



YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



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In this latest edition of our campaign newsletter, we look at the YMCA's unwavering commitment to families, heart health and the powerful rhythm that resounds throughout our Community Building Campaign: a vibrant, healthy and inclusive community and generations of fun and growth at the YMCA.



Adventures at the Y: Changing Lives Across Generations

Learning to swim at the YMCA brought about significant changes in David Allen's life in two big ways. Following a near-drowning incident at 8, David was enrolled in swim lessons at the Peterborough Y where he grew up, which laid the groundwork for a transformative career. At 17, David secured his first job at the YMCA, launching a remarkable journey that would ultimately see him rise to the position of CEO, overseeing three YMCA branches. His story emphasizes the enduring impact that the YMCA has on individuals spanning generations.

For children, the YMCA becomes a playground of possibilities, fostering exploration, learning, and growth in a secure and nurturing environment. Youth benefit from mentorship programs, leadership development opportunities, and recreational activities that empower them for personal and academic achievements. Families find support by building connections and community through

shared experiences. And seniors are invited to stay active, socialize, and contribute their wisdom and experience to the broader community.

David's personal journey within the YMCA unfolded rather unexpectedly. Starting with playing basketball, floor hockey and swimming on Friday Teen Nights at the Y in Peterborough, he soon found himself working at summer camp. This experience sparked a passion for recreation, leading him to pursue further education in the field. Hired through the Ottawa YMCA Fellowship Program, David worked while attending school, gaining invaluable experience and building a strong foundation for his future roles.

Beyond its local communities, the YMCA presents opportunities that extend globally and David's involvement with the Y also unlocked doors on an international scale. At the age of 21, he engaged in a leadership

development program that took him to Hong Kong, the Philippines, and the United Nations. "This exposure broadened my horizons and enriched my perspective," he says.

Over the years, his career within the YMCA saw David become a General Manager, overseeing large departments. The journey continued with studying business and taking leadership roles in various locations, including Sault Ste. Marie, before heading to Belleville as GM in 2000. It was only going to be temporary, but when the entire family fell in love with the City and region, Belleville quickly became home.

David underscores the significance of engaging the whole family in the YMCA experience. "As our children participated in YMCA programs and swim lessons, I've witnessed the positive impact on their lives," he says. "This involvement not only strengthened their connection to the organization but also the community at large."

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Through various programs at the Y, David's wife and three children each have had transformative experiences that have enriched their lives. Additionally, David's nieces and nephews found the Y to be a nurturing environment that provided them with valuable experiences that also served as steppingstones to fulfilling career paths.

David Allen's journey from learning to swim at the YMCA to becoming the CEO of three branches is a testament to the organization's transformative power. The YMCA continues to change lives across generations, providing a supportive environment for individuals to learn, grow, and contribute to their communities. David's story serves as an inspiring example of the lifelong impact that the YMCA can have on individuals and their communities.



David Allen, President & CEO of YMCA of Central East Ontario with his family (L to R: Teresa, David, Emma, Carter and wife Elaine)

Empowering Hearts: YMCA Centre for Life Champions Community Wellness Revolution



In a world with persistent healthcare disparities, the YMCA Centre for Life will stand as a beacon of community solutions and play a role in preventative care and rehabilitation in the community. Diverse and accessible programs promoting heart health at the Belleville YMCA will expand at the new Centre for Life to empower individuals to take control of their cardiovascular health.

"The new building, with its accessibility and partners, will open the door for us to offer more programs and more services," says David Allen, President & CEO of YMCA Central

East Ontario. "We have people involved in the New Canadian Centre in Peterborough and working with Quinte United Immigrant Services in this region and sitting on the Diversity Committee for the City of Belleville. We need to do that to become friends and connected to each other and say, 'How do we make our community the best place to live?'"

The Y's popular Prescription to Health program addresses sedentary lifestyles by removing barriers to motivation and access. In partnership with Queen's University Health Centre, Belleville Nurse Practitioners, and Belleville and Quinte West Health Centre, patients can receive a prescription from their healthcare professional for a complimentary 60-day gym membership at the YMCA to get active and help prevent future illnesses.

Nutritional counseling services and healthy food choices will also be on the menu at the new Centre for Life. It's part of a holistic vision aligned with the region's healthcare. Stacey Daub, President and CEO of Quinte Health, notes the prevalence of chronic illness and a rapidly aging population. She highlights the importance of community

support in preventing such health challenges by encouraging community involvement in creating a healthier environment, from personal wellness and fitness to volunteering and community engagement. These initiatives not only aid in recovery but also empower individuals to effectively manage their heart health in the long term.

Looking forward, the YMCA remains committed to advocating for wellness with no bounds. By caring for each other, respecting each other's dignity, and embracing shared humanity and community, the YMCA envisions the new Centre for Life as a place where everyone can thrive.

