



From the “New Normal” to a New Future

The COVID-19 pandemic is without precedent. All our lives changed dramatically in March and no one thought that nine months later our daily lives would still be so different and difficult. However, as 2020 comes to a close, know that your contribution as a YMCA donor made a significant impact in helping the YMCA of Greater Vancouver serve thousands of children, families, seniors and adults during the pandemic. Despite substantially decreased revenue, with vital help of generous YMCA of Greater Foundation donors, an increase in grant funding, and donors to our Covid 19: Community Action Fund we’ve been able to meet this year’s challenges head on and accomplish great things for our community. Thank you for your support!

During the pandemic the YMCA of Greater Vancouver provided child care to essential workers’ kids and

families in need, connection to isolated seniors, chronic disease support programs to vulnerable adults, one-on-one support to at-risk youth, employment services, plus virtual fitness, mental wellness, camp and family activities at YMCAhome.ca.

Throughout the year, we’ve worked to keep members safe and engaged both online and when safe, in person. “Many people count on the Y to live a healthy life and stay connected to others in the community,” shares Liia Vuur, General Manager of the Robert Lee YMCA. “In June, we were happy and relieved to be able to safely reopen Robert Lee YMCA in Vancouver and Tong Louie Family YMCA in Surrey to adults, with new health procedures and modified programming.” Karen Price, General Manager of Chilliwack YMCA adds, “We look forward to opening the doors of our Chilliwack YMCA in the future.

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Message from the Chair

I hope this edition of Newsworthy finds you healthy and safe during this challenging time. Thanks to generous donors like you, the Foundation's strong financial position allows us to be committed partners in the YMCA's response to the current pandemic. Critical programming for our diverse communities continues—in-person and virtually—as well as the identification of new opportunities to meet growing needs as the “next normal” unfolds.

In this winter issue, you will find:

- a general update on what's been happening this fall;
- a spotlight on the YMCA Family Development Centre program;
- a special insert on the 30th Anniversary of the Ellen Bell Memorial Scholarship; and
- a briefing on the improvements made to YMCA Camp Elphinstone this summer.

The summer issue of Newsworthy included highlights from the Foundation's 2019 Annual General Meeting and a link to the online annual report. Over the fall, YMCA program teams completed their report back to the Foundation's Impact and Advancement Committee on the discretionary grants they received in 2019. While 2019 seems so very long ago, the Board found the Impact Report informative and inspiring.

On behalf of the Foundation board and team, we wish you a happy, healthy and safe holiday from our bubbles to yours,



Mary Beck
Chair, YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation



You can view the YGV
Foundation 2019 Impact
Report online at
gv.ymca.ca/AboutUs

From the “New Normal” to a New Future continued...

However, with the recent surge in Covid-19 numbers, we do not yet have a date determined.”

Before the pandemic, our communities were already experiencing tremendous change and growth, resulting in mounting pressures on families, higher rates of chronic disease and increased feelings of isolation. COVID-19 has exacerbated these pressing issues and the need for YMCA financial assistance has understandably grown. To operate successfully in this new normal the YMCA of Greater Vancouver is strategically assessing all our operations and fundraising initiatives looking for efficiencies and innovations.

This holiday season, as we reflect back on this unusual

year for all, we have much to be thankful for. Y donors, members, staff and volunteers stepped up to make a positive impact in our communities during the pandemic. Vaccines have been created in record speed and will slowly become available to more people throughout 2021. Construction of our new Coquitlam Y is on schedule. And we plan to open twelve new child care centres next year.

The pandemic isn't over by any means, but there is light up ahead. With your support, the Y will continue to build a sustainable future for vulnerable children, youth, families and adults in the Lower Mainland. So goodbye to 2020 – with cheers to a New Year of hope and health.

Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship

30 years supporting women's education

2020 marks a special anniversary for the Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship. Now in its thirtieth year, the YMCA has recognized outstanding young women pursuing studies in marketing or advertising with this special award.

The Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship is awarded annually not only for scholastic achievement, but also for a recipient's drive, optimism and the way in which they are giving back to the community. Ellen was a life force, as talented, energetic and driven as she was creative. Highly respected in the field of marketing and advertising, she managed some of the largest accounts in the province. At the same time, she was also a dedicated YMCA of Greater Vancouver volunteer.



When Ellen passed away her friends and family created the scholarship in her honour. They gather annually to review student applications, award the scholarship, and share fond memories of Ellen. The scholarship is awarded to recipients who embody Ellen's intelligence, kindness and dedication to the betterment of the community. It is a way for her friends and family to keep Ellen's spirit and legacy alive.

Though she passed too soon, Ellen's legacy has helped inspire and change the lives of 44 promising young women. "I can't believe Ellen's been gone for 30 years. She will forever be in my heart," shares Shirley Broadfoot, a close friend of Ellen's who helped set up the scholarship fund and current YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation Trustee. "I know that Ellen would be astounded to realize she's helped so many young women fund their education and begin careers in marketing and advertising. It has been very rewarding for me to be a part of awarding Ellen's scholarship through the YMCA every year."

2020 Ellen Bell scholarship recipient



A big congratulations to Anita Rudakov 2020 winner of the Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship! Anita, a recent UBC Commerce graduate, with a specialization in Marketing, is enthusiastic about her work

and community activities. Her marketing experience includes student co-op positions and an editor at the former Lotusland magazine. In July she began a new account executive role at Proctor and Gamble.

Anita has volunteered with the UBC Commerce

Undergraduate Society, the Yearbook Committee and eProjects, an entrepreneurship club at UBC. As an improv theatre performer on and off campus she has participated in shows and charity events.

"I believe that I can demonstrate Ellen Bell's values and honor her life," Anita shared with the scholarship committee. "This award is an indescribable help to me — personally, professionally and financially. It's wonderful to have some of the financial stress of paying off my student loans reduced and to be recognized as I start on the career path I'm passionate about. Thank you very much!"

Where Are They Now? Catching up with Past Ellen Bell Scholarship Recipients

—In celebration of the thirtieth anniversary we reached out to past recipients of the Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship Fund, to reconnect, and find out how the scholarship influenced their careers, their community service work and their lives.



Jennette Leung—2008 recipient

I graduated from an inner-city high school and a neighbourhood demographic composed of recent immigrants. From the age of 14, I worked at a family-owned grocery store to save for my post-secondary education. The Ellen Bell scholarship in 2008/9 recognized my community service and helped significantly during the recession.

After my undergraduate degree, I was accepted at the University of Geneva's MBA program and had my sights set on a fulfilling career at the World Health Organization; however, to secure a student loan to study abroad, I needed a guarantor. My family's income was considered insufficient and I was denied student loans by financial institutions. It is scholarships like the Ellen Bell Memorial Scholarship that have helped me overcome such financial barriers and lift me and my family from lower socio-economic circumstances. I experience, firsthand, the cascading benefits higher education can have on an individual and her family.

I completed my MBA with honours in 2017. In the height of Ebola, I received multiple internship offers at the WHO. During the Zika virus epidemic, I contributed and authored several WHO publications on medical devices. Two months before graduation, I secured a role with the global health and healthcare team at the World Economic Forum where I worked on epidemic preparedness, healthcare delivery innovation, and non-communicable disease prevention initiatives. I've since returned to Canada and work at LifeScan in the role of Healthcare Professional / Payer Brand Manager, Americas. I continue to contribute to my local community—focusing on healthcare, mental health, and addictions.



Sonia Ghag—2015 recipient

It is an absolute honour to be a recipient of this scholarship. To be acknowledged and rewarded for not only my academic achievements but also for my work and community involvement was such a proud and exciting moment for me and my family. Meeting the scholarship committee and receiving this scholarship has opened many doors. I now work at the Canadian Cancer Society as a Signature Programs, Cops for Cancer Coordinator where I

fundraise for pediatric cancer research and support programs.

As a recipient of the scholarship, I was introduced to the YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation and I became a board member in 2019. The Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship committee helped me and now I get to help others. Giving back and helping others has always fueled my soul.



Gwen Hardy—1999 recipient

It was great to feel supported winning the award as I was finishing up my studies and looking towards starting my career. Financially it also meant that I could start to pay down the student loans that I was incurring to spend my fourth year taking part in an international exchange program in France. It was more than just money though, one of the women who I met through the award process encouraged me to ask local agencies for informational interviews instead of relying on job postings. This was something that I hadn't considered before and doing so better equipped me for my first big job interview in the industry. Now, I am Managing Partner at Elettra Communications.

Giving back was a value that my parents instilled in me but knowing that I had been supported by others reinforced that value. Today I am on the Board of the Downtown Vancouver BIA and the Vancouver Police Foundation. Thank you to Ellen's friends for supporting me all those years ago.



Caitlin Lemiski—1998 recipient

It is because of people like the generous close friends and family of Ellen Bell that I am so fortunate to report that my life has gone well since having the great fortune to be awarded the scholarship all those years ago. I was able to get a Writing degree from UVic, a law degree from the University of Manitoba and then settle into my dream job as Director of Policy with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC, where I work closely with our communications team to develop guidance for our website and deliver presentations across BC and elsewhere. Thank you so much for your generosity, and for believing in me. In the years since, I have given back to my community with donations of money as well as sitting on numerous boards.

Family Matters: Spotlight on the YMCA Family Development Centre



I'm a single mom of two young boys and the YMCA Family Development Centre has been positive and essential to my life and for my kids, especially since all our family are back in Brazil. It is kind of our second home where we feel comfortable, safe, loved and cared for. I was dealing with a very hard situation with my divorce and here I found support, love and resources to help me and my kids. —Daniela Martins

Normally, the Family Development Centre (FDC) on the fifth floor of the Robert Lee YMCA is a warm, welcoming place of learning and refuge for all families who walk through its doors. So its closure due to COVID-19, especially now during the holiday season, makes it feel especially quiet.

The Family Development Centre supports young families living in the downtown core of Vancouver with programming focused on healthy child and family development, nutrition education for parents and building a sense of community with other families.

Moving into 2021, the Family Development Centre will reopen once it is safe to do so.

The Family Development Centre's work bridges the support gap by serving many families not usually included in federal or provincial funding and will be even more vital due to increased hardship the pandemic has caused lower income children and families. The need for Y

financial assistance to support such families is projected to increase substantially.

Grants from the YGV Foundation have been vital to the Family Development Centre's growth and success. A Foundation grant in late 2019 went towards purchasing equipment and building the lending library as well as staffing costs to enable the Centre to be open 55 hours per week. The grant helped staff plan for the continued sustainability of the program by providing planning time and empowering the FDC to build partnerships with other service organizations to better serve the downtown community.

The Family Development Centre helps both children and adults reach their potential. It enables volunteers to gain child care skills and experience. A number of volunteers have joined the Early Child Care Career Exploration with YMCA Immigrant Services. Other participants have become long term YMCA volunteers or staff and they're excited for the day they can welcome children and families back.



Y GIVE? It's a win/win!

Buy your 50/50 tickets for a chance to win - and to help kids, families, seniors and adults facing barriers to access vital Y programs and services.

Tickets at ymca.rafflenexus.com
Or to donate go to gv.ymca.ca/donate

Sprucing Up Summer Camp

This past summer was, due to COVID-19, the first time in 113 years that YMCA Camp Elphinstone didn't welcome overnight campers to experience the wonders of the Sunshine Coast. While extremely disappointing for hopeful kids, families and camp staff, ensuring everyone's safety was most important.

Funding provided by the federal government's CERB program enabled the Y to keep our full-time summer camp team of eight intact and busy through August. Thanks to annual grants from the Foundation's thirty-seven camp and campership funds, staff took advantage of the summer weather to complete needed site maintenance and asset preservation projects.

To ensure our buildings are in great shape when we re-open to campers, staff painted the Rec Hall porch and Squirrels cabin. They also deep cleaned Exploration Hall, MacKenzie Hall, Mark Hume Leadership Centre and the lodges. At the waterfront, the dock, pier and boats were power washed. The camp team also tackled major landscaping projects and created a new extensive orienteering course for future campers and outdoor education participants.

Camp staff were able to pivot quickly and begin creating YCamp content for kids across Canada at ymcahome.ca. Delivered virtually by camp staff across the country, campers received weekly challenges. By collaborating with other YMCA Camps we were able to provide diverse and engaging content.

Back in April, when kitchen staff were still working, Operation Garfield—delivering 350 lasagnas to grateful essential workers' YMCA child care families—was executed. Once the kitchen closed, the dining hall was cleaned thoroughly and leftover food donated to a local food bank.

"We are looking forward to when we can safely welcome back campers," shares Linea Grace, Manager, YMCA Camp Elphinstone. "We are fortunate to have this incredible oceanfront site, equipment and infrastructure, but it is truly the campers – and the personal connections they form with each other and us – that make Camp Elphinstone so special."



YMCA Camp Elphinstone staff

Heritage Club In Memoriam

We regret to inform our members of the passing of two longtime YMCA Heritage Club members who will be warmly remembered by all of their YMCA friends: Richard Tingley and Adam Hicks.



To learn more:

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