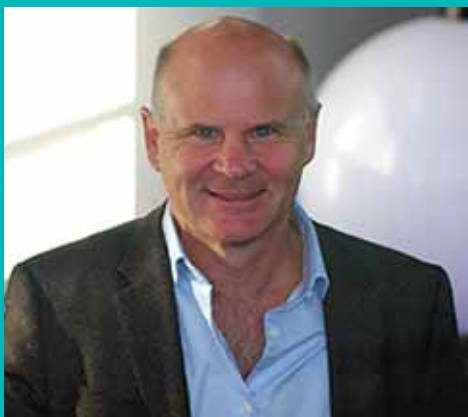




YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth



YEARS of Community Building



Greetings

from the Chair of the Board of Directors and the
President and Chief Executive Officer

Established in 1853, it's hard to believe it's been this long and we're thrilled to be a part of it, celebrating the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth's 165 years of community building! In tribute to this, we're pleased to share with you a collection of our rich and diverse history, coupled with our "Y Stories" from over the years.

The YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth would not exist without the continued support of our donors, volunteers and staff, and we can't wait to welcome you into our newest centre of community.

You all belong here.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Posavad'.

Brian Posavad
*President and
Chief Executive Officer*

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Doig'.

Peter Doig
*Chair,
YMCA Board of Directors*



History

YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

On **December 6, 1853**, a small group of men came together in the office of Peter Lynch. In the Forrester Building on Barrington Street with a reading room, a library, classes, and bi-weekly lectures, the organization that would become the YMCA of Greater Halifax and Dartmouth was formed.

Moving from building to building, the organization developed the Community YMCA on November 21, 1951 in the Old Children's Library. The South Park Building opened

its doors just a few years later. At that point, Big Cove YMCA Camp had been thriving for almost 65 years after opening in 1889 as the first residential camp program in Canada.

We have been here through two world wars, one of the biggest explosions in history, and a massive fire that destroyed the Community YMCA in July 1979. Through it all, the YMCA has remained a centre for everyone to grow in spirit, mind, and body.



On **June 17, 1995**, Halifax hosted the G7 summit and the First Lady of the United States, Hillary Clinton, attended the Grand Opening of the Community Y on Gottingen Street.

(Left to Right) Gary Farmer, George Rodger, President & CEO of YMCA Halifax, Mark Smith, CEO of the Community Y.

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES
OTTAWA, CANADA

September 20, 1995

Mr. George E. Rodger
President and CEO
The YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth
1565 South Park ST
Halifax, NS B3J 2X2

Dear Mr. Rodger:

Mrs. Clinton has asked me to present you with the enclosed photographs. On behalf of the First Lady and myself, I would like to thank you for participating in her enormously successful visit to Halifax.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Janet Blanchard
Janet Blanchard



GEORGE E. RODGER & HILLARY R. CLINTON
SUMMIT Y.M.C.A. (G-7 SUMMIT VISIT)
JUNE 17, 1995

September 20, 1995

*Letter from Janet Blanchard (assistant to
Hillary Clinton) to George Rodger on behalf
of the First Lady.*

Our Community Y

In the Beginning

On **November 21, 1951**, the Community Y opened in the Old Children's Library and was known as the Brunswick Street Division of the YMCA. Total enrolment at that time was twelve. Before the year was out, an executive was elected for the Club. The name picked for their club was "The Y Devils".

One of the rules passed by the Club in **March 1952** was that anyone misbehaving while in the gym or club rooms would be fined on a three-cent basis. The fine had to be paid within a week or another two cents would be added.

Quick Facts

- 1962: Lou Dixon was elected to the Order of the Cove by his fellow campers at the Big Cove YMCA Camp.
- Basketball was continuing to be popular in the 1980s. The basketball program was so good that youth were coming from all over the city and outside to join the many Y teams. One of the top-notch coaches included Irvine Carvery – our current Community YMCA Director (2018).
- The success of basketball enabled the players to travel and see other parts of the country learning to present themselves with discipline, dignity, and confidence. The Community Y reputation grew and became known throughout Eastern Canada.

• **Donors of the Community Y since the beginning:** Halifax Protestant Youth Foundation, Metro United Way, and the City of Halifax Social Planning Department.



Four Community YMCA Campers prepare to leave for Big Cove YMCA Camp in the summer of 1968 for a Junior Leadership course. Left to right are: Frank Symonds, Gary Farmer, Greg Downey, and Michael Lucas.



1957: Junior (ages 12-15) and Intermediate (ages 15-18)

basketball team entered the YMCA Church League for the first time under Carl Johnson. The Intermediates won their division while the Juniors made a fine showing before losing in the semi-finals.

Carl turned the responsibility over to his brother and Wilfred Jackson. The 1958-59 program saw the Intermediate team win the YMCA Church League title again. Not to be outdone, the Juniors also won their division under Carl and Mack Johnson.

A House Basketball League was formed in 1962 with the "Celtics" and the "Warriors". In Church League play, the Community "Y" again captured both the Intermediate and Junior League Championship (1962).

House League continued in 1963 with an additional two teams – the Ambassadors and the Royals. Church League play continued this year with the Community Y winning both the Intermediate and Junior crowns.

The City started **Biddy (ages 9-12)** and **Juvenile (ages 15-17)** leagues in 1968. The Community "Y" won its first City Juvenile League title in 1970.



"A feeling of pride comes over me, as I meet and greet so many of today's successful people, whose roots go back to the Community YMCA. . .it goes without saying, that without the encouragement and support of the local Community Y, many of us would not have carried the books as well as the ball. Our Community Y has enjoyed an outstanding reputation, throughout its long history of positively shaping the lives of its membership.

Although we have seen major changes within the YMCA movement in the metro area, the Community Y has remained steadfast in its efforts to meet the needs of inner city youth.

It has always been there when we needed it most."

Wilfred A. Jackson,
*Chairman of the 1990
Halifax Community
YMCA Reunion*



“What I loved about the YMCA and Big Cove was that none of that mattered – everyone is equal at the Y. To this day, the YMCA emphasizes that it doesn’t matter where you come from – you can be whatever you want to be.”

– Ardythe Wildsmith

Our very own Big Cove YMCA Camp, in Pictou County, Nova Scotia, is the oldest continuously running residential camp in Canada. Ardythe Wildsmith, a long-time supporter of Big Cove, worked there as a counsellor in the mid-1960s. “I was very musical, involved with choir and dance, so I brought a more artistic perspective to the job,” says Ardythe, also known to her fellow campers as Ardy. “Before going to camp though, I had never been in a canoe, so I had a bit of a learning curve that first summer!” Growing up in the North End of Halifax, Ardythe



Ardythe and Bruce Wildsmith, met at Big Cove YMCA Camp 50 years ago, and have been married for 48 years.

heard about the counsellor jobs while attending the Hi-Y program at the South Park YMCA.

“At that time in Halifax, there were very clear divisions, including North-South, poor-wealthy, and Catholic-Protestant. What I loved about the YMCA and Big Cove was that none of that mattered – everyone is equal at the Y,” she says. “To this day, the YMCA emphasizes that it doesn’t matter where you come from – you can be whatever you want to be.”

"The days are long, but the time is short. Camp levels every social playing field – it's a melting pot of perfection." – Breanna Lane

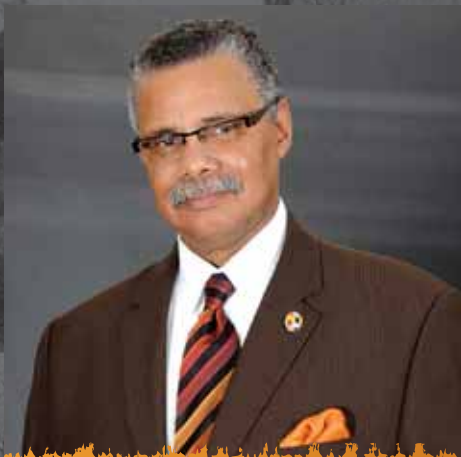


Breanna Lane started her journey at the YMCA Big Cove Camp over 15 years ago. She came to camp as an extremely shy kid, and left with irreplaceable experiences and memories; a network of life-long friends.

Her first year at Big Cove was when she was 11 years old. She recalls being very nervous on the first day, but as predicted by the Big Cove staff who have seen it every year, she was devastated to leave on the last day and cried the whole way home.

She credits Big Cove – and in particular, the 10 day-out trips and overnights by herself – with helping shape her sense of self and build her confidence. After spending four years as a camper, she completed both Leadership I and Leadership II. Breanna also spent five years on the Big Cove Staff.





Lou Gannon's YMCA story has taken many forms as a member and staff person. In 1988, he was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Charlottetown YMCA. He was the first African Nova Scotian to hold this position in Canada. Lou still remains as a Honourary Life Member of the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth and his daughter, Kim Gannon, currently serves on the Board of Directors.

Honourary Life Member

of the YMCA

The first time I walked into a YMCA, I was 8 years old looking for extracurricular activities. Those first steps led to a fulfilling career lasting over 27 years.

My career with the YMCA has provided me with many incredible opportunities. I developed leadership skills, worked on initiatives that improved my community, made life-long friends, and travelled to many countries. The most satisfying aspect was having the opportunity of watching young YMCA members develop into productive young adults.

It has been my experience that the YMCA is a welcoming and safe environment where we all can find something that helps us find our place and path in the world.

The YMCA philosophies are deeply embedded in everything I do.

Lou Gannon
Honourary Life Member

New Beginnings start here.

The YMCA began assisting Sawsan Shamo in April of 2017 as she was seeking admission to Saint Mary's University. She did not have all her academic transcripts, as she was unable to acquire them from Syria due to the civil war. The transcripts that she was able to bring in addition to the YMCA staff speaking to the admissions office and advocating on her behalf, she was granted conditional acceptance.

Sawsan began her studies at the Language Centre at SMU and graduated in June 2018. She is now double-majoring in English Literature and International Development Studies. Sawsan is excelling in her studies.



Sawsan attended the Centre for Immigrant Programs "Employment Series" workshop and gained insight into how to start her own business in Canada. She has aspirations of having her own clothing line and importing clothing from overseas. The YMCA is immensely proud of Sawsan and the accomplishments she has achieved in her short time in Canada.

“Working in community on a grass roots level has always been my passion and where I feel I do my best work. I am privileged to be a part of the YMCA and give back to this community.”

– **Lynda Thomas**

Co-Director of YMCA NS Works Employment Services



Lynda



"Halifax is so small and so nice; the people are great and friendly, always smiling. I have a great group of friends here at the YMCA."

– Kanan Receb

Kanan received employment through YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs employment education services



Robert

Robert Richardson was born into social housing in Halifax's Mulgrave Park and spent his early years in the North End with his parents and seven of his ten siblings.

They all lived in

what he refers to as a "cozy two bedroom apartment."

At the age of 10, Robert and three of his siblings went to live with his sister, Shirley, and her husband Stephen after their mother unexpectedly passed away. At the young age of 25, Shirley and Stephen took on the care of two children and two teenagers.

Robert is now an industrious entrepreneur and a well-respected business leader and a tireless community builder with a long history of commitment to making

our community a better place. Robert has dedicated his time, talent and treasure to the YMCA and serves as a member of our Capital Campaign, Honorary Trustee, and Chair of the YMCA Legacy Foundation and was the Past-Chair of our Board of Directors.

"I have a deep respect for YMCA's principle of offering programs to participants regardless of their ability to pay. That would have been me as a young boy – unable to pay, but very much wanting to play."

– Robert Richardson



Community
YMCA

2018

FEEL THE

Ahmad's Story

Ahmad Al-Helwani is a 13-year-old Syrian refugee. After he and his family left Damascus in 2014 to escape the war, they spent two years in Cairo, Egypt. They were selected to come to Canada when the federal government eased immigration quotas to admit more Syrian refugees.

Since arriving in the country a year ago, Ahmad has been making the most of his new home. He credits the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth in large part for his success in adapting to his new country, including learning English.

Ahmad was selected to participate in a four-day trip to Ottawa in 2017 through the WE organization, where he participated in workshops and sightseeing, and was on stage at the Canada Day concert. He was partnered with a student from Dartmouth through a buddy system where Canadians are matched with newcomers. These two students were the only ones from Atlantic Canada chosen for this program!

According to Fadi Hamdan, Manager of the YMCA Refugee Youth Program, Youth Advisor (Atlantic Canada), Ahmad's passion for his new country and his willingness to give to his community made him the ideal participant.

When asked about how he felt about the opportunity, Ahmad said he was a little nervous.




Al-Helwani boys

Ahmad (left) and his younger brother Yousef



*Ahmad got the chance he had hoped for.
He got to meet and personally thank Prime
Minister, Justin Trudeau*

"It will be my first time outside Halifax since coming to Canada. I don't really know what to expect. But I am excited to meet new people. We were told there is a chance we will meet Prime Minister Trudeau. I would like that – I would like to say thank you." – Ahmad Al-Helwani



Kim Marsman is a lead case manager at the YMCA Employment Centre of Dartmouth, but her YMCA story began long before she was staff. In fact, she started out as a client of the Centre.

Kim was on assistance raising her kids and was using the YMCA to help her job search. She took some workshops and realized that her passion was in management and counselling. Kim went back to school through the Adult Learning Program. After graduating, she studied Business and Administration Management, and during her summer break came to the YMCA to volunteer from Monday to Thursday for three months. She enjoyed the position so much – and was so good at it – that the Centre welcomed her back with open arms for her five-week work term of her program. She decided to stick around, and she's been with us ever since.

"I just love it! I love that I can relate to my clients. I can tell them my story. I do share it with them. I can say that I was in their shoes, and that I was on assistance too. I think it inspires my clients to know that they're not just talking to someone who doesn't know what they're going through."

"I just love it! I love that I can relate to my clients. I can tell them my story."

– Kim Marsman

Kim



“The YMCA Strong Kids Campaign changed our lives. I was in a situation where I really needed help and they were fantastic, the whole team took Teddy in and really embraced him. They made him feel part of everything.” – Tara Smith

Tara Smith's son Teddy was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum disorder when he was two and a half. Because of his unique situation, Tara was always conscious about where she would take him for child care.

“I've always said to myself that I would never go to work or leave Teddy, unless I knew with 100% certainty that he was going to be absolutely safe. Once we joined the YMCA, it's like a smaller community, within a community. We have developed friendships. Some of our closest friends are now part of the Y!”

As a single mom, Tara also faced barriers in affording child care such as the YPHD Program that was recommended by one of Teddy's teachers. She was able to find support from YMCA Strong Kids, and Teddy has been playing basketball and running track and field ever since.

YMCA
STRONG
KIDS
CAMPAIGN



Gwen

"AIM is a wonderful and caring community. The amount that the participants and volunteers care for each other is what makes it particularly special."

– Gwen MacLachlan

Abilities in Motion (AIM)

Gwen MacLachlan joined the AIM program in 2014. At 83 years old, and dealing with the symptoms of MS, Gwen had difficulty moving and used a walker to get around. After coming to AIM, she is able to walk between the parallel bars!

She says that AIM helped her maintain her mobility and independence, but it wasn't just the physical activity that helped her. The friendship and caring environment also had a positive effect. She says, "AIM is a wonderful and caring community. The amount that the participants and volunteers care for each other is what makes it particularly special."

To sum it up, Gwen makes her feelings on AIM pretty clear, "It is the greatest thing since sliced bread!"

Paul Curwin has been with AIM for over 10 years. In addition to his work with AIM, Paul is a member of the YMCA and he also teaches YMCA Forever Fit. He is a much loved and highly respected volunteer, with many of the participants crediting him as their favourite part of the program. Gwen MacLachlan says that he is the “number one person.” Shelley Conrad says that it is him that makes the program “so special.” And Paul feels the same way about the participants.



Paul

“AIM lifts my spirit. There’s lots of mutual respect and support. AIM makes life better, and the members make it special. This program helps people stay fit or get fit, set goals, and feel proud of their achievements. I think AIM fills a gap in the rehab world.”

– Paul Curwin



Gene

“Getting back self-esteem is a big part of the process. That’s where the YMCA team kicks in and says ‘okay, get rid of those negative thoughts – let’s help you find the right track for you.”

– Gene MacCabe

Gene received assistance through YMCA Employment Centre on Wyse Road



Sabrina

"I realize now that when they say 'you can do anything you put your mind to' that they are right!"

– Sabrina Lewis

Sabrina Lewis graduated with a diploma in Health Information Management from NSCC. She says that if you had asked her three years ago where she imagined herself, her current life would definitely be a surprise.

April 1, 2010 was her last day of work in Customer Service. She decided that the situation should become an opportunity, and that going back to school to receive more education was her best chance. Sabrina attended career planning sessions at the Dartmouth YMCA Employment Centre and realized that she wanted to go into healthcare. She wanted to help people, but avoid blood.

As part of her program, Sabrina participates in "Service Learning" where students give back to the community. Each year, they raise funds for the Bone Marrow Transplant Comfort Fund at the QEII Hospital to support patients and their families in the difficult times of illness.

All in all, Sabrina says the last two years have changed her life for the better. "I realize now that when they say 'you can do anything you put your mind to' that they are right!"

"In all our work, let it be distinctly understood that we do not wish to bring boys here to teach them how to make a living, but rather to teach them how to live."

– **John Irvine**, *Chairman of Boys Work Committee*

John A. Irvine was a member of the Halifax YMCA Board of Directors at the turn of the 20th century. At the 46th Annual Meeting in April 1900, the president noted the good work that J. A. Irvine had been doing in the Boy's department. Boy's Work Committee started in Halifax circa 1890.

Pictured: Mrs. Murielle Duckworth at Cornerstone Laying Ceremony (November 14, 1951)

*Hi-Yer's Robbie
MacKeigan/Margaret
Webb Honouring Dr.
JMC Duckworth (1962)*



Jack Duckworth

Jack Duckworth was a staff person in the YMCA for over 35 years with the final 15 years of his professional career at the Halifax YMCA as General Secretary (Chief Executive Office) from 1947 to 1962. Jack oversaw the construction and opening of the South Park YMCA building. The commencement of the Community Y occurred during Jack's tenure and the evolution of the largest Hi-Y Club and youth program in a YMCA in Canada. Jack was also strongly committed to the peace movement and he and his wife, Muriel, devoted much of their time to the cause of peace.



A. Gordon Archibald

A. Gordon Archibald was an outstanding volunteer in the Halifax YMCA beginning in the 1940's. He served as President from 1949 to 1953 and was Chairman of the Campaign & Building Committee that resulted in the South Park YMCA.

Did you know?

1854: Halifax had a population of 20,000 with a large naval and military presence. There were a disproportionately large number of licensed and unlicensed establishments. Community leaders recognized the need to provide a safe, healthy alternative for young men coming into Halifax “from the country” who were otherwise distracted by the metaphorical bright lights of Halifax.

There were well-delivered, topical lectures that were popular across North America in the late 1800s as a form of entertainment – prior to the introduction of movies.

1855: Halifax YMCA had its first YMCA Annual Report in Canada

- Membership fee: 1£
- Expenses: 374£ (pounds) 7s (shillings) 3d (pence)

1900: Howard Crocker, Phys Ed. Director at the Halifax Y became the most influential physical educator in Canada between 1900-1930. Crocker set the standard for teaching physical education.

September 2, 1860: Two members did the first YMCA “fundraising blitz” by calling on 20 members in one hour – they made 12£.

January 15, 1878: Demonstration of the telephone at the Halifax YMCA with 120 attendees.

1901: YMCA orchestra was active at YMCA functions and performed at church socials and other community organization meetings during year.

1930: In addition to WW1, WW2 and the HFX explosion, the Great Depression of the 1930’s added to the burden on the Barrington Street Y. The Y was heavily used during the Great Depression.

1969: Kinderschool Y program at Kin House on Caledonia Road.

1981: Full-day Day Care opens in 1981.





A stroll down memory lane

History of events throughout the years at the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

1853



December 6, 1853

A small group of men meeting in an office of the Peter Lynch formed the Halifax YMCA. One of the first formed in North America. First "rooms" were in the Forrester Building on Barrington Street.

1874

1874

Prince Street Building erected. The first permanent home of the Halifax "Y" among the first and finest YMCA Buildings on this continent in its day. Cost was \$40,000.

1889

1889

Big Cove Camp was established.



1912

1912

New building erected on Barrington Street.



1917

December 6, 1917 | Halifax Explosion

Volunteer helpers at work within an hour removing debris, preparing beds, cots and supplies – dressings, food and medicine. **Three hundred cases** of injury received attention in the first two days! **2,500 people were treated** during this period.



1923

1923

Y Men's Club of Halifax founded.



1939 - 1945

1939 - 1945

- Lobby and gym used as first hostel at the outbreak of the war. Halifax Ladies College purchased, adapted, equipped and operated by YMCA as a hostel.
- During WWII, the YMCA became especially known for its "Tea Cars" that delivered hot tea and biscuits to soldiers.



1952

November 21, 1952

The Community YMCA opened in the Old Children's Library and was known as the Brunswick Street Division of the YMCA.



1953

1953

South Park Street YMCA opened at the cost of \$1,500,000.



1965 - 1969

1965 - 1969

Pre-employment Classes for school drop outs to enable them to continue and upgrade their education.



1970 - 1972

1970 - 1972

Metro wide campaign to renovate South Park YMCA building, including the building of Rockingham YMCA, and repairs to the Community YMCA facilities.



1975 - 1980

1975 - 1980

Big Cove Camp operated the last season since opening as the children's residential summer camp, until 1980 when it reopened for resident camping once again.



1983 - 1992

1983 - 1985

Carole MacDougall, the first woman Board Chair for the YMCA.



1992

The Post Office on Gottingen Street is bought to house the new Community YMCA.



Serving youth in community-based settings in the areas of employment and personal and community enrichment, starting with the Options Project. The Y's Job Generation Project, which was funded by Human Resource Development Canada, ran successfully for more than 10 years and served unemployed youth with multiple barriers to employment.



2000

First woman President and CEO, Bette Watson-Borg.



2004

- YMCA named the official charity of the Blue Nose International Marathon
- John Lindsay Sr. appointed into the YMCA Fellowship of Honour



2009

Planning and development to bring a "new YMCA Centre of Community to Peninsular Halifax and the region is a major initiative underway."



2014

- YMCA partnered with the province to leverage existing resources and expertise in immigration to offer YREACH
- Closed the South Park YMCA on May 30, 2014, after serving the community for over 60 years
- The new YMCA to be named -- John W. Lindsay



2003

- YMCA turned 150 years old
- Development of the first Strong Kids Campaign (contributions totalled **over \$91,000**)
- YMCA Newcomer Services received the Citation for Citizenship – the Federal Government recognizes organizations/individuals for their service to immigrants. The YMCA was nominated by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission



2016

- YMCA is part of the national initiative to welcome Syrian refugees, helping over 800 refugees feel at home across the province
- Partnership begins between YMCA Employment Services and Nova Scotia Works
- Excavation began for the John W. Lindsay YMCA



2017

- **November 17, 2017**
Wade Smith, a long time volunteer with the YMCA, wins a Posthumous Senate of Canada 150 Medal
- Premier Stephen McNeil and Member of Parliament for Halifax Andy Fillmore helped unveil the cornerstone of its new John W. Lindsay YMCA facility on the corner of South Park and Sackville Streets



2018

November 21, 2018
The first ever "Out and Equal" 2SLGBT+ Job Fair held at our YMCA NS Works Gottingen Street location.



2018

November 22, 2018
YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast at Pier 21 with Bridget Brownlow, President of Peaceful Schools International, as award recipient and keynote speaker.



2019

John W. Lindsay YMCA slated to open its doors.

2000

2003

2004

2009

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

“The YMCA feels like home to me. It’s great to have a safe place to come to and hang out.”

– Heavyn Beals





Heavyn

Leadership starts here.

From the age of four, the Community Y on Gottingen Street has been a huge part of Heavyn Beals' life. Her family connections to the YMCA runs deep – she started out playing on a Little Dribblers basketball team coached by her dad.

Heavyn played on the midget-level Panthers team and was often found shooting hoops at the Community Y. In addition to practicing her skills on the courts, Heavyn also participated in many of the Community YMCA programs for children and youth, including Kids in the Kitchen, the after school program, and Junior Leaders. "The YMCA feels like home to me," she says. "It's great to have a safe place to come to and hang out."

Heavyn says that the Junior Leaders program in particular made a big impact on her life. As part of the program she was given opportunities to volunteer with younger kids and work on career planning, which both inspired her future plans. "I want to be a child psychologist," says Heavyn. "I love working with kids. I want to know what their problems are and help them through it."

Heavyn is doing very well since the Panthers, currently playing for a prep school in Ottawa, Central Tech Blue.



Linda

“Because of the Y,
I’m on a journey
that is filled with
light and joy!”

– Linda Carey

A group of people, mostly women, are participating in a group exercise or dance class. They are in a room with a wooden floor and large windows in the background. Many of them have their arms raised in the air, suggesting a moment of celebration or a high-energy part of the routine. The overall atmosphere is positive and active.

A healthier you starts here.

Nine years ago, Linda got a big wake up call from her doctor. Her partner had recently passed away after battling illness for three years, she was dealing with stress in her job and her only coping mechanism was over-eating and poor food choices. Linda's doctor had diagnosed her with Type 2 Diabetes. It was a pivotal moment for Linda and she asked her doctor for some time to turn things around before starting on medication. That's when Linda found out about YMCA Forever Fit classes and started attending regularly.

After going to classes for a few months, Linda was able to get her health back on track. Linda was so dedicated to the program that two of the instructors took her under their wings and encouraged her to go through training to become an instructor herself. Linda's life was transformed and she was able to avoid diabetes medication.

"At the time when I got involved with the Y, I was at a low level of depression and sadness, and heading for disease," Linda says, "Because of the Y, I'm on a journey that is filled with light and joy!"

The difficult times were made easier by the support she had from the participants in her classes, but her health challenges were not over. In 2012, Linda was diagnosed with breast cancer and continued to teach throughout her treatment. "My people encouraged me," she says. "They kept me strong."

"We're not just a class, we are friends," says Linda with a beaming smile. She plans to keep teaching for years to come, following in the footsteps of Ida Hebert, a former YMCA yoga instructor in Ontario who holds the Guinness World Record for oldest yoga instructor. "I have her picture up on my fridge. That's going to be me!"

The Value of Volunteering

Meet **Shawn** (left)

Shawn grew up going to the Community Y, and learned a lot of valuable life lessons. He wanted to start volunteering to give back to the kids, and has been volunteering for a total of 15 years at our YMCA. Shawn coaches the Junior NBA and Panthers Basketball teams. Both of his sons now play! He says, "kids are the best motivator for volunteering. They're engaged and want to learn." Thank you for your years of service Shawn!



Meet **Madhurima** (left)

She started volunteering in 2017 when she moved to Halifax from India. She's been a huge support at the YMCA helping with events and assisting with administrative tasks.

She's gained new skills fundraising, which have helped her to better understand the Canadian workplace culture. Always ready to lend a hand, her sewing and educator skills have increased the number of participants at the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs Sewing Social. She says, "The Centre for Immigrant Programs is so full of energy and amazing set of people, volunteers, and staff, that are working toward making Halifax/Dartmouth an absolutely wonderful place to live". Thank You, Madhurima.

Meet **Twila** (centre)

Twila volunteers assisting instructor Linda Carey at our Forever Fit program. Each participant gave Twila glowing reviews saying, "she has the greatest laugh and most infectious smile". "She doesn't just open the door, she actually greets us for every class." Linda emphasized that she couldn't do the class without Twila, "she's always there when I need her. If someone falls sick, or misses class for a few days, she follows up with a phone call. People have to understand that we have a large variety of individuals, and as an instructor my people are my heart. When someone gets sick or can't go on, Twila is there to help me ... and that's what it's all about." Thank You, Twila.



Meet **Susan** (far left)

Susan came to the YMCA about 7 years ago for rehabilitation with the Abilities in Motion Program (AIM) after sustaining injuries

from a car accident. At the end of each workout session she practiced Tai Chi, and soon enough other participants in AIM took notice and wanted to learn Tai Chi as well! Susan decided to volunteer teaching Tai Chi at AIM, and has been for about 5 years now. Thank you, Susan!

Meet **Svetlana**

Svetlana volunteers at our Centre for Immigrant Programs in the Active Children's Program, assisting with several activities (including

martial arts!), events, and trips, as well as helping students with their homework during Youth Homework Club. We appreciate all you do, Svetlana!



"Grand Friends is a unique opportunity for children to have close contact with older generations and to begin to understand the aging process. For many seniors, it's a reason to get up in the morning."

– **Marg MacDonald**
YMCA Grand Friends Lead



*In loving memory of
George James "Marshmallow" Forsyth
(July 5, 1929 – April 25, 2016)*



Grand Friends

George "*Marshmallow*" Forsyth

To the children from the YMCA Child Care programs he was known simply as "Marshmallow." A jokester at heart, George Forsyth was always excited to take part in the Grand Friends program at the Camp Hill Veterans Memorial Building.

The Grand Friends program brings together children from our YMCA Child Care with the residents at Camp Hill for social activities, including arts and crafts, gardening, music, baking, and physical activity. It offers a unique experience for both generations to get to know each other and develop friendships.

George's son, George Jr., often visited with his dad during the Grand Friends program and enjoyed seeing the smiles on the faces of the participants.

His dad would light up when the kids came for visits. George Jr. says, "He called kids magical, because they can do anything they want or be anybody they want when they grow up."

George Sr.'s favourite activity with the kids was art and he loved having pictures that the kids gave to him decorating his room. A veteran of the Korean War and living with Alzheimer's disease, George recognized the pictures of himself with the kids from Grand Friends on display in Camp Hill.

The nickname "Marshmallow" originally came from George's family as he frequently roasted marshmallows with his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren over fires in the backyard. George Jr. would bring in mini marshmallows for his dad to share with the kids in Grand Friends and one of them called him "The Marshmallow Man." From then on, the nickname "Marshmallow" stuck and the kids loved to visit him and share a mini treat!

"We try our best to make sure that every child has the opportunity to be involved in our programs no matter what their financial situation is. That's huge."

– Terry Dixon

Terry



Irvine Carvery is the current Director of the Community YMCA as his life comes full-circle. Describing himself as a “Y Guy,” he came to the Community YMCA after he was relocated into the city from Africville when his community was destroyed in 1965.

He was attending a different school than his old school friends, and so the Community YMCA was the place to make new friends “in town” as he calls it.

“It was always a place to go to meet friends, but more importantly, it was a place to go to stay out of trouble. Because we were always looking for trouble. Even today, parents in the community know that their child can be out at the Community YMCA. They know they’re going to be safe, and there are people that are going to care for them and love them as if they were family members.”

Irvine sees his role at the YMCA as just a small way he can give back to the community that gave so much to him. Recently a coaches meeting at the Community YMCA reminded him of this dedication that everyone in the community feels.



Irvine

“That sense of belonging, that sense of responsibility – that’s what makes the YMCA special. Every one of those coaches in that gym were there for the right reasons because they wanted to give back what they were able to get out of being a part of the Community YMCA.”

– Irvine Carvery

Jade Verney's life at the Y started at 10 years old when she came to play basketball. Her first coach was Stephen Nelson – the very person that she now shares an office with as Youth Development Coordinator for the Community YMCA!

Jade played basketball from ages 10 to 16, including playing for Citadel High School. She came back to coach in order to give back to the kids. After working for the YMCA part-time since 2011, she secured her full-time position last fall.



Jade

"Being able to come back home and live through the Y all over again and securing a full-time position just makes me not want to go anywhere else. I love this place."

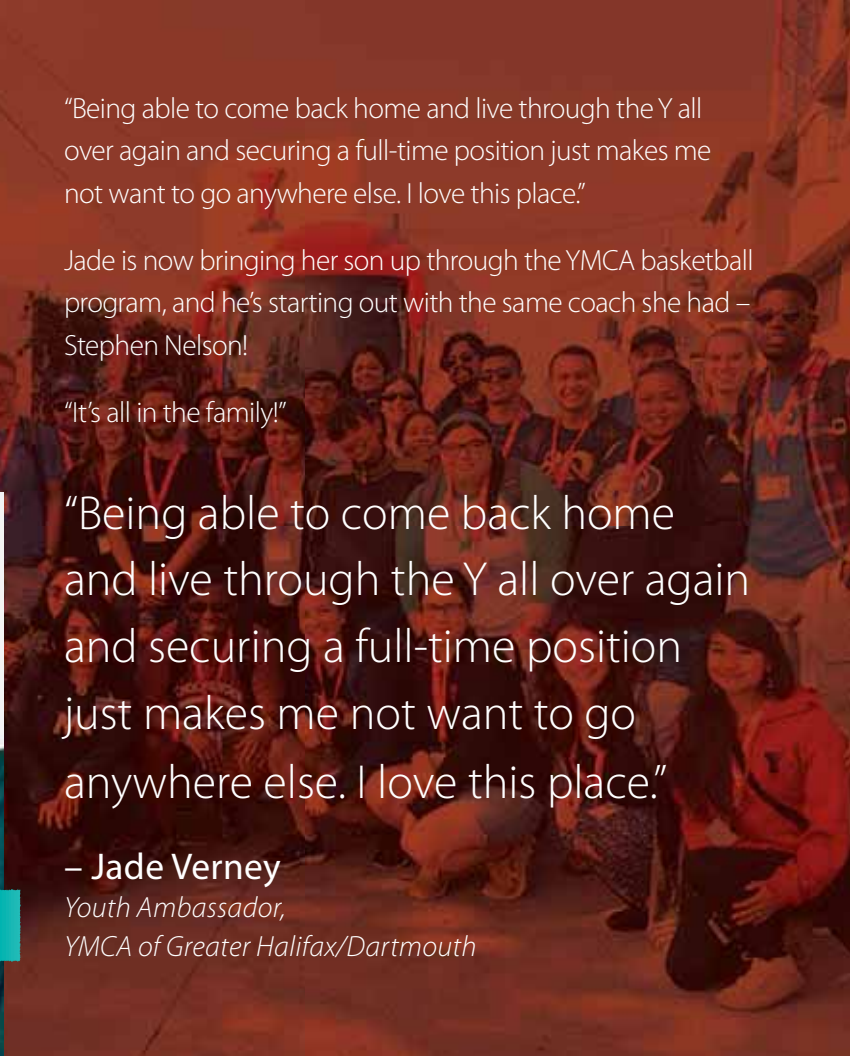
Jade is now bringing her son up through the YMCA basketball program, and he's starting out with the same coach she had – Stephen Nelson!

"It's all in the family!"

"Being able to come back home and live through the Y all over again and securing a full-time position just makes me not want to go anywhere else. I love this place."

– Jade Verney

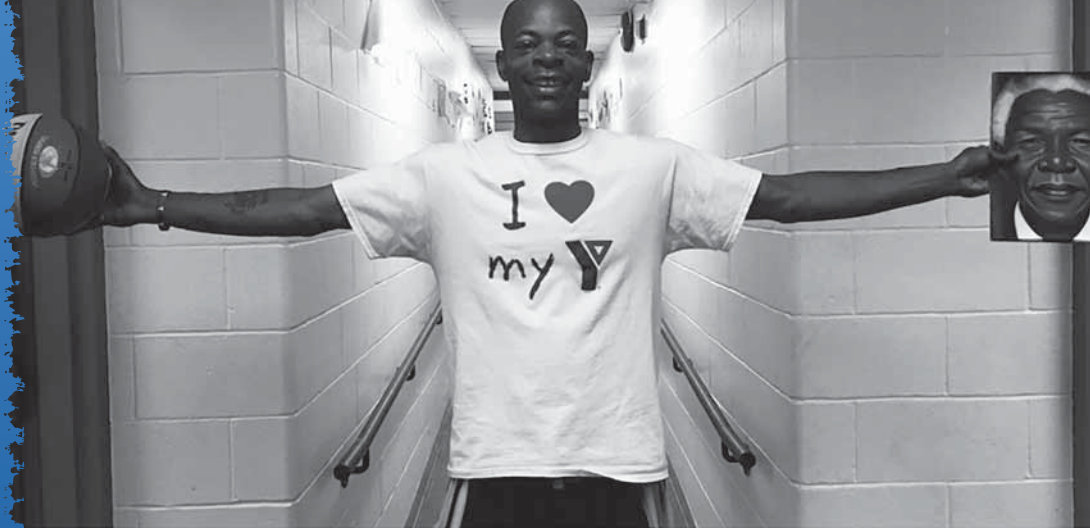
Youth Ambassador,
YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth



"My Y story
is helping
others create
their own
Y Story."

– Stephen Nelson

*Program Director at the
Community YMCA*



Stephen

Stephen Nelson is the Program Director at the Community YMCA and has grown up in the Y.

"Back in the day, there wasn't a lot of technology, and when everyone had fun, it was at the Y. I started back when I was five or six, when my father was actually one of the coaches."

Stephen stuck it out with basketball with strong guidance from his coaches and parents. As his skills grew, he made his high school team and the Nova Scotia team, but he always credits the YMCA for building him up.

He graduated from high school in Halifax and attended Cape Breton University to study a Bachelor of Arts in Community Studies while playing basketball. After graduating, he played basketball in China and Korea before coming back home. Upon his arrival back on Nova Scotia ground, he came to watch his niece's basketball game, and within days became her coach.

"The Y is that place. It's that hub where it happens, and it

never stops happening. The Y has just been here. We grew up thinking 'Each One, Teach One' and 'if I got it, you got it' and that's all we knew."

"I have so many Y stories, but the biggest one that sticks out for me, is the exchange program. It's when we take kids out of the community and show them other parts of Canada. I can see the impact and how it changes their lives. My Y story is helping others create their own Y Story."

"The Y is that place. It's that hub where it happens, and it never stops happening. The Y has just been here. We grew up thinking 'Each One, Teach One' and 'if I got it, you got it' and that's all we knew."

– **Stephen Nelson**

YMCA Community Action Network (YCAN)

The **YMCA Community Action Network (YCAN)** is one of Canada's national youth service initiatives, part of the Canada Service Corps. The program is for young adults aged 15 to 30, and is led completely by the participants! Groups identify needs in their community and create service projects to address them, gaining employable skills throughout their journey. The YMCA's role is to reduce barriers to participation and engage with youth who may not otherwise have the chance to participate in a service project.



Amber

Women Unlimited, an alternative option for young women who are looking to explore various trades. Should they choose this path, upon the completion of a 14-week program with Women Unlimited, they are offered a seat at NSCC in the trade of their choice!

Pictured above: Amber Grosse, Program Coordinator YCAN in Halifax

YREACH



Our provincial YMCA YREACH Program provides **information, orientation, and settlement/integration support** to Immigrants, Refugees, and their families who are new to communities outside of HRM.

We work with local partners to create welcoming communities and have staff in multiple smaller centres across the province.

- Nine in-person, local Settlement and Integration support sites
- Over 20 different Language Instruction sites

Gender-Based Violence Prevention Project (GBVP)



Made possible thanks to support from Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), the YMCA

of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth has launched a new **Gender-Based Violence Prevention Project (GBVP)** through their YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs. The project began in September 2017 with a focus on working with newcomer children, youth, and families to raise awareness about gender-based violence and how to access available resources within their community. The Project also focuses on capacity building of service providers to engage, support, and better understand how gender-based violence impacts newcomer communities.service project.



Our Farewell to South Park YMCA

Amy Hunt

Started working at the YMCA in 2006. As team leader in membership and sales, she was the friendly face you'd see weekday mornings at the front desk and (still) calls the Y her second home.

"I worked full time at the front desk. It actually reminded me of back home. Our home always had people coming in and out. I'm a people person. We were raised always surrounded by people. The members, I got to know them and developed some relationships with them. We became a family in this space."

"I think the Y is important because to have a strong community you will have a healthy community. It's a place you can always come in and be accepted no matter who you are."

Fred Honsberger

Member of YMCA Halifax since 1975, served on the Board of Directors for 10 years starting in 1980, President 1988/1989.

"There are people here that have known each other I'm sure for 25 years, and if you ask them what that person did for a living, they wouldn't know, because they wouldn't care. All they care about is who you are. And that's kind of nice."

"The YMCA has always been at the leading edge of community need. YMCA programs have traditionally been developed in response to unmet community needs. When the community has met those needs, the Y has moved on to address new needs that have not yet been met."

Excerpts taken from The Coast feature in June 2014. The South Park Y officially closed its doors on May 30, 2014.

Samantha Twohig

Member since 2006

"People always ask me why the Y? And I instinctually say it's because of the pool. And for the most part that is true, but for me it's because I've always felt comfortable being a member of that organization. I like the fact that they don't refuse anyone their services. It's important to feel comfortable in the place where you're trying to better yourself because it can be a really vulnerable experience."

Hugh Gillis

AquaFit volunteer instructor since 1987

"It's the connections you have that are fascinating. Anybody can go to the Y, it welcomes all ages. It's not just buff gym bodies. It's people with different body shapes, different ages, abilities, income levels, and they all feel pretty darn comfortable there."

"A phrase from the Y a number of years ago was 'you can go anywhere but you belong to the Y.' I see that. It's that real connection of community. It's that intangible thing you experience. (There is) just something about the Y."

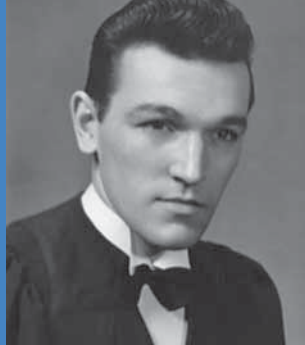
Early Morning Group

Quotes from the class participants, led by instructor Suzanne McDonough

"We can solve the problems of the world after class over our coffee. We could run this city, no problem."

"I come for the exercise but also the camaraderie. We've all gone through various things, so when we sit on the couches, we're able to open up to each other as well."

"If anyone needs us, we will listen. If anyone has a problem, you know you can talk to someone. At other facilities people work out, they go home – this is so much more."



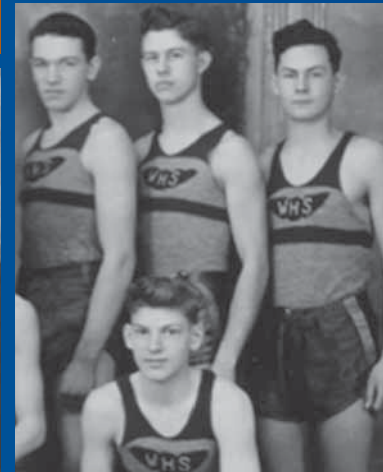
John Lindsay Sr.

John Lindsay Sr. was a volunteer, member, and ambassador of the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth. John joined the Board of the YMCA in early 1960s and remained as Director until 1971, all while remaining an active and encouraging participant of his much-loved YMCA exercise class. He was also active in every YMCA fund raising campaign from 1970 to the time of his passing in 2006. In 2005, he was appointed to the YMCA Fellowship of Honour in a ceremony on Parliament Hill. Because of his dedication and passion for the YMCA, the new Centre of Community was named in his honour.

Even after his passing, John was recognized for his generosity and care. Marjorie and John were celebrated for their philanthropic work in our community with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Funding Professionals at the 30th annual Maritime Philanthropy Awards in 2016. Marjorie reminisced on her husband's giving spirit, saying, "I had an amazing marriage, to an amazing man, and I shaped him well!"



John Lindsay Sr. is survived by his wife, Marjorie, their children, John Jr. and Deborah Rotta-Loria, and their grandchildren, who were his deepest passions. His contributions to, and involvement with, the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth are an integral part of our history.



"Next to my family and friends, the YMCA is the most important thing in my life. I met my wife at the YMCA and my children went to daycare there. I have developed lifelong friendships with many people I would never have met had I not been a member.

When the new facility opens, so many of us will be excited to go to our new second-home, welcome new members to the YMCA family, and create new memories."

– Jim MacGowan

Jim holds up a shower handle from the old South Park YMCA that he keeps in his gym bag as a reminder that he will soon be home again in our new YMCA!







165 YEARS of Community Building

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YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

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