



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Weston Foundation gives Hamilton kids a giant boost at the YMCA

Hamilton, ON – Students and families of Dr. Davey School at Sanford Public School will be given a major financial boost from The W. Garfield Weston Foundation to sustain the Virtual YMCA at the school on Thursday, December 10th.

The Weston family owns George Weston Limited which today includes not only the family's original baking company but also Loblaw Companies Limited, Zehrs and No Frills.

Members of the Weston family will be present Thursday, to have lunch with the school children and share the news about their three year commitment to the Virtual YMCA. The Weston Foundation's donation towards the Virtual YMCA program supports their focus on education programs for underserved communities, which recognize and facilitate educational achievement, community involvement and leadership.

"The YMCA is well known for delivering effective programs and services promoting the health of families in communities across Canada," says W. Galen Weston, President of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation. "The Weston family and The W. Garfield Weston Foundation are delighted to continue their long history of support for the YMCA. We were particularly pleased in July to partner with the Hamilton YMCA to create a 'healthy food pantry' for the families in the McQuesten neighbourhood. Today we are happy to join with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board to support the Virtual YMCA program at Sanford Public School in Hamilton."

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation first approached the YMCA in June 2009. The Family recognized that job loss and food bank shortages were leaving many in the Hamilton community with no where to turn. Their first gift of \$25,000 opened a Healthy Food Pantry and Community Kitchen in the McQuesten Neighbourhood. The new program provides families not only with healthy foods but also hands on instruction to cook healthy recipes. The immediate short term relief allowed families to move away from expensive and unhealthy prepared foods. The Westons have supported other Hamilton food banks through the Hamilton Community Foundation and Loblaw Companies Limited's partnership with Food Banks Canada.

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YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford

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Looking for a longer term solution to help alleviate the effects of poverty, the Weston Family has sought out the YMCA again through support of the Virtual YMCA. This major gift will sustain the Virtual YMCA program in the new Dr. J. Edgar Davey School for three years, giving over 120 children and their families a free after school program for children who need additional academic assistance. The Virtual YMCA is an after school program that operates in priority schools located in high needs neighbourhoods, that focuses on literacy, homework assistance, values, education and recreation. The program is free to participants. The Weston donation will give over 120 children and their family access to these valued outreach services.

“We’re thrilled to have an organization such as the W. Garfield Weston Foundation behind the Virtual YMCA program. The Weston family’s increasing support of the YMCA is part of an ongoing collaboration and longer term relationship focused on supporting learning and recreation for children in our community,” says Jim Commerford, President & CEO of the YMCA of Hamilton / Burlington / Brantford. “Research has shown us that families are more likely to exit social assistance quicker when their children take part in organized recreational programs like the Virtual YMCA.”

The YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford is a values based charity that serves over 122,000 people of all ages, background and abilities in all stages of life. The YMCA offers diverse programs including: Health, Fitness & Recreation; Child Care; Day, Resident and Family Camping; Outdoor Education; Employment and Academic Assistance; Community Outreach; Leadership Development; Voluntarism; and Residence for Men.

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