



YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022

Partnering for Change

Working with our community partner organizations, the YMCA Centre for Life will provide meaningful programs and positive relationships for the people that we serve.

Our values and missions align and, together, we will partner to create an inclusive centre. The **Community Building Campaign** is opening the door for more people in the community to become involved in one safe, accessible, centrally located facility.



Community Learning Alternatives Staff

Partner Profile: Community Learning Alternatives (CLA)

Community Learning Alternatives helps people reach their goals. The Belleville-based non-profit organization provides opportunities for adult learners to upgrade their education and skillsets in a supportive environment. By building and maintaining strong relationships within the community, CLA helps adult learners improve their self-confidence, make connections to needed supports, and develop skills for life.

“CLA makes things happen,” says Executive Director Shannon Lee, who’s worked at the adult learning agency for 21 years. Clients can be anywhere between age 19 and 64 with a goal to finish grade 12, or develop specific skills for employment or an apprenticeship. CLA is unique in also supporting those with more personal goals such as learning math to help their children with homework, or learning about financial literacy.

“If it’s been a while and you’re rusty, CLA is the place to go,” says Shannon, who offers many avenues to supporting people. “If you moved a lot as a young child and missed out on a skill, CLA is the place to start.”

Originally founded in 1978 as the Quinte Adult Day School, the agency merged with The Quinte Literacy Group in 2011 to create CLA. As the region’s only community-based literacy and basic skills agency, they prefer to use inclusive language such as essential skills training, upgrading and development. “People think literacy is something you have or don’t have, but really, it’s a spectrum of what you need. At different points in your life, you need different things. It’s not an on-off switch.”

As a partner moving into the new YMCA Centre for Life, Lee is looking forward to greater exposure to connecting people with CLA’s services – whether as a program volunteer or an adult learner. She also hopes to encourage CLA clients to become members of the YMCA to support their physical health alongside upgrading their skills.

“We love the opportunity to work with others,” says Shannon, whose staff is continuously upgrading as well, acquiring new resources and learning how to implement them. It’s one of the main reasons she has stuck around

for two decades. “We are known for working collaboratively with others and partnering with the YMCA can open up any number of different opportunities to collaborate that are impactful not just for our learners but for others in the community.”

An Email from A CLA Learner

“Hi there – I just wanted to encourage you at the beginning of this school year to keep persevering and caring about those coming through your doors – YOU guys are making a difference. I went back to finish my high school about 5 years ago and now I am in a new vocation working full time and have only 6 credits to go towards my bachelor’s degree.

Your encouragement and help empowered me to become an even better version of myself – thank you for believing in me when some days it was hard to believe in myself! Be encouraged!”

Cabinet Profile: John Mastorakos

Belleville-based lawyer John Mastorakos is thrilled to be a part of something big after a decade in the making. The volunteer cabinet member for the Community Building Campaign has also volunteered on various committees for the YMCA of Central East Ontario since 2012 – including a three-year term as Board Chair – championing the new facility that will be accessible to more people than ever.

With deep roots in the Belleville area, John grew up just north of town and completed his law degree at Queens University. After articling in Toronto and marrying his high school sweetheart, he returned to town to raise a family. Since joining O'Flynn Weese LLP in 2001, John has been involved in the community supporting underprivileged children and women's shelters, along with Camp Quin-Mo-Lac, where he fondly spent his summers as a child.

Today, he's active with his two sons and motivated to volunteer for the YMCA because of its unwavering commitment to welcome everyone to stay active and connected to community. For John, the Y's most important work is opening doors for families who couldn't otherwise afford fitness and wellness programs.

"I'm directly and indirectly giving back to the community with a membership fee for those that can't necessarily afford it," says Mastorakos, who brings an ability to see different sides of the plan and analyze it from different angles. During his time as Chair, he's been fortunate to attend the YMCA national



John with his two sons

annual general meeting and see the work that the YMCA is doing across the country and world. "Learning about the Y's mission and its importance in each community it's in continues to deepen my appreciation for it."

The YMCA Centre for Life will flourish with new partners, and that's one of the main reasons John supports the Community Building Campaign. "The fact that this is about an improved, accessible location and strong partnerships makes it more special than just building a new Y. Without those two elements, it's just a new building, and this is about community building. That makes it unique."

Our Supporting Team

We are grateful to our **Community Building Campaign** Cabinet members for their passion to the YMCA Centre for Life:

Wolf & Elaine Tausendfreund,
Campaign Honourary Chairs

Kristin Crowe, Co-Chair

Ed Lehtinen, Co-Chair

Ruth Ferguson Aulhouse

Cassandra Bonn

Bruce Mackay

John Mastorakos

Kelly McKinney

Sue O'Brien

Bernie Ouellet

Doug Peterson

Mark Phillips

Boyd Sullivan

Heather Williams



Those pictured in the photo are: Front Row: L-R Heather Williams, Ed Lehtinen (Campaign Co-Chair), Kristin Crowe (Campaign Co-Chair), Dave Allen (YMCA of Central East Ontario President & CEO) Back Row: L-R Sue O'Brien, Mark Phillips, Doug Peterson, John Mastorakos, Bruce Mackay, Cassandra Bonn
Absent from the photo: Ruth Ferguson-Aulhouse, Kelly McKinney, Bernie Ouellet, Boyd Sullivan, Wolf Tausendfreund

Holiday Message from Dave Allen, President & CEO



As an organization, we are grateful for the relationships we have cultivated over the years and the continued generosity we receive that supports our charitable mission and work to support the health and wellness of our community. 2022 has been an exciting year for us as we have moved closer to the dream of opening the doors to the new YMCA Centre for Life. In the coming year we will have many announcements to share with you about the initiative and the investments we have received to ensure that this legacy project is built and here for generations

to come. This holiday season, I hope you enjoy the company of family and friends, and that the New Year brings you much health, happiness and prosperity.

Dave Allen, President & CEO



The YMCA of Central East Ontario is building a new YMCA Centre for Life in Belleville. It will be an inclusive space for people of all abilities, socio-economic status, ethnic and sexual orientation, while providing more community services closer to home in a safe and welcoming environment.

To learn more about how you can get involved, contact us at campaign@ceo.ymca.ca.

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