



YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2023

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.



Big Brothers & Big Sisters Participants

Partner Profile: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties

Many young people in our communities are facing adversities that put them at risk of not reaching their full potential. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hastings and Prince Edward Counties helps young people develop the social and emotional competencies needed to achieve their potential. Skills like optimistic thinking, self-awareness, goal-directed behaviour, and decision-making help immensely, and learning alongside a mentor can make all the difference. The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. We caught up with Arlene Coculuzzi, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters of HPE to learn about their mission and vision for partnering with the new YMCA Centre for Life.

What brings you joy about the work you do for BBBS?

Over 12 years ago, I was incredibly fortunate to join the mentoring movement with BBBS as an event volunteer. As my journey with our organization evolved, I've witnessed thousands of selfless hours that our dedicated volunteers have given by simply providing a small act for a big impact in as little as an hour a week. It's the smiles on the hundreds of children's faces when they see their mentor and the lifelong

relationships that grow from their friendship, the continued support of our donors, partners and community, and the amazing staff and board members that make these friendships happen.

How do you raise awareness for BBBS and engage in outreach?

Big Brothers Big Sisters of HPE has close to 50 years of experience in creating and empowering life changing relationships for children and youth. Throughout the years, our free services have evolved to meet the changing needs of youth, families and our volunteers. Most recently, the global pandemic has amplified the critical need for our mentoring programs, increasing the necessity to stay connected and to continue reaching children and families who are particularly vulnerable.

Through an intentional matching and training process, supported by a mentoring coordinator, the match builds a trusting developmental relationship, in which the adult mentor expresses care, challenges growth, provides support and expands possibilities for their Little "brother or sister." Clients build executive functioning skills, improve their social-emotional skills and resiliency and benefit from a natural support who facilitates

other connections in the community.

How will your organization and the people it serves benefit by partnering with the YMCA's Centre for Life?

Working closely with the Y staff will help us find new ways to deliver programming to enhance the quality of life for residents accessing systems and services. By developing a healthy and sustainable community, and promoting citizen participation and volunteerism, we're jointly responding to community needs and interests.

What excites you most about partnering with the YMCA's Centre for Life?

Coming together with resources, expertise and values that align to not only better our organizations but be better for the members of our community that need us the most. Individuals and families accessing services within the YMCA's Centre for Life will support our goals of building thriving communities by empowering lives through mentorship and wellness for happy and healthy lifestyles.

Do you have a favourite quote or phrase?

We are #BiggerTogether!

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Did You Know?

People often wonder why a volunteer-based organization needs funding at all. Arlene Coculuzzi says the reason is simple: Matching children with positive adult role models requires professional screening, training and monitoring. Given that it is to enable life-changing mentoring relationships to ignite the power and potential of all young people, funding plays an ever-important role in success as well as the safe development of children in community.

Supporting financially could be the start of many “BIG” things, including:

- Safe and inclusive space to access our services
- Empowering us to recruit and screen new volunteers
- Ensuring mentors and mentees are matched by qualified professionals
- Enabling ongoing supervision and relationship support for every match
- Providing cultural and social activities to enrich the opportunities for children and youth

Spotlight on Campaign Cabinet Members Heather Williams and Mark Phillips

There’s a dynamic duo rallying support for the YMCA’s Community Building Campaign from communities outside of Belleville. Cookbook author and private practice Registered Professional Dietitian Heather Williams and community-driven entrepreneur Mark Phillips, owner of Mystical Distributing in Trenton, are known as the “Quinte-West Connection” and they’re working together to help the YMCA Centre for Life reach its goals to better serve a diverse, growing community.

“We’re asking people here to support the Y in a neighbouring community,” says Mark, from his office in Trenton, about 20km west of where the Centre for Life will be built. “We’re finding people are receptive because what’s good for Belleville is good for Trenton.”

With the new Centre for Life, synergies are bound to be strengthened between the YMCA in Belleville and Trenton, the latter of which is named in honour of John Williams, Heather’s late husband who was mayor of Quinte West from 2006 to 2014. For Heather, volunteering on the campaign cabinet is a natural extension of her husband’s passion for bringing the YMCA to Quinte West.

“Eating well and getting exercise – I preached this every day to my clients. This new Y will make for a much stronger community,” says Heather, who has volunteered for numerous committees including the local hospital and children foundations’ galas. “I’ve learned that all three Y’s in eastern Ontario work together to have a bottom line, which saves a lot of money. And in order to keep the Quinte West YMCA successful, it’s really important we have a strong Belleville and Peterborough YMCA as well.”

Trenton is the primary community in the municipality of Quinte West, and many



Mark Phillips and Heather Williams

residents living closer to neighbouring Belleville will benefit from the new Y next door. Each of the four community-based organizations that will be re-locating to the new Centre for Life in partnership with the YMCA not only service Belleville, but also Napanee, Stirling, Prince Edward County, and Trenton.

“All of those groups are going to be healthier,” says Mark, who is a long-time member of the Y and says it changed his life after immigrating from Jamaica over 40 years ago and eventually settling in Trenton to build his business and raise his family. His firework distribution business covers half of the Y membership fees for staff interested in becoming members. “We know what it’s like not to have everything, and I like to give back because I’ve been truly blessed being in Canada.”

What motivates this duo the most is the dedication of the “all-star” cabinet and the impact the Centre for Life will have on the community – for families, seniors, and newcomers – and believing that this campaign will go off with a bang!

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



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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