small trip in my backyard shattered one ankle and sprained another. I was off work for months and bedridden for weeks and had to undergo surgery to try to repair the damage. During those early weeks, I was incredibly grateful for any ounce of upper body strength I had earned through my YMCA classes to help me get around and alleviate the pressure on my ankle. The healing process has been long, and grueling and isolating. As I healed I had to avoid any kind of unlevelled terrain so even a simple walk was off-limits, especially in the winter months. I found great relief being in the water but never knew how challenging it was for some people to get in and out of residential pools or Georgian Bay. This whole experience has made me appreciate my Y membership even more. Having a safe and accessible pool with railings and ramps, having access to the types of fitness equipment recommended by my physiotherapist, having the comfort of staff nearby in case I slipped or fell (believe me it is scary to walk again!) and being able to see people in the community have been an invaluable part of my recovery. You can't really appreciate how important accessible spaces are until you face limitations yourself, whether physical, social or financial. I am so happy the Y is able to be open again and can't imagine how many other people like me don't just love the Y but NEED the Y!

My YMCA experience goes beyond fitness for fun or aesthetics, it has been a critical part of my health and healing. Everyone in our community deserves this kind of support in healing whether they can pay full price or not. We all benefit from a healthy community and I am so grateful to the Y and to the donors that make this possible

***"The most reliable way to predict the future is to create it"***  
**-Abraham Lincoln**

**To discuss leaving a legacy gift with the YMCA please call 705-726-9622 ext 1450**



### **Lifesaving Sport Awards**

This April the Wasaga Beach YMCA the Life Saving Sport team, The Wasaga Ducks, celebrated the awards they received from the 2021 Fall Jr. Lifeguard Telegames Competition. Lifesaving Sport offers participants a recreational introduction to lifesaving sports skills. The program also teaches team building, fair play, ethics in sport, and responsibility. This program fosters the lifeguards of the future. The telegames allowed for an opportunity to compete without travel.

Funding from Jump Start Charities allowed our Y to purchase the equipment needed to run this program and offer the first session completely free of charge to children and youth and dozens of children were able to participate at the Collingwood and Wasaga Beach YMCA's. We want to recognize the many individual donors who have contributed as well. Many of the children and youth in this program (and even the lifeguards who are currently supervising the pool where they practice) are the beneficiaries of YMCA financial assistance. They learned the basics of swimming, which allow them to pursue these more advanced programs, thanks to the generosity of donors like you removing financial barriers.

As these children and youth progress through their swimming levels, graduate to the Lifesaving Sport and Jr. Lifeguard clubs, and some even as far as becoming certified lifeguards and swim instructors themselves, we see the ripple effect of your gifts continuing to promote safe and inclusive communities.

[\*\*Learn More About Lifesaving Sport Here\*\*](#)



### **We Want To Hear From You!**

One of the best ways you can help our YMCA right now is by clicking the link below to our 2022 Donor Survey. This survey helps ensure we have up to date contact information and communication preferences from you, our valued supporter and allows an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and feedback on your experience. We would greatly appreciate if you could take the time to complete this survey at your earliest convenience.



### **Did You Know...**

On March 28, the government of Ontario announced the signing of a Nation-Wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement with the Government of Canada.

The Y supports the announcement of the federal-provincial child care agreement to improve accessibility and affordability of high-quality licensed child care in Ontario. As the largest non-profit, licensed child care provider in Simcoe County we believe the agreement will support growth and development with children and empower parents, especially women returning to work to grow our economy and create more affordable and accessible options for children. We're thrilled with this amazing news!

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