

# TIELINES

The Newsletter of the Canadian YMCA Alumni



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## February 2026

Hello everyone, and welcome to 2026. I hope the New Year is off to a great start for you. For me, this year has begun just as last year ended: busy and full of activity, especially for those of us involved in the 2026 Storytelling Project. I'll share more about that later in this newsletter.

While the past several months have been hectic for Marilyn Kapitany, Laura Palmer Korn, and myself as we reviewed interviews and conducted new ones, it's also been incredibly rewarding and uplifting. I continue to be amazed by the generosity of our current and former Board and staff members. The time they've devoted to preparing for our questions and interviews has truly warmed my heart. I've always believed that one of the YMCA's greatest strengths is its dedicated and talented volunteers on the Board, and recent months have certainly proven this true. I'm grateful for the past volunteer leaders who have shared such rich stories about their experiences at the YMCA. Meeting many of them for the first time, on-line, after only knowing their names for years, has been a real pleasure. Many of us reflect on our own leadership roles at the YMCA and remember that the journey wasn't always easy—but when we consider the Y's mission and how all our efforts have come together to impact so many individuals in our community, it feels truly worthwhile.

Switching topics, 2026 is a big year for the YMCAs in Canada. July will see the World YMCA coming to Toronto as World Council gathers for their quadrennial meeting. This is a first for Canada and as you can imagine there is lots happening with the planning. We will keep you updated as we get information on activities that you might be interested in and can participate. From what I hear there are still lots of plans still to be confirmed.

Now for our history buffs, just a reminder that 2026 in November will mark the opening of the first YMCA in Canada and in North America. Montreal YMCA opened way back in November 1851, marking this year as their 175th year of operating, providing a variety of programs and services to their population and building stronger communities where everyone can participate and grow.

So lots happening this year – and we will keep you updated on all the plans and activities as we hear about them.

Until next time...

[janet.giles@shaw.ca](mailto:janet.giles@shaw.ca)

# Canadian YMCA Alumni News

## Celebrating Birthdays!

Happy Birthday to:

### January

Joan Anne Baker, Judith Levkoe,  
Joann Hook, Nancy Dube, Julie McIntyre,  
Janet Giles, Brent Thomas and Helene Weir.

### February

Trudy Brydges, Diana Deakin-Thomas,  
Sandy McIntyre and Bill VanGorder.

## About TieLines

TieLines is the newsletter of the Canadian YMCA Alumni published bi-monthly at the end of February, April, June, August, October and mid-December. Please forward articles for inclusion, any corrections/comments to Diana Deakin-Thomas and Trudy Brydges indicating TieLines in the subject line at [geegeenb48@gmail.com](mailto:geegeenb48@gmail.com) and [dianadeakinthomas@gmail.com](mailto:dianadeakinthomas@gmail.com). Don't want to receive TieLines anymore? You can unsubscribe by emailing [editor.cdnyalumni@gmail.com](mailto:editor.cdnyalumni@gmail.com). To find back issues of TieLines, [click here!](#)

## Who are our members?

The Canadian YMCA Alumni is a fellowship of former YMCA or YMCA-YWCA staff, volunteers and/or their partners. We stay connected through TieLines and various ZOOM events. If you know someone who might be interested in joining the Alumni, please share this issue and connect them with Mimi Price, our Membership Chair, at [mimi.price@hotmail.com](mailto:mimi.price@hotmail.com).

## Extra! Extra! Read all about it: **The Alumni has a New Website!**

Well, more correctly the Canadian YMCA Alumni Association has a revised section on the YMCA Canada website. Your Membership Engagement committee worked with Y Canada to update the content of our portion of their site, and we're happy to let you know it's now ready for prime time.

Take a look! You can learn more about the benefits of being an Alumni member, and see who the members of your Executive Committee are. The Constitution, which we voted to revise at the AGM in December is there, as is information about the annual Alumni award and Secours Speciaux.

You can read the annual message from our President, Janet Giles, and see past issues of TieLines.

Please take a look and share the site with anyone you know who might want to become an Alumni member. We would love to welcome anyone who has left their role as a Y staff member or as a volunteer and would like to stay connected with the Y. There's info on how to join and you can remind your friends that the first year is free.

You can find us at [ymca.ca](http://ymca.ca) under Who We Are, Our People, Alumni. [\(Click Here!\)](#)

Please let us know what you think. All comments are welcome.



### **Hey CEOs!**

Just a reminder if you know YMCA staff or volunteers who are retiring, they can still be part of the YMCA family through the Canada YMCA Alumni Association. Please contact the Membership Chair, Mimi Price at [mimi.price@hotmail.com](mailto:mimi.price@hotmail.com) or 705-721-8388. Membership in the alumni is free for the first year following retirement from the Y. It is a great way to keep Y folk connected!

# THOUGHT for the MONTH

If you want to know someone's mind,  
listen to their words.

If you want to know their heart,  
watch their actions.

BE HAPPY...  
ENJOY LIFE.



**We encourage you to write to your editors — whatever is on your mind (well, within reason)!**

Please send to [dianadeakinthomas@gmail.com](mailto:dianadeakinthomas@gmail.com) or [geegenb48@gmail.com](mailto:geegenb48@gmail.com) anytime!



# Report on the Canadian YMCA Alumni Association Annual General Meeting Presentation

November 28, 2025, Submitted by Mimi Price

## *The Work of the RDC in the Canadian YMCA*

Guest Presenters: Anna Barnes, Jim Janzen, and Nancy Farries. Unfortunately, the Quebec RDC was unable to join us.

### *Atlantic YMCA Regional Development Centre*

Anna Barnes is the VP of the Atlantic YMCA Regional Development Centre. There are eleven member associations in the RDC in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador. The total combined budget of these Ys was \$121 million in 2024. They have experienced growth in the last five years especially related to the \$10/day child care and in meeting community needs. Anna's complement of staff includes government relations, training, people, and culture. Most of these roles are part-time in nature and in some cases make use of expertise from local associations. Brian Posavad of the YMCA of Halifax-Dartmouth is the CEO of this RDC.

The role of the RDCs is to provide support to YMCAs, coordinate collaborative initiatives and support federation initiatives. The priorities

for the Atlantic RDC for 2025 were: capacity growth; training of staff; increasing philanthropic proficiency, especially by working together on a larger scale across the provinces (they raised \$1million); and strengthening government relations practices to advance provincial priorities such as child care and health needs.

In aligning with the YMCA Canada strategy, they are working on leadership development through mentorship and common training and development opportunities. They are supporting the next steps in the Thriving Y initiative by confirming priorities and accessing much needed resources. Their collaborative work is focusing on strengthening their ability to better utilize shared services and strengthening the Ys impact and funding work to build on past successes.

### *YMCA Ontario Regional Development Centre*

Jim Janzen is the VP of the YMCA Ontario Regional Development Centre. There are fourteen Ys in 140 communities in Ontario, with most concentrated in central and southern parts of the province. There are eight hundred child care locations, 65 Health,

Fitness and Aquatics locations, 45 Employment and Training locations, twelve overnight camps. Thirteen of the fourteen YMCAs serve in a regional capacity, i.e., more than one municipality. Four YMCAs in Ontario are currently under the crisis designation

from YMCA Canada. The gross revenue for these fourteen YMCAs was over \$726 million in 2024.

The Ontario RDC has evolved through an Ontario centric strategy that supports federation initiatives within a scope and delivery that supports Ys in Ontario, often through a provincial lens. As well, the RDC delivers on the needs of individual associations, communities and programs based on an emergent need.

Lesley Davidson is the CEO of the YMCA of Greater Toronto and YMCA Ontario. Jim is supported by staff with expertise in government relations, strategy and

good governance and association supports.

There are a number of areas that are strategic in nature that take up Jim's time...labour relations, crisis support, provincial government relations, real estate/facility development, child care through the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care work (CWELCC), program development and leadership and governance. There are provincial work groups in Ontario for all aspects of YMCA work, such as child care, aquatics, training, etc.

### *Canada West YMCA Regional Development Centre*

Nancy Farries is the VP of the Canada West YMCA Regional Development Centre which consists of eleven YMCAs across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. Heidi Worthington, CEO of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is the RDC CEO for Canada West. The combined revenue in 2024 for these YMCAs and YMCA-YWCAs was \$381 million. Growth in these Ys has primarily been driven by low/no contribution services such as child care and social services.

Priorities for the RDC include financial strength and sustainability; managing capital deficits and aging infrastructure; providing quality, sustainable, accessible child care; negotiating and re-negotiating municipal contracts and investigating joint opportunities; climate change resiliency and response, especially preparation for natural disasters and responding afterward; expanding community services to respond to the strain on societal health; and better understanding the challenges facing downtown economies.

The RDC is keen to have meaningful engagement with the YMCA Canada strategic plan in determining priorities that may shift or added as needed. They will also be creating resources based on local/regional expertise to be shared across the country.

**Q and A session followed:**

**What do you think is the greatest leadership challenge in the Y over the next five years? How do we keep the Y ethos, mission, federation knowledge as more senior staff come from outside the Y? How to maintain or increase the association capacity to remain a top-tier charity?**

Regionalization allows Ys to have the capacity to do the work needed to remain relevant. Staying well-connected to the community is critical for YMCAs.

A new initiative from Y Canada is the Good Governance Project which makes use of local and national volunteer board members to develop a stronger ethic relative to board governance. So far, fourteen Ys have had the training with individual association action plans built out over time. The goal is to have all thirty-seven YMCAs on board by 2028.

**How are the Ys working better in the community?**

The Ys are reaching out and collaborating with community organizations as community needs cannot be met by one organization alone and collaboration is the way to success.

**How is the Y using AI?**

AI and Innovation is in Y Canada's strategic plan, and some Ys are already working in this area.

Here is the link to the AGM held November 28, 2025 **(Click here to view!)** | Passcode: **!5t!SiCj**



# 2025 Secours Speciaux

## YMCA Generosity Revealed Once Again—Thank You!

Once again, our Canadian Y Alumni and Alumni Hubs have embraced the power of generosity and provided amazing financial support to the World YMCA's Secours Speciaux program in 2025.

Generosity is defined as the act of giving without expecting anything in return expressing an authentic desire to uplift others.

Similar to the previous 4 years – we have over 50 Alumni members and 3 Hubs donating over \$14,000 to World YMCA Secours.

Direct beneficiaries have included residents of Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South America - the YMCA is truly a world-wide movement.

Thank you once again for supporting this worthy and critical cause – it has made a powerful impact!

Sincerely,

John Haddock

# YMCA Storytelling Project: Capturing the Past to Inform the Future

To kick off the new year, the YMCA Storytelling Project steering committee\* is thrilled to share that we have **successfully reached our fundraising goal** and **welcomed four young leaders** to the steering committee: Jaclyn Carbone (Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford), Maeve Devries (Ottawa), Gloria Elekwa (Calgary), Karmen MacLean (Pictou County).

Thanks to the support of generous donors and including YMCA Canada's contribution, more than \$150,000 has been raised to transform first-hand stories of Canadian community-building leadership into a treasured and practical book that will be a lasting, global resource for the YMCA. Our thanks goes out to everyone who has contributed to this exciting initiative. You're helping us plant an important seed through this initiative and we anticipate an exciting future as the project progresses.

We have been hard at work and **content development is already underway!** The book will be launched at the YMCA World Council event taking place in Toronto in July 2026.

Our partnership with Canada's National History Society is in full swing as well. They are developing a case study about their successful online archive that YMCAs can use as a reference tool. This will be accompanied by a **practical "how-to" guide** that we hope to present at a session during YMCA World Council. These resources will also inform the digital future of the YMCA Storytelling Project in Canada.

And last but certainly not least, a group of YMCA Young Leaders is building a plan to test the digital rollout of this storytelling initiative.

*"Congratulations on the success of your fundraising campaign! It is exciting to hear about the progress of the book that will capture YMCA leadership stories for the benefit of future YMCA leaders," says Peter Dinsdale, President & CEO, YMCA Canada. "We are deeply committed to providing planning and support to YMCA World Council 2026 and we look forward to sharing this resource with our global colleagues at the event. Planning for next steps will follow later in the year and we look forward to working with you on that."*

## For more information

Please contact Franco Savoia, Chair of the YMCA Storytelling Project committee, at: [fsavoia@shaw.ca](mailto:fsavoia@shaw.ca)

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\* **YMCA Storytelling Project steering committee members:** Franco Savoia (Chair), Jaclyn Carbone, Franca D'Angelo, Angela de Burger, Maeve Devries, Gloria Elekwa, Janet Giles, John Haddock, Scott Haldane, Marilyn Kapitany, Laura Palmer Korn, Karmen MacLean, Bryan Webber.

# WORLD YMCA

## Interested in knowing more about what is happening internationally?

Here you will find the latest [World YMCA news](#). If you haven't already, we invite you to subscribe to our [monthly e-newsletter](#) to stay updated on YMCA news and upcoming events.

### BRIDGES

WORLD FELLOWSHIP  
OF YMCA RETIREES (WFYR)



**Check out the most recent editions of Bridges**

**Dec 2025**  
[\(Click here!\)](#)



**Carlos Madjri Sanvee**

**LinkedIn**

During a recent family visit to Senegal, I had the privilege of meeting with the leadership of YMCA Senegal at their national council offices in Dakar. ... [Find it on LinkedIn!](#)



# News from Y Canada our RDCs and our Hubs



Federation of Canadian Municipalities



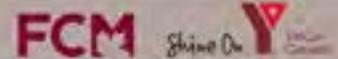
On January 28, join this panel of experts for our first Collective webinar of 2026, exploring how municipalities can work with their local YMCAs to strengthen their communities and create lasting impact.

We look forward to learning more! ... [Find it on LinkedIn!](#)

FREE WEBINAR

January 28 | 12 PM (ET)

PRESENTED IN  
PARTNERSHIP BY:



## COLLECTIVE

AN FCM WEBINAR SERIES

### PARTNERING FOR IMPACT: UNLOCKING MUNICIPAL POTENTIAL

Is your municipality looking for innovative ways to tackle housing challenges or expand recreation and child care options? Join us for this Collective webinar with YMCA Canada for practical insights.





**Zane Korytko  
to Retire in  
July 2026**

Zane Korytko, Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA of Greater Moncton, has announced his retirement effective July 31, 2026, leaving behind a community strengthened by care, inclusion and purpose.

After nearly two decades of dedicated leadership, Zane's departure marks the close of an extraordinary chapter for the YMCA of Greater Moncton and for the community he has served with heart, humility and unwavering purpose.

Zane's YMCA journey began long before boardrooms and strategic plans. At just five years old, he found himself standing on a small step stool in a YMCA kitchen in Montreal, helping peel carrots and wash dishes. That simple childhood experience sparked a lifelong connection to the Y, one rooted in belonging, service and feeling valued.

As he grew, Zane became deeply involved in Y programs, volunteering as a teenager, working as a counselor in training, and taking on roles across camps, aquatics, childcare, and facility operations. "As long as I was willing to help, the Y was willing to give me a chance." Zane said. Those early experiences shaped his leadership philosophy, leading with empathy, understanding every role and always putting people first.

Zane has dedicated nearly five decades to the YMCA community, including more than 34 years in senior leadership roles. Since joining the YMCA of Greater Moncton as Chief Executive Officer in 2006, he has led the organization through sustained growth, organizational transformation and expanded community impact. Under his leadership, the YMCA strengthened its focus on youth development, inclusion and support for community members, particularly those in need.

Zane's tenure has been guided by a strong commitment to ensuring the YMCA remains a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all. With this, the YMCA of Greater Moncton advanced inclusive programs, meaningful community partnerships, and initiatives that promote dignity, connection and opportunity for people of all backgrounds.

As he prepares for retirement, Zane leaves behind a strong organization, a dedicated team, and a lasting legacy of compassion and belonging. His impact will continue through the people, programs and values that shape the YMCA of Greater Moncton.

# Celebrating 5 years of the North End Y in Moncton

News from Eastern Canada

Submitted by Trudy Brydges

In an earlier TieLines edition shortly after Covid I wrote an article about “The Little Y That Could” telling the story about a new Y being built to serve a very rapidly growing area in the North End of Moncton. When it was nearing completion, Covid happened and changed the world as we had known it. But it turned out to be a good news story despite this setback because lots of dedicated people pulled together and finished the facility on time in 2020 and UNDER BUDGET.

Although a grand opening could not take place, the doors quietly welcomed the community, beginning with limited hours and child care services only, eventually blossoming into a facility with vibrant programming. Over the past 5 years it has had a huge impact on the area. Here are some of the highlights of this impact:

- 1) Through the Back on Track program 252 students discovered their inner strength, building resilience and learning to perseverance - transforming challenges into stepping stones for success.
- 2) 715 children gained a newfound sense of wonder and understanding of the world around them through YMCA Moncton North Summer Day Camps.
- 3) 1,763 youth (ages 12-17) found belonging, inspiration and connection through drop-in programs including Youth Connections at the YMCA Moncton North.

On November 13, 2025 the 5th anniversary of the North End YMCA was celebrated with a wonderful evening event attended by people who helped through their donations large or



small to make the dream become a reality. This gave the staff an opportunity to express their heartfelt gratitude to contributors, supporters and the community for believing in the vision for a North End Y.

The staff and volunteers have worked very hard over the past 5 years to create a place where people can come together to connect, grow, and belong. After reaching this milestone they can continue developing and providing more exciting opportunities ahead!

So “The Little Y That Could” kept on going to overcome obstacles and reach its goal.

# Moncton Y Alumni Hub 2025 Christmas Party

News from Eastern Canada

Submitted by Trudy Brydges

This happy, smiling group from the Y in Moncton NB gathered again for a time of fun, fellowship and food in the beautifully decorated home of Diane DeWare in early December. Unfortunately, not all the members were able to attend. During the afternoon gathering a great deal of the laughter and storytelling centred on reminiscing about their younger days spent at the downtown Y. Many marriages resulted from the friendships started at the Y and have continue to this day.

On that day, they collected \$265 worth of Tim Horton gift cards to donate to the ReConnect program operated by the Y working with unhoused individuals.

Earlier in December the group was happy to send their annual donation to support Secours Speciaux. This year their contribution was \$625 through their voluntary donations of \$3 whenever they attend a monthly gathering. Half of the \$3 goes towards their summer and Christmas parties and the other half is for their yearly support of Secours Speciaux. Through John Haddock's updates on how the funds are distributed and making a great difference in the lives of the recipients, the members are kept up to date. This is an example of the spirit of the Y continuing to be part of the group's focus.



*Moncton Y Alumni Hub 2025 Christmas Party*

# YMCA Ontario celebrates with first Queen's Park Advocacy Day

News from Ontario



Sibel Cicek

LinkedIn

When YMCA leaders join forces, something powerful happens. After months of preparation, YMCA Ontario's first Queen's Park Advocacy Day exceeded every expectation. We brought our A-game – and a little Y magic – to the halls of the legislature, meeting with elected officials from all parties to advance three pressing priorities:

- Affordable, accessible, high-quality child care
- Strong youth employment pathways
- Sustainable investment in community sport and recreation infrastructure

Were we a little nervous? Yes. Did we get a little lost in the building? Also, yes. But that didn't stop us from making our presence felt. [...Read it all, on LinkedIn!](#)



# Building Healthier Screen Time: Rogers Communications supports the YMCA



Lesley Davidson



I'm thrilled that the YMCA was selected to receive support through a new Rogers initiative helping tweens and teens build healthier screen-time habits. Donations like this enable our charity to get more young people moving and feeling better — in our gyms, pools, and programs — while strengthening their sense of belonging. ... [Read it all & watch the video on LinkedIn!](#)



# New Centre of Community for Kingston, ON

## News from Ontario

The YMCA of Eastern Ontario, in partnership with the City of Kingston, is planning a new Centre of Community at the INVISTA Centre.

This new aquatic and wellness destination will bring people together to connect, move, and thrive. Designed to meet the growing demand for aquatics, recreation, and wellness opportunities in Kingston, the Centre will offer an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming space for residents of all ages and abilities.

The new Centre of Community will feature two pools, a leisure pool and a competition-ready 10-lane, 25-metre pool, along with a gymnasium and fitness spaces to support year-round activity.

This new aquatic and wellness destination will bring people together to connect, move, and thrive. Designed to meet the growing demand for aquatics, recreation, and wellness opportunities in Kingston, the Centre will offer an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming space for residents of all ages and abilities.

The new Centre of Community will feature two pools, a leisure pool and a competition-ready 10-lane, 25-metre pool, along with a gymnasium and fitness spaces to support year-round activity.

### **One destination for community, recreation and well-being**

The aquatic spaces will serve a wide range of needs, from swim lessons and family swims to aquafit classes, water therapy, and athlete training. Thoughtfully designed for participation, movement, and fun, the pools will include accessible entry points and provide a comfortable environment for learning, exercise, and relaxation.



The existing four ice pads and amenities at the INVISTA Centre will continue to be part of the site, with some spaces reimaged to enhance the overall community experience.

[View the current draft plans and designs for the site](#), including some amenity examples.

### **Partners in recreation and community impact**

This project represents a shared commitment between the City of Kingston and the YMCA of Eastern Ontario to expand access to recreation and wellness for all.

As a charitable organization dedicated to building healthier communities, the YMCA of Eastern Ontario will bring its expertise in programming, operations, and community engagement to the new facility. Through programs that support physical health, mental well-being, and social connection, the YMCA helps people of all ages and backgrounds reach their full potential.

Together, the City and the YMCA are creating a place where the community can belong, grow, and thrive today and for generations to come.

# Calgary City Council Funds Design and Planning for Proposed West District YMCA and Library

News from Western Canada

Earlier this month, City Council made an initial investment to support detailed design and planning for a new YMCA Calgary and Calgary Public Library location in West District! A West District YMCA



and Library would uniquely leverage public, private, non-profit, and philanthropic support to deliver recreation and library services to over 41,000 households in a rapidly growing part of the city and contribute to achieving The City of Calgary's goals to make recreation more accessible for more Calgarians. Funding from all three levels of government will be necessary for this project to come to life.

To learn more, [click here!](#)

# YMCA of Northern Alberta celebrates revitalization in downtown Edmonton

News from Western Canada



YMCA of Northern Alberta

LinkedIn

At the end of January we officially launched our DTY Campaign with DTY@NITE, an event that not only spotlighted our beautiful Don Wheaton Family YMCA, but also the incredible work being done by so many to revitalize downtown Edmonton. From politicians and sports figures to business and civic leaders in our community, our downtown Y was packed to the brim with folks exploring every corner of this amazing facility.

The Y first opened our doors in downtown Edmonton in 1907, growing over the past century to become one of the biggest charities in Alberta, extending our reach from Red Deer up to Fort Chip and becoming one of the biggest Ys in Canada. We've never forgotten our humble roots or our downtown neighbours, which is why it's so important that we take a leadership role to help our community dream again about what's possible downtown when we all work together.

DTY@NITE was just a start. Our Y will always step up to spark positive change in our communities, and we're going to keep doing that in downtown Edmonton. To learn more [click here!](#)





## THE LAST LAUGH

I know 2026 was going to have 365 days, but I didn't know they were all in January!

**BE HAPPY  
ENJOY LIFE**

# Thank You!

I would like to start off by saying thank you to Trudy Brydges (Executive member and AWESOME Atlantic Hub member) who has graciously agreed to help me with the preparation and development of our TieLines. We will be co-editors—so now you have two of us searching for stories to keep you engaged!

And, as always, a hearty thanks to staff at YMCA of Northern Alberta for laying out and preparing TieLines for production. This incredible team makes us look so good every issue! The team to thank includes:

Katherine O'Neill (President and CEO), Amber Niemeier (Chief Community Engagement Officer) and Abdullah Al-Nono for designing.

Franca D'Angelo (General Manager, National Office YMCA Canada) and Alexandra Mooney (Y Canada) distribute TieLines for us. And, of course, thanks to Nancy Dube and Marg Flett who check your editors' work! To Scott Haldane for his beautiful photography used in our TieLines. And to those of you who have contributed this month — **THANK YOU!**



Canadian YMCA Alumni  
**TieLines • February 2026**

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Photo credit: Scott Haldane