



YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2023

This month, we unite in a moment of silence to honour all those who have served and continue to serve Canada. Among them, the YMCA remembers family, staff, volunteers and participants who have served throughout the charity's 172-year history.

November also includes National Philanthropy Day on the 15th, recognized worldwide as a celebration of philanthropy and those who give. The day invites reflection on the meaning of giving and the endless contributions individuals and organizations around the world make to countless causes and missions. The ongoing charitable giving in Belleville and surrounding area has benefitted so many, including the YMCA and our journey to the new Centre for Life to expand our programming and services for a growing community.



The Ripple Effect of Community Growth

The growth of a community is a sign of progress that brings with it an increased demand on a community's social services. It's a natural outcome of population growth, economic development, and urbanization not without challenges like increased demand on social services. As Belleville and the surrounding area expands, so does the demand for healthcare, housing, education, and support for vulnerable populations. The interconnectedness of these services creates a ripple effect that necessitates careful planning and management. Local government and organizations like the YMCA play an essential role in meeting these increasing needs.

"Fitness, recreation and community services are pillars of the overall wellbeing of a community and the YMCA has been a main source for

these services in our community since its establishment. As Belleville's population continues to grow at a rapid rate, so does our need for improved access to services like these," says Mayor Neil Ellis. In 2021, the City undertook a Parkland and Recreation Master Plan, which indicates a growing demand for bigger, modernized multi-purpose recreational facilities. "We are thrilled to be working with the YMCA on their new Centre for Life. Once completed, we know this facility will bring so much to our community, not only in terms of improved health, but also through a further sense of community and belonging."

When it comes to healthcare, growing communities require more facilities, human resources and specialized services. The region's newly branded hospital, Quinte Health, is



City of Belleville Mayor Neil Ellis

responding to the pressure of regional growth with innovation and determination to think proactively about health and wellness in its communities. With unprecedented patient volumes, Quinte Health is seeing 1.5 times more visits to the emergency room per capita in Ontario at a time of significant health human resource challenges. *(continued on next page)*

Community Members Can Support YMCA Funding Request

The Belleville YMCA is one of the candidates being considered for The Commonwell Mutual Insurance Group's L.E.A.F Initiative (Learning & Engagement Accelerator Fund), and community members can have their say in the Y's potential for being awarded.

The fund supports capacity, resiliency and growth in the communities where Commonwell operates, and is awarding \$350,000 in grants for community projects supporting long-term learning and capacity improvements for communities to thrive. Eligible submissions are strengthened when backed by community supporters. The public are encouraged to spread

the word on social media and share comments or stories about why the new YMCA Centre for Life matters to them. Commonwell will take community comments into consideration when making their funding decisions.

Every community in Ontario was invited to submit an idea for a L.E.A.F. grant to help bring in new programming or update and upgrade community facilities where residents learn, play, engage and gather. The YMCA Centre for Life Community Building Campaign has requested funding to meet the needs of Belleville's growing population by building a new YMCA, which will bring together four community and social service

partner organizations, anchored by the YMCA, to address the health and well-being of residents.

Members of the community have until November 17, 2023, at 11:59pm to show their support. The YMCA Centre for Life project can be found using the map search tool on the L.E.A.F. project page <https://thecommonwell.ca/leaf/>



INITIATIVE | Learning & Engagement Accelerator Fund

The Ripple Effect of Community Growth cont'd

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"Our new strategy and the way that we are thinking about caring for our community goes beyond the walls of the hospital to much broader partnerships with organizations like the YMCA," says Stacey Daub, President and CEO of Quinte Health, who is exploring social prescribing for programming at the YMCA, for example, rather than health care professionals writing a prescription for medication. "Our health systems were built on supporting



Quinte Health President & CEO Stacey Daub

trauma and acute care illnesses. We're trying to change our systems to be more preventative, to think more about health promotion and empower people to take control of their own health."

"As a community grows, so does the number of individuals and families who require social support," says Dave Allen, President and CEO of the YMCA of Central East Ontario. "By innovating with our partnerships across the community, we are not only encouraging the community to take care of their physical health, but to also connect and interact with different members of the community and take care of their emotional and mental health."

Quinte Health has also been working with community partners like Loyalist College and municipalities on an initiative called "Health Pulse" to come together as a community to better understand the impact of growth and the social determinants of health that profoundly impact health services.

"We've discovered that our population has quite a bit more chronic illness and chronic disease. And it also has a very rapidly aging population," says Stacey Daub. "Those two things are really important in terms of how we think about setting up our communities to support and prevent chronic illness and disease, and how we help the population who wants to age in place and at home."

By understanding the interconnected nature of social services and taking a proactive, data-driven, and community-engaged approach, local governments and organizations can better respond to the increasing demand on social services. This ensures that as the Belleville region continues to flourish, it can provide essential services to all residents, fostering a healthier and more prosperous society.

My Y Story

Longtime volunteer Sam Brady has dedicated his time and energy to several committees and as Chair for one year for the YMCA's Strong Kids Campaign. The Senior Advisor at Brady Clark Advisory Group also greatly assisted with the planning of the Community Building Campaign, drawing on his deep roots and relationships in the community to build a strong campaign cabinet to raise awareness and support for the new Centre for Life. This is a snapshot of his Y story.

When did you first become involved with the YMCA of Belleville, and how were you involved? My first interaction with YMCA programming wasn't even at the Y but through the backyard learn to swim program. A few years later, I joined the Belleville youth swim team (BYST) and spent a lifetime of early mornings and weekends in the pool at the Y.

What inspired or motivated you to get involved as a volunteer? I now have kids of my own and I recognize that not everyone has a loving household and the financial resources to thrive in life. The YMCA provides

programming to everyone, no matter their personal and financial circumstances. The new Centre for Life is a great investment in our community's long-term health and well-being.

What does supporting the YMCA Centre for Life mean to you, your family, and community? A new YMCA in Belleville will leave a legacy of equitable programming, leadership opportunities, healthy lifestyles and the welcoming and caring community that you find at every Y. My family regularly uses the YMCA facilities, and one of my sons was employed as a counsellor during summer camp.

Why is contributing to the campaign's success, and the YMCA, important to you? The YMCA played a formative role in my life and has helped my family and I immeasurably. This campaign is our opportunity to give back and



say thanks – not only to the community – but to the YMCA organization. The current facility is long past its due date, and a new facility will revitalize programming, staff and services. It's a big win for all stakeholders.

Pictured Above: Sam Brady and Family in St. Sebastian, northern Spain, Christmas 2022
(L-R: Kevin, Rachel, Sam, Ann-Marie, Pdraigh)