



## YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

# COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



NEWSLETTER SUMMER 2023

As we head into the last weeks of summer, our Community Building Campaign volunteers are making major strides in securing support for the new YMCA Centre for Life. We hope this summer issue of our campaign newsletter finds you enjoying relaxation and fun with friends and family. We are excited to share just one of the many ways the new facility will better serve Belleville and we thank you for following along with the progress of this legacy project.



David Allen, YMCA President & CEO, Benda Snider, Executive Director, VIQ, Amanda Smith, General Manager, YMCA Belleville Branch, Shannon Lee, Executive Director, CLA, Tracey Legault-Davis, Manager of Community Programs and Communication, VIQ, Arlene Coculuzzi, Executive Director, BIG Brothers/Big Sisters, Heather Barker, Program Coordinator, CLA, Mike Vajda, Executive Director, QVSS

## Collaborative Programming

When it comes to efficiency and effectiveness in the nonprofit sector, collaboration between organizations can result in great outcomes. Working towards a common goal or address a shared issue can maximize impact by pooling resources, expertise, and networks. Many organizations dream about working together. For the Belleville Y, it's a dream come true to collaborate with four community organizations under one roof at the new YMCA Centre for Life.

"Not-for-profit and charitable organizations talk a lot about working together," says Dave Allen, CEO of YMCA of Central East Ontario. He's dreamt of collaboration for decades and started the conversation with Belleville organizations two years ago about leveraging their collective strengths and expertise to address complex social issues. "I asked what if we didn't build just a Y, but something truly special and unique? What are some of the challenges that our community is faced with and how can we collectively work together to find solutions for them?"

The four partner organizations joining the YMCA at the new Centre for Life are: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hastings & Prince Edward Counties, Community Learning Alternatives, Quinte Vocational Support Services, and Volunteer + Information Centre of Hastings & Prince Edward Counties. Each has their own area of expertise and impact on the community.

Over the spring and summer, the YMCA has been working with Community Learning Alternatives and Volunteer + Information Centre of Hastings & Prince Edward Counties to develop a concept for collaborative programming. A series of meetings have helped to identify each partner organization's key programs, impact and socio-economic-health issues affecting their target populations. The process has included a strategic review of programs that address specific needs in the community and where a collaboration could fill a gap or provide a solution to a problem in the community.

"It's very exciting thinking about how we overlap in various places and how we can work collaboratively to provide an even better service than we do individually," says Shannon Lee, Executive Director of Community Learning Alternatives. She emphasizes the importance of providing effective referrals and assisting clients by working together in the same facility. "It just takes a layer of difficulty out of the equation."

When nonprofits collaborate, they can share resources, including financial, human, and material resources. This helps overcome constraints, reduce duplication of efforts, and optimize the allocation of resources. Collaborative efforts can also foster learning and innovation; organizations can exchange best practices, share lessons learned, and

develop new strategies to tackle challenges more effectively.

"It's making the Center for Life vibrant and exciting with new programs. That's a win for all of us, no matter how you look at it," says Dave. "This will allow us to use our human resources in a more effective way. We're building capacity to serve more people, to bring expertise from different areas that together finds solutions. When we start sharing resources and working together, it means that, from a financial perspective, we spend less as individual organizations. By coming together, we can spend more collectively and impact more people."

Consultations are ongoing with partners to identify areas and potential programs where a "better together" approach could translate into helping more people in the community by providing seamless, holistic support to the community from under one roof. The goal is to have a framework in place leading to programs that will be piloted at the new Centre for Life and replicated in other regions.

"That's the key piece about what will make the Center for Life special," says Shannon. "All of the parties are taking the time to get to know each other's programs more intimately and figure out how we can maximize this collaborative effort for lasting impact."

# Helping New Canadians Find Strength in Community

Living in a country free from the threat of war has allowed Mohammed Rushdi and his family to focus on building a new life. He left his home in Ukraine over a year ago with all they could carry. When they arrived in Belleville, they felt immediately welcome.

"When we came here, the immigration centre told us about a sport complex in Belleville that [offers] memberships for free," says Mohammed. Newcomers often hear about the YMCA through the many partner agencies that work with the Y, such as Quinte United Immigration Services.

The YMCA provides a 6-month complimentary membership to their clients and holds regular information sessions to explain how their clients can use the memberships and what is available at the Y. Once the 6-month membership has expired, the Y works with the individual or family to see what membership structure works for them, and if finances are a barrier, they offer financial

assistance to ensure that they can continue their membership.

"I recommend people use [the Y] before work, after work, or to relax," says Mohammed, whose wife and two children also enjoy the Y's programs. "It's a good place for family. They have many activities and help take care of kids."

Through the process of orientation and settlement, while encouraging public respect for the diversity of immigrants, Quinte United Immigration Services assists newcomers isolated by cultural and language barriers. Occasionally the Y has staff that speak multiple languages who can help, or volunteers work directly with families or individuals. Quinte United Immigration Services also promotes recognition of the value of racial and cultural differences, and the facilitation of integration and participation of newcomers into the social, economic and cultural aspects of the community. The YMCA also attends regular meetings with

Quinte Local Immigration Partnership (QLIP), a collaboration between regional employers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, educational institutions and health care and legal services working together to build a welcoming community for newcomers. One of their goals is to foster an environment where the education, skills and experience of newcomers are fully employed to make the community economically and socially stronger.

"I'm a doctor and hope I can do something for the people in the community," says Mohammed. Moving to a new country to escape war is a journey filled with uncertainty and fear, but also hope. When people know we're not from Canada, and especially from Ukraine, they ask if we need help. You know, Canadians are amazing. They are ready to help anybody just because they like to help people."

[Click](#) to watch an interview with Mohammed.



## Spotlight: Cabinet Member Chris Skinner

A volunteer Campaign Cabinet member is a passionate community-minded ambassador and leader whose task is to strengthen existing

partnerships and forge relationships with new donors to support the YMCA's Community Building Campaign. Chris Skinner was born and raised in Belleville, attending Harry J. Clarke Public School and Centennial High School. He graduated from the University of Western Ontario with a business degree and began a career in banking in Toronto with Scotiabank. After a decade living and working in Toronto, he decided to return to the Quinte community with his twin boys. Now district Vice President for Scotiabank, Chris is passionate about family and loves spending time outdoors boating, golfing, skiing, and generally staying active.

**What drew you to support the YMCA's Centre for Life capital campaign?** The local YMCA has delivered programming for so many Quinte residents. As a young person, I personally participated in many programs offered by the YMCA including swimming lessons, summer camps, playing basketball and using the fitness facilities.

**What interests and skills do you bring to the Campaign Cabinet?** Community participation,

living an active lifestyle and wanting to give back to the local community. I have participated on several volunteer boards and have led several regional employee resource groups at Scotiabank.

**Why are you motivated to volunteer?** I am passionate about our community and want to help support the need for a community space that is accessible for all and to be a part of making the Centre for Life a legacy project for the Quinte Region.

**In your opinion, what is the most important work that the YMCA Belleville does?** Provides a cost-effective and community focused facility and programming to meet many different needs of all local residents.

**What moves you about the dream for the YMCA's Centre for Life becoming a reality?** I am so excited about the Centre for Life project as I know how significant a need there is for a YMCA community-based facility in our growing community. This project will have an enduring impact for generations to come!

**What other organizations or causes do you support?** I am an active contributor to the local United Way in Quinte region. I am also the Scotiabank Regional Champion for JDRF in Ontario helping to raise funds across the province for the Ride to Defeat Diabetes.

## Did You Know



14

participants in new programming partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Hastings-Prince Edward



266

children registered for summer camp



1,060

individuals participated in fitness classes in May



20%

of memberships are subsidized



6%

of members are newcomers