



YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



NEWSLETTER APRIL 2023

Volunteerism

Volunteers are vital to nonprofit organizations. In recognition of National Volunteer Week during the month of April, we salute the many volunteers who have gone before, are here now, and are to come, making the YMCA Belleville a thriving, vibrant community.



Ken Schmidt and Patricia Guernsey

The Value of Volunteers

Volunteers are the heartbeat of nonprofit organizations. Their active participation in fundraising, marketing, and program delivery saves organizations millions of dollars a year, and their contribution to improve the well-being of their communities is valued at 2.6 per cent of Canada's GDP (volunteer.ca). As YMCA Belleville Board Vice-Chair John Enright Jr. puts it, volunteers are paramount to nonprofits.

"Without volunteers, and not just the Board of Directors, but every volunteer out there connecting or canvassing is of utmost importance," says John, who's been a member of the Y since he was 7 years old taking swimming lessons. Even at a young age, the concept of volunteering resonated with him to share one's knowledge and expertise. He's always believed in the YMCA, and so it was an easy yes when he was approached to volunteer with the Board four years ago.

"It's always been an ambition and goal of mine to give back to the community," says John, who was born and raised in Belleville and is now an Advisor at McDougall Insurance & Financial. "You carve out your own path, but I always

wanted to come back to the region to give back to the community that has effectively shaped who I am today."

For Patricia Guernsey, Co-Chair of the YMCA Strong Communities Campaign alongside Ken Schmidt, volunteering is all about acting on what's important to a person. Whether it's taking tickets at a door, helping run a capital campaign, or using one's influence to get others involved, Patricia points out how valued and different each volunteer can be.

"It's about using the skills you have and trying to make an organization better," she says. "I don't believe that there isn't a person out there that couldn't do something; it's just a matter of utilizing their skills to do it naturally."

As a well-connected realtor, Patricia is a natural mover and shaker, building relationships and moving a project along. "I don't waste time, and I trust the other volunteers in the organization to do their jobs. When I'm involved in a campaign, I think of myself at the center of the wheel with all these spokes that go out – someone's going to make that phone call, another is going to contact someone else – and I follow up with them and make sure I'm

supporting them. And somehow that wheel turns. Many hands make light work."

If people didn't volunteer, Patricia says what a mess we'd be in. "I think it's just really good social consciousness to be part of your community and try to make it a better place. Otherwise, you can't complain about it!"

John believes people aren't motivated to volunteer for selfish reasons. Yes, there's the satisfaction of helping others, but he's not looking for accolades. Being on the Board is something he really enjoys doing. "We truly believe in the Y and want to give back. We have connections, centers of influence to draw on, and the time to carve out. I think that speaks to how much the Y means to this community and how many lives it's impacted."

While studies show that charitable activities can improve the life satisfaction of volunteers and may improve their health – an outcome aligned with the Y's mission of living healthy lives – the benefits of volunteering reach well beyond the personal to the greater good, ensuring essential programs and services exist to help enrich communities.



My Y Story

Long-time volunteer Ruth Hatton leads a one-hour weekly meditation session at the YMCA Belleville.

She enjoys sharing her knowledge of meditation with members who want to “round out

their physical exercise routines.” She volunteers because, simply put, it’s who she is.

“I know that if I want to live in a healthy, caring and compassionate community as a contributing

citizen, I need to step in and step up,” says Ruth. “As a former health promoter, I understand that some of the determinants of health include engagement in exercise, relationships, and positive, inclusive environments. The Y’s belief that income should not deter membership is a powerful influencer in my commitment to the Y.”

Ruth also shares her time with other community organizations supporting the environment, social justice and the arts. What she likes most about volunteering at the Y are the people. “Those who work, volunteer and play at the Y keep it real, as the model includes a full cross-section of our community. There appears to be no overt classism, racism or ageism.”

First Phase of Staff Campaign a Huge Success

When it comes to running a successful campaign canvass, all hands on deck are needed. A trio of YMCA Belleville senior staff took the lead on organizing a canvass of senior staff and supervisors that has resulted in a major collaborative gift. Belleville YMCA CEO Dave Allen, Tracy Shipman, Finance Assistant, and Tiffany Dranski, Regional Supervisor of Aquatics, Quinte Region, and Supervisor of Child, Youth, and Family, Belleville Branch connected with YMCA senior staff and supervisors to educate them about the Centre for Life project and invite their support.

Eighteen senior staff donated over \$90,000 and the amount, as Dave Allen says, really “blew his mind.” He believes it says a lot about the staff’s commitment to the Y at a time when employee retention is important. “The proof is in the pudding,” says Dave. “Their generosity says a lot about their commitment to the organization and their understanding of this project’s impact – not just for the Y but for the community as a whole, and the many lives it’s going to change.” The staff are excited about the new facility being

able to provide more accessible programming by working with partners in the same building. “They feel they are helping build the Centre for Life and build a better community,” says Tiffany, who’s worked at the Y for 23 years and leads up to 50 staff. “The Y is more than just a job. It has become a part of me. I am so proud to work for an organization that provides opportunities all around. I have worked in all departments the Y offers but quickly found my love for Aquatics. Teaching a life skill is super rewarding. I am the leader I am today because of my team. Without them, I couldn’t do what I do.”

Plans are in motion for Phase II of the staff campaign canvass to roll out this month, inviting the hourly staff to help build their new Y. Dave feels it’s important to treat staff with the respect of any potential donor by having meaningful conversations and letting them arrive at deciding how they would like to be a part of the campaign.

“We’re adding some individuals to take the next phase of the staff campaign canvass to the next level,” says Dave. “Our goal is to ultimately have all of our staff contribute to the new build, recognizing that people will donate based on their capacity and no matter the size of donation, it’s going to make a difference!”

Once the campaign is wrapped up, the effort and results will be an important piece shared with donors and the community as a whole, says Dave. “Look at the Y staff at all levels who have stepped up to raise funds,” he says. “I’m just one guy who happens to carry a certain title, but the staff make the magic happen.”



Tiffany Dranski , Dave Allen and Tracy Shipman

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 Aulthouse

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-Aulthouse, 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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