



# GRATITUDE REPORT

The YMCA is a  
charity that ignites  
the potential in people.



[ymcaowensound.on.ca](http://ymcaowensound.on.ca)



Owen Sound  
Grey Bruce

*Shine On*

FALL 2024

# Message from the CEO, Sarah Cowley

## Dear Community Members,

I am writing to express my deepest gratitude for your unwavering support of the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce. Your commitment has been instrumental in enabling us to continue our mission of fostering a healthier, more connected community.

Through your generosity, individuals and families in need can apply for financial assistance, allowing over 500 people monthly to participate in our programs. In addition to financial assistance, your support fuels our rural homelessness response, offering hope and a path forward to those who need it most.



Your contribution represents the transformative power of community, enabling us to develop programs and services that prioritize our community's health and well-being. Thanks to your support, we can provide diverse resources, from fitness classes to wellness workshops, that empower individuals of all ages to embrace a holistic approach to well-being. Your generosity sustains us during challenging times and fuels our aspirations for a brighter, more connected future. We look forward to continuing this journey together, creating a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for being an integral part of our YMCA and for making a lasting impact on the lives of those we serve.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Cowley". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sarah Cowley, CEO



## 186 Donors

helped us reach our fundraising goal to continue running our YMCA across Grey Bruce.



## 984 People

received financial assistance to access YMCA's programs and services.



## \$101,100

was donated to our financial assistance fund, ensuring vital support and enhancing community well-being for our community.



## \$93,358

from Grants and Foundation enabling us to sustain existing programs and launch new ones, allowing us to evolve and continue meeting the needs of our communities.



## \$181,000

from the YMCA's Strong Communities Fund provided financial assistance to individuals and families, helping them access essential YMCA programs and services.

# Water Safety is Our Priority



## YMCA Secures Grant to Address Lifeguard Shortage, Ensuring Water Safety for Our Community

**May 8, 2023** - The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce is proud to announce that it has been selected to receive a grant from Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities (Jumpstart). The grant will be used to train candidates to become certified lifeguards and instructors, in order to meet the increasing demand for swimming lessons and promote water safety across the region.

“We are thrilled to have been chosen as a recipient of this valuable grant,” said Sarah Cowley, CEO of the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce. “This funding will allow us to train more lifeguards and instructors, which will enable us to provide high-quality swimming instruction to even more members of our community.”

We are committed to ensuring that everyone in Owen Sound and Grey Bruce has the opportunity to learn essential water safety skills and

enjoy the many benefits of swimming.”

Jumpstart is a national charity committed to helping families overcome financial and accessibility barriers to sport and play. Since 2005, Jumpstart has helped over 3.1 million kids in Canada get off the sidelines and into the game.

“By investing in lifeguard and instructor training, more children in Owen Sound and Bruce Grey can enjoy the benefits of swimming in a safe and supportive environment,” said Marco Di Buono, President of Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. “We are proud to support the YMCA of Owen Sound Bruce Grey in their efforts to make swimming accessible to the community while providing leadership opportunities for local youth.”



## YMCA Steps in to Save Blue Dolphin Pool Season Amid Lifeguard Shortage

**May 18, 2023** - Facing a severe shortage of lifeguards, the Meaford community was at risk of losing its public outdoor swimming pool for the season. However, a new agreement with the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce has averted the closure. Under this partnership, the YMCA will assume full responsibility for the pool's operations, including lifeguard recruitment, training, and programming.



## Zehrs Give A Little, Help A Lot Campaign Raises funds for YMCA Financial Assistance Program

**July 9, 2023** - From July 9 to July 25, community members generously donated at Owen Sound Zehrs to support their local YMCA. The funds raised helped families of all ages improve their health and well-being through YMCA programs, such as swim lessons, day camp, and youth programming. Thanks to the community's contributions, nearly \$800 was raised in 2023. Together, we made a significant difference in the lives of many.



*"The new facility is amazing." Mark Avery, President and Ken Fitzpatrick, Head Coach*

## Partnership with OSAC Shines On

The YMCA is grateful to the Owen Sound Aquatics Club (OSAC) for their annual donations, which help fund the 8-lane, 25-meter swimming pool and warm water leisure/therapy pool. These contributions enable OSAC athletes and families to continue benefiting from the pool's accessible features, including ramps and family changing rooms, and the use of the fitness facilities for dryland training.

## Nourishing Young Minds at YMCA Day Camps

**June 1, 2023** - Meridian Credit Union of Owen Sound and Domino's Pizza Owen Sound generously donated funds and pizza to ensure that our YMCA day camp kids had full bellies and smiles.

With the challenges of the current economy and rising food prices, Camp Director Patty Publuske noticed some children arriving at camp without lunch or with less nutritious options.

Thanks to the support from Meridian Credit Union, she could purchase fresh fruit, vegetables, granola bars, and other healthy snacks, ensuring every child had access to nutritious food. Kids also enjoyed Domino's Pizza Days!



*"You are such an amazing team! You make a positive difference in each child's daily life. Hope you know how much you are all appreciated!"*  
- Kathryn & Dan



## New YMCA Child Care Center Brings Hope and Community to Kincardine

### New Kincardine Child Care Opens in St. Anthony's Catholic School

**November 1, 2023** - The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce and the Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board (BGCDSD) are thrilled to announce the completion of renovations at St. Anthony's Catholic School, allowing the Kincardine YMCA Child Care facility to relocate there on November 1, 2023. Designed to be fully accessible, the new center features controlled access for added security, four spacious rooms with natural light and bathroom facilities, a secure outdoor play area, and designated spaces for strollers and car seats.

Cyndy Jefferson, Director of Child Care at the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce, states, "We are excited to partner with BGCDSD to open the child care center at St. Anthony's Catholic School. It's designed for young learners to grow, build friendships, and make memories. The new center will offer more safe and affordable child care spaces, much needed in our community." Marilyn Dawson, Superintendent of Education at Bruce-Grey Catholic, adds, "Our Catholic schools are truly the heart of the community, and this opening reaffirms our commitment to the Kincardine neighborhood. We look forward to welcoming the students and families who will make it a vibrant place to learn and grow."

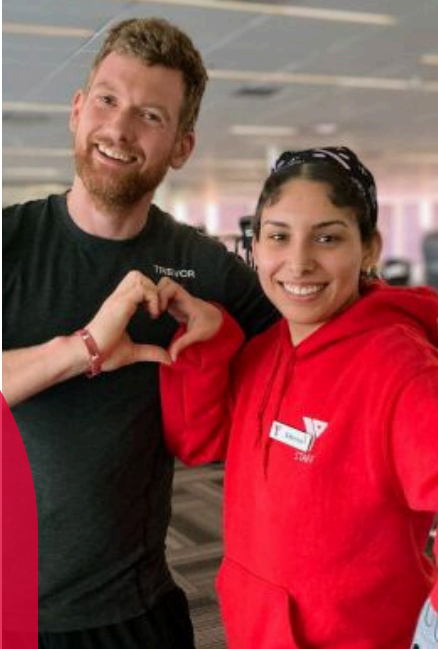
The center is licensed for 78 children, including 30 toddlers (an increase of 20 from the former location) and 48 preschoolers. The YMCA Before and After School program is licensed for 26 junior and senior kindergarten students and 60 children from Grade 1 to Grade 6 (12 years of age). A formal opening celebration is planned for the New Year. St. Anthony's School, located at 715 Russell Street, Kincardine, is part of the government's \$14 billion commitment to expand child care.

### Gift Fosters a Brighter Future for Kincardine's Children

**October 4, 2023** - The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce extends its heartfelt thanks to John Satosek, owner of Canadian Tire in Kincardine, ON for his generous donation of \$1,000 towards the purchase of equipment for our new YMCA Child Care center in Kincardine. His contribution is crucial in helping us create a nurturing and safe environment for the children in our care. The equipment, including pots, pans, food storage, coffee makers, and ovenware, will provide essential resources for early childhood development, ensuring the success of our child care services.



## Campaign Reaches \$101,100 with Last-Minute Donation



**March 31, 2024** - We are thrilled to announce that the YMCA's fundraising campaign has exceeded our goal, thanks to a last-minute donation that pushed our total to an incredible \$101,100. This campaign's success is a testament to the unwavering support and generosity of our community.

The funds raised will significantly impact the programs and services we provide, ensuring that we can continue to support children, families, and individuals in need. Every contribution, no matter the size, has played a crucial role in reaching this milestone.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all our donors, volunteers, and supporters who have contributed to this achievement. Your commitment to the YMCA's mission of building a stronger, healthier community is deeply appreciated.

This final donation serves as a reminder of the power of community and the difference we can make when we come together. Thank you for helping us Shine On and make a lasting impact!

## Peace Week Food & Clothing Drive Brings Donations to Those in Need

**November 27, 2023** - During Peace Week the YMCA collected food and used clothing to support local charitable organizations who serve individuals experiencing homelessness and those escaping domestic violence in Grey Bruce.

The community filled a van full of items that were graciously accepted at Safe 'N Sound, CMHA, and The Women's House.



## Igniting Hope for Homelessness

**April 1, 2023** - The YMCA plays a vital role in Bruce County's housing and homelessness efforts through our Rural Housing and Homelessness Outreach program. We prioritize safety and access to basic needs, with our YMCA Housing Outreach Workers assisting those who are homeless, or at risk, by securing safe overnight shelter and creating long-term housing plans. Partnering with Bruce County and the universal 211 service, we provide 24/7 access to essential resources. "Our commitment is to deliver responsive services to help individuals and families obtain or maintain shelter and permanent housing," says Matthew Shute, Director of Community Initiatives and Employment Services.



## Pool Repairs

**August 26, 2023** - During the annual facility shutdown our pools underwent essential refurbishment to address extensive tile repairs and ensure their continued safety and longevity. This critical maintenance was part of our commitment to maintaining our cherished facilities in the best possible condition for the health and safety of our YMCA community. We appreciate your patience and understanding during this necessary shutdown.



## Igniting a New Beginning

**March 14, 2024** - The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce is excited to announce the relocation of some of its services to the historic Sun Times Building. With the support of the owner, JP Commercial Contracting Inc, Andy Smit, this move allows us to expand and enhance the programs and services offered to the community. By relocating to this iconic location, the YMCA aims to bring new energy and accessibility to its offerings, fostering a vibrant community hub where individuals and families can come together to participate in health, wellness, and support programs. The new space will allow for a broader range of activities and resources, continuing the YMCA's tradition of igniting community spirit and bringing light to the community.



## New Steam Room Unit Installed

**February 15, 2024** - Despite a thorough engineering study, the men's steam room heating unit involving the thermostat and heating elements, failed prematurely due to tampering. After several months of anticipation, the new unit has arrived and been installed. The facilities team adeptly navigated a few challenges during the installation, ensuring the steam room could resume operation and provide a comfortable experience for our members.



## Energy Efficient Upgrades

**August 26, 2023** - During the 2023 annual shutdown the YMCA upgraded the facility's lighting system to LED, a change designed to reduce operating costs and support our commitment to sustainability. These improvements not only lower energy consumption but also contribute to a more environmentally friendly operation, reflecting our ongoing dedication to finding innovative solutions for energy efficiency in our YMCA.





## **\$46,547 Grant Awarded for Infrastructure Modernization**

**October 24, 2023** - "With this grant, we can upgrade our computer infrastructure, improving productivity, security, customer service, and data management," said Sarah Cowley, CEO of the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce.

Since August, the YMCA has installed new security cameras, upgraded 15 computer systems, and implemented a new teleconferencing system. These improvements will greatly benefit staff and community members, supporting the YMCA's mission to build healthy communities.



## **Fun Run Raises \$6,000 for Strong Communities Fund**

**April 30th, 2023** - The inaugural Cobble Beach Lighthouse Fun Run, successfully raised \$6,000 for the YMCA's Strong Community financial assistance program.

This program, which last year distributed \$83,000 to support 247 individuals in need, ensures access to health, fitness, and aquatics programs for those facing financial challenges in Grey and Bruce County, where approximately 15% of children and seniors live below the poverty line.

YMCA CEO Sarah Cowley expressed deep gratitude for the donation, highlighting its role in helping the YMCA build healthy communities and make their services accessible to everyone, regardless of financial circumstances. The YMCA looks forward to future events that continue to make a meaningful impact.

## The YMCA Saves Lives - Member Story

**January 15, 2024** - "Get out of the pool, Bob!" 6 words from Diana, a lifeguard at the YMCA aquatics centre, addressed to me. Those 6 words started a 5-week odyssey that I am not likely to forget.

Just for a little background on me: I swim a kilometer 5 days a week. I consider myself healthy, watching my diet, never smoked, and rarely drink, maybe a glass of wine once in a while. My blood work has always been good. The Veterans Administration in the US takes extremely great care of me. I thought my lifestyle was exemplary and had a long healthy life ahead of me. I had no idea why I was being told to get out of the pool. What ensued was mind-boggling.

This all started on December 5th when I was only about halfway through my laps. Diana and Dianne told me to sit down, and they would call an ambulance. I was very firm that I did not need an ambulance because "I am FINE!" I would go to the locker room and then go home. They called my wife instead, over my protests. They sat with me until my wife arrived. My wife, a nurse of 35 years, arrived and took me straight to the Owen Sound Hospital (Brightshores Health System).

They found several points of concern about my heart, in the echocardiogram and some other tests. I was already scheduled for 2 appointments at the Veterans Administration in Wilmington, DE.

When I got to the Veterans Administration Hospital in Wilmington, DE, they would not do the stress test and sent me to the Cardiologist. He sent me to the Philadelphia Veterans Administration Hospital, who then sent me to the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania (HUP).

Without giving a whole "ORGAN" recital, they performed 5 critical surgeries. My wife and I were there until January 9th, after the final surgery.

The lifeguards literally saved my life. Based on what the doctor at the OSH saw on the test, I may not have made another length. I owe them my life. Thank you, Diana and Dianne."

~ Bob



## Thank You to the Following YMCA Supporters!

### Foundation Funders

- Eva Leflar Foundation
- James Goreski Private Foundation
- Canadian Tire Jumpstart
- United Way of Bruce Grey
- United Way of Greater Toronto
- Community Foundation Grey Bruce
- Meridan Credit Union Owen Sound
- Toronto Foundation
- Charities Aid Foundation Canada

### Inspired Banner Sponsors

- Shannon McComb, Sutton-Sound Realty Inc., Brokerage
- The Agency
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- Shankar Professional Corporation
- Grey Bruce Orthodontics
- Fresh Burrito

### Federal & Provincial Funders

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development
- Ministry of the Attorney General
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- The Corporation of the County of Bruce
- The Corporation of the County of Grey
- Canadian Career Development Foundation

# Thank you Donors!

April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024



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Widaad Al-Busaidy  
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