



YMCA of
Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford

BUILDING BRIDGES

Community Impact Report 2019



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND PRESIDENT & CEO

Looking back on the past year as we navigate the current impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, reinforces the important role of our YMCA in supporting the health and social challenges of our community, particularly those at-risk.

In 2019, we focused on building bridges to extend the reach and impact of our programs beyond our boundaries and connect more children, youth and families with YMCA programs and services locally and around the globe.

Through federal funding support, more than 30 YMCAs across Canada introduced the Weemarkable™ child care digital app developed locally by our YMCA. Each day, more than 14,000 people around the globe now access Weemarkable™ to connect with YMCA educators and learn more about the healthy development of children in YMCA Child Care programs across Canada.

We also launched the Employment Ontario funded Skills for Steel program, an 8-week skills-specific training and job placement initiative to help individuals find employment in the steel industry. Our YMCA provides regional leadership to this program offered across Hamilton, Brantford, Niagara and Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo.

This year, we explored the benefits of coming together with YMCAs in service to community. While we ended this process, we continue to recognize the importance of new models of service delivery and remain indebted to our local Board and staff team that led this important work.



John Chisholm
Chair, Board of Directors



Jim Commerford
President & CEO

Partnerships are critical to the work of our YMCA and are the backbone to progress in our community; connecting resources, expertise and services together to find solutions to our most critical health issues.

As you'll read through the personal stories in this report, across all our programs we remain steadfast in our commitment to create inclusive and accessible spaces where people of all backgrounds, and abilities can access the health and social supports to thrive.

This work is made possible through the continued support of YMCA donors, funders and the incredible staff and volunteers who lead and serve our organization. Thank you for your continued support.

YMCA OF HAMILTON|BURLINGTON|BRANTFORD

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8,103

children were welcomed to YMCA Child Care and EarlyOn Centres to support and nurture development and early learning



“It is really touching that they put so much effort in to include her, that the other kids are legitimately her friends.”

WHERE ALL CHILDREN THRIVE & GROW

Chris and Diane Malcolmson say the staff at the Sir William Osler YMCA Child Care Centre go above and beyond to help their daughter, Mable.

Mable was born on June 28, 2016 by emergency C-section, two months before her due date. She spent several weeks in the neonatal intensive care unit getting help breathing and eating. As she grew, Chris and Diane noticed that she had to work a little harder to do things that came naturally to most babies and she wasn't hitting some developmental milestones. Mable had trouble sitting and walking and could not lift her head up very well.

In October 2017, Mable was diagnosed with periventricular leukomalacia. Doctors believe that during birth, her brain was deprived of oxygen and it damaged the part responsible for sending signals to the rest of the body for gross motor skills.

When Diane was ready to go back to work after maternity leave, the Malcolmsons' knew it would be difficult to find child care, since most babies are more independent by the time they start. But in December 2017, the YMCA enrolled Mable.

“They have done everything they can to help with her development and support her,” said Chris, adding that Mable's little brother, Clark, 2, also loves attending YMCA Child Care. “They go above and beyond the call of duty, in terms of including Mable into activities she otherwise could not do.”

Mable can sit up on her own on the floor for short periods but she cannot stand or walk on her own, so for many activities, someone has to put her in her wheelchair or stand with her. If she uses her walker,

someone has to be with her. She is also a happy, goofy little girl who loves to sing and dance.

“We see photos from throughout the day and she is in her walker and someone is with her, even though that is not what they signed up for,” said Chris. “When we pick her up, someone is often walking with her and getting her to move her feet, instead of just sitting her down with some pillows. We really appreciate that they do everything they can to include her. Her best chance to develop her gross motor skills and to walk is to repeatedly try to stand up and use her walker.”

Chris says that the YMCA educator's efforts to ensure an inclusive environment have also helped her make friends. She was recently invited to a birthday party.

“It is really touching that they put so much effort in to include her, that the other kids are legitimately her friends,” said Chris. “When you have a child with special needs, your whole world gets flipped around. You have some dark moments and you wonder how your child's life is going to be. When they start to have these experiences, it makes you feel good.”

“I think the effort of the YMCA staff makes a huge difference in her personality and her future outcomes. I can't say enough good things about them. They are just outstanding.”

Ensuring safe and inclusive programs where all children can grow, thrive and belong is core to all YMCA programs for children and youth.

COMMUNITY-BASED HEALTH CARE IN ACTION

In 2017, Andy Crawford started feeling out of breath, even when doing simple tasks. After a biopsy on his lungs, Andy was diagnosed with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF).

IPF causes scarring of the lungs. Over time, the scarring gets worse and it becomes hard to take in a deep breath and the lungs cannot take in enough oxygen. Symptoms can also include a chronic cough, chest pain, weight loss and fatigue.

Andy, who is 64, is waiting for a lung transplant. After his diagnosis, he went to the hospital for rehab and exercise sessions regularly for eight weeks but then had to continue on his own. His physiotherapist contacted the Laurier Brantford YMCA to set up an exercise program that Andy could do there.

Since June 2019, Andy has exercised at the Y five days a week with a trainer. The program allows Andy to exercise while using his oxygen tank, including lifting weights, walking for 30 minutes on the treadmill and riding the stationary bicycle for 30 minutes. His trainer checks on his oxygen levels and ensures he is safe and doing the exercises properly.

Between the regular exercise and lowering his portion sizes, Andy has been able to lose 60 pounds. Exercise also helps with cardiovascular conditioning and improves the muscles' ability to use oxygen, which helps decrease shortness of breath.

"It has helped me so much. I could not get on the lung transplant list until I lost the weight. So that is huge," says Andy. "The staff are very helpful and friendly every day. For example, I had asked them if they could place a chair just outside the change rooms, as it is such a long walk from the gym for me with my breathing issues. They accommodated me by having a chair there the very next day. It's just a great place."

Ensuring programs and supports for people of all abilities is just one way that the YMCA helps people, including those with chronic conditions or illnesses, get active and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

** As we prepared to send this year's Impact Report to press, we received good news from Andy that in late May 2020, he received that long-awaited lung transplant he was preparing for at the Y. The surgery was a success and Andy is growing stronger by the day.*



“It has helped me so much. I could not get on the lung transplant list until I lost the weight.”



5,444

children and youth developed life-saving skills and learned to swim at the Y



27,162

members participated at the YMCA to improve their health and well-being



9,724

people participated in YMCA programs through the support of financial assistance



13,243

people connected
to vital community
resources as they build
their lives in Canada

“Our goal is to help newcomers
become independent and
empowered to access services
on their own.”

Abir Alsaid

HELPING FAMILIES REBUILD THEIR LIVES IN CANADA

Samer Almakhlly came to Hamilton from Syria in 2017 with his wife and four children. He had studied law at the University of Damascus, but left his country because of the war.

Starting in 2012, as a refugee in Turkey, he worked in temporary schools educating Syrian refugee children for five years. During that time, he took education qualification courses, as well as courses in educational administration.

Despite all of his education and experience, when he came to Canada, the language barrier was a challenge. In addition, Samer would need to study again to earn an Ontario teaching degree.

Samer hoped to find employment working with children and youth. He reached out to the YMCA's Immigrant Services program and met with Community Connections Worker Abir Alsaid. Abir helped Samer find resources to improve his English, including tutoring at the Hamilton Public Library and an English conversation circle that she organizes, which gives newcomers a chance to enhance their listening and speaking skills.

Abir also connected Samer with YMCA Employment Services to receive support with his resume. She then helped him apply for a job with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board International and Indigenous Language Elementary program, which offers children an opportunity to learn or maintain a language other than French or English.

Samer now works part-time teaching Arabic to elementary students, as well as at a community mosque. He is also studying the English language to eventually work toward an Ontario university degree.

“The YMCA provided advice to me and explained difficult forms and helped me follow up on them,” said Samer, who is 50. “I received help determining my level of the English language. Most importantly, the YMCA helped me get a job in formal education. This gave me hope for the future.”

Abir says YMCA Immigrant Services helps clients along the entire settlement journey.

“There is a suite of settlement services that we provide to newcomers depending on their needs. Our goal is to help newcomers become independent and empowered to access services on their own,” she said. “For example, in filling out a simple government form, the first time, we explain to them what the form is about, what information is needed and how to complete it. The next time, we encourage them to do it on their own and will review it with them. The third time, they are able to do it on their own. It is important they gain the confidence that they can do things themselves.”

Samer says having someone to help him gave him the assurance he needed.

“I am so grateful that the YMCA offers this assistance,” he says. “I would like to get a permanent job, where I can use all of my experience to help individuals and the community.”

“This is the goal I carried with me to Canada and with the help of the YMCA I have started to achieve it.”

RALPH & EILEEN CONNOR – IN MEMORIAM

“It’s a gift for the kids,” Ralph Connor had told Jim Commerford, President & CEO, walking into his office and handing him a cheque to the YMCA Endowment Fund for \$200,000. “We want to see them benefit from the YMCA as much as we have.”

That generous gift was invested 16 years ago and became the seed for the legacy gift that Ralph and Eileen would leave years later after nearly eight decades of involvement.

When Ralph was just nine years old, he took out his first membership at the Hamilton YMCA. “I quickly learned that a one year membership could be stretched to 18 months before having to come up with another \$5 for the next year,” Ralph once recounted. “Only if you knew the basket room attendant and were fast on your feet.”

His involvement grew as a member of the YMCA Phy-So Club throughout World War II. While many of the club members were away in the armed forces, those who remained, including Ralph who was stationed out of Mount Hope, took part in operating the music for Sunday night entertainment at the YMCA including the YMCA Circus. Here, Ralph and Eileen met life-long friends.

As young parents, their summers were spent at YMCA Geneva Park with their children and years later at YMCA Wanakita in Haliburton. During one of their Phy-So group outings to Wanakita, they put out a fire at Colonel Kenny’s cottage, which was located behind camp. Several years later, the Colonel sold his 900 acres to the YMCA at a minimal cost of \$5,000 for saving his cottage.

As a member of the Board of Directors during the 1970’s, Ralph chaired the New Building Committee for the Hamilton YMCA. He recalled members having to line up outside until a locker became available. “We knew we had to make the YMCA more accessible,” said Ralph. He had always understood the value of YMCA programs in the community and when the opportunity arose to raise funds to build new YMCA facilities during the 1990’s, Ralph once again gave his support.



The Connors were members of the YMCA Heritage Club, a very special group of donors who had made a planned gift to the YMCA to ensure YMCA programs and services could continue to benefit generations of children long after they themselves had passed.

Sadly, Ralph passed away in 2016 at the age of 92. Just two years later at the age of 93, Eileen too passed away.

Last year another gift arrived in Jim Commerford’s office – a \$1 million bequest from the estate of Ralph and Eileen Connor. The gift is to be used to provide children opportunities to enjoy summer camp at YMCA Wanakita and enjoy the many benefits of a YMCA membership.

“Being an insurance broker was his livelihood,” says their son Robin Connor, “but the YMCA was his life and passion.”



13,539

children and youth built leadership skills, found life-long friends and lasting memories at YMCA Wanakita, and YMCA Day Camps

Thank you to Ralph and Eileen for ensuring the YMCA will continue to support children in our community who need the YMCA most.

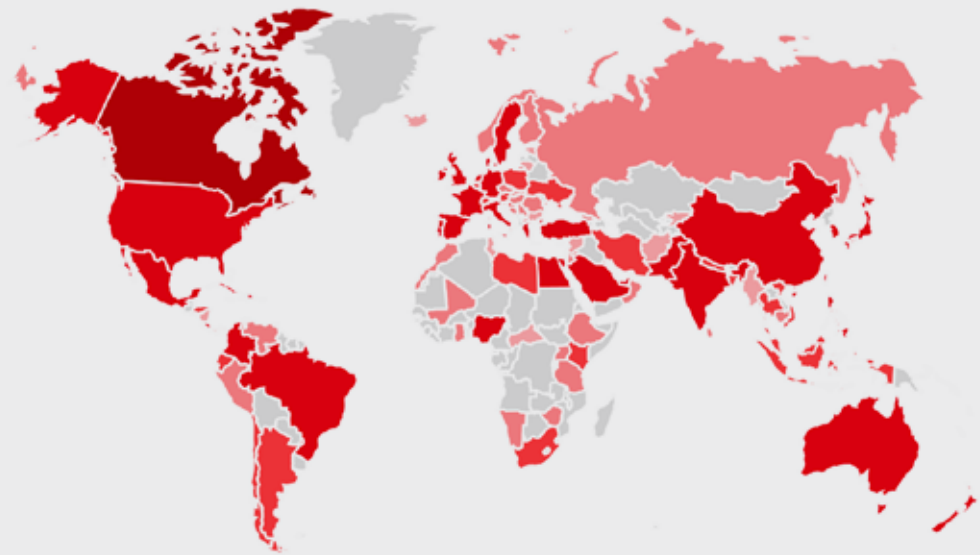


The Weemarkable™ app was developed by the YMCA HBB in 2016 to help better connect families with their YMCA child care community. Every day, caregivers using Weemarkable™ receive highlights of their child's day. Educators are able to share meal plans, photos, child care events, developmental milestones and personalized messages.

2019 was a banner year for the Weemarkable™ app, as the YMCA of Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford received funding from the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program - Children and Families Innovation Fund to update the application and improve accessibility across the country. Over an eight-month period, Weemarkable™ was updated and enhanced to be used by child care centres across Canada.

The YMCA HBB hosted symposiums from coast to coast to introduce educators to the platform and equip them with the tools needed to adopt the Weemarkable™ app in their own childcare centres. Upon completion of the innovation grant, the Weemarkable™ app is now active in 28 YMCA associations in 7 provinces. In its commitment to connect families to their childcare providers, the Weemarkable™ app allows users to share information with extended family members. This means that over the past 4 years grandparents and other loved ones around the globe have been able to follow along with childhood development milestones. The Weemarkable™ app removes barriers of distance and access and allows families to share in the joys of childhood moments.

WEEMARKABLE'S GLOBAL REACH: The following map highlights countries around the world where people are actively connected to the YMCA Child Care community through the Weemarkable app. From extended family, to military families stationed overseas, Weemarkable harnesses the power of technology to keep loved ones connected with the development of children in YMCA Child Care programs across Canada.



Demographic Overview - 5 Top Users by Country

Canada
United States
Mexico
United Kingdom
India



SKILLS FOR STEEL

The YMCA Skills for Steel program is a new employment program that launched in the spring of 2019. The program helps participants prepare for and succeed in full-time employment in the steel sector in southern Ontario. The YMCA HBB is providing regional leadership for this program which is offered across Hamilton, Brantford, Niagara and Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo. Individuals seeking meaningful work often face multiple barriers to success, including a lack of professional skills, transportation, and child care needs, financial instability, and mental health challenges. The Skills for Steel program uses an integrative approach that aims to help participants address individual challenges and accomplish career goals.

156 participants registered for the first year of the Skills for Steel program. Each cohort completed eight weeks of course work, including training in industry specific skills, financial management, mental health exercises, and communication skills.

Participants in the Skills for Steel program then worked one-on-one with an employment coach to identify their aptitudes and interests secure a paid work placement for 4 – 6 weeks. Since completing these initial placements, 29 participants have moved on to full-time employment.

The Skills for Steel program is committed to the long term success of its participants. Each individual remains in contact with their employment coach for a full year. The coach is available to support participants in retaining their employment with help managing any workplace conflicts or absenteeism. They also work with new employees to maintain a healthy life-work balance helping to secure reliable transportation and childcare, challenges which in the past may have prevented successful employment. Looking forward, the Skills for Steel program hopes to build on its initial successes by expanding the number of participants for the coming year.

** Skills for Steel is an Employment Ontario project funded in part by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario.*



43,441

individuals who accessed employment and newcomer supports through YMCA Employment & Immigrant Services

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Year Ended December 31, 2019 (Audited)

	2019	2018
Statement of Financial Position		
Current assets	\$6,140,892	\$8,940,077
Investments, and LT Receivables	\$9,803,624	\$8,310,113
Capital assets	\$65,065,788	\$66,617,355
Intangible assets	\$1,438,364	\$1,438,364
Total Assets	\$81,010,304	\$85,305,909
Current liabilities	\$8,119,203	\$10,696,357
LT Liabilities and Deferred capital contributions	\$44,195,954	\$47,199,417
Total Liabilities	\$52,315,157	\$57,895,774
Net Assets	\$28,695,147	\$27,410,135
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$81,010,304	\$85,305,909


	2019	2018
Statement of Operations		
Revenue		
Programs and Services	\$41,892,697	\$40,542,221
Donations, Grants and Fundraising	\$18,500,033	\$18,009,525
Investment (Loss) Gains	\$866,645	(\$261,941)
Gain on disposal of capital assets	–	\$165,629
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	\$1,597,586	\$1,162,139
Total Revenue	\$62,856,961	\$59,617,573
Expenses		
Programs, Service, Compensation, Administration	\$55,552,459	\$53,430,853
Interest Costs/Bank Service Charges	\$840,426	\$827,412
Amortization of Capital Assets	\$3,313,644	\$3,290,125
Total Expenses	\$61,571,949	\$57,548,390
Excess Revenue over Expenses	\$1,285,012	\$2,069,183

The report includes selected financial information extracted from statements audited by BDO Canada LLP. Complete financial statements are available upon request.

Annual Giving/ YMCA Strong Kids Campaign

	2019	2018
YMCA Strong Kids Allocation		
YMCA Beyond the Bell	\$445,273	\$559,873
Camps	\$184,467	\$173,241
Child Care programs	\$22,206	\$24,612
Health, Fitness and Aquatics programs	\$270,958	\$143,625
International initiatives	\$23,882	\$43,659
Youth programs	\$40,000	\$10,228
Total Donation Dollars	986,786	\$955,238


3,518
generous YMCA
donors that made
YMCA experiences
possible for
people across our
communities


\$986,786
donation dollars



2,291

passionate employees
who steward the
mission and values
of our YMCA



694

dedicated volunteers
supported the work of
our YMCA this year



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We are grateful for the passion of our dedicated staff, volunteers and donors who make the work of the YMCA possible and to the communities we are privileged to serve.



United Way Charitable Registration #10808 3825 RR0001