



Shine On

2024
Gratitude

REPORT



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You helped
make this possible

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Message from Stephen MacDonald

Chair, YMCA Board of Directors

At the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, we believe in the power of community—and this past year, you’ve shown just how strong that community can be. Thanks to your generosity and commitment, we’ve been able to ensure that no one is left behind, providing vital programs and services that help individuals and families thrive.

A key highlight from this past year was our marquee event, YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast, where over 80 youth gathered to celebrate and be inspired by local change-makers. Seeing so many young people engage in conversations about leadership, peace, and making a difference was truly remarkable. It’s a reminder that when we invest in our youth, we invest in a brighter future for all.

Through our annual campaign, *No Person Left Behind*, we continued our mission to break down financial barriers, ensuring that everyone has access to the life-changing programs and services the YMCA offers. From health and wellness initiatives to youth programs and community outreach, your support makes it all possible.



YMCA Board of Directors (left to right back row): Sanjay Khanna, Michelle Bussey, Stephen MacDonald (Chair), Lora MacEachern (Vice Chair), Jacob Woods, Kevin Stoddart, (front row) Samantha Nixon, Ashley Hill, and Mary Navas (missing from photo) Krista Jangaard, Safia Rahemtulla, Sarah McInnes, Shelly Martin, Sian Wren, and Sonia Beattie

Your generosity has also helped fuel important initiatives like our Y-EATS program, providing after school meals for children who need them most. Because of you, kids in our community are not only nourished but also supported in ways that go beyond a meal—they’re given a sense of belonging and the opportunity to grow.

None of this would be possible without you.

Your kindness, dedication, and belief in the power of community inspire us every day. On behalf of the entire YMCA family, thank you for making a difference. Together, we are building a healthier, more inclusive community—one person at a time.

With Sincere Gratitude,

Stephen MacDonald | Chair, Board of Directors
YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

YOU HELPED MAKE THIS POSSIBLE

Our impact in 2024



9,000 nutritious meals
were served to our after school
youth through Y-Eats



294 basketball games
helped us ignite the potential
in our youth



**1,211 weeks
of summer camp**
were financially assisted by the
Gift of Camp Campaign



**1,823 individuals were
financially assisted**
gaining the opportunity
to shine



\$604,800
raised in donations,
foundations, and grants



10,000+ youth
accessed life changing
programs and services

“Since joining (Panthers Basketball) in September, Inioluwa’s growth—both on and off the court—has been remarkable. Beyond the technical skills, basketball has taught Inioluwa valuable life lessons. It’s inspiring to see the power of sport in shaping young lives, and I hope more families are encouraged to explore such opportunities.”
- Tiwalola, Community YMCA Panthers Parent



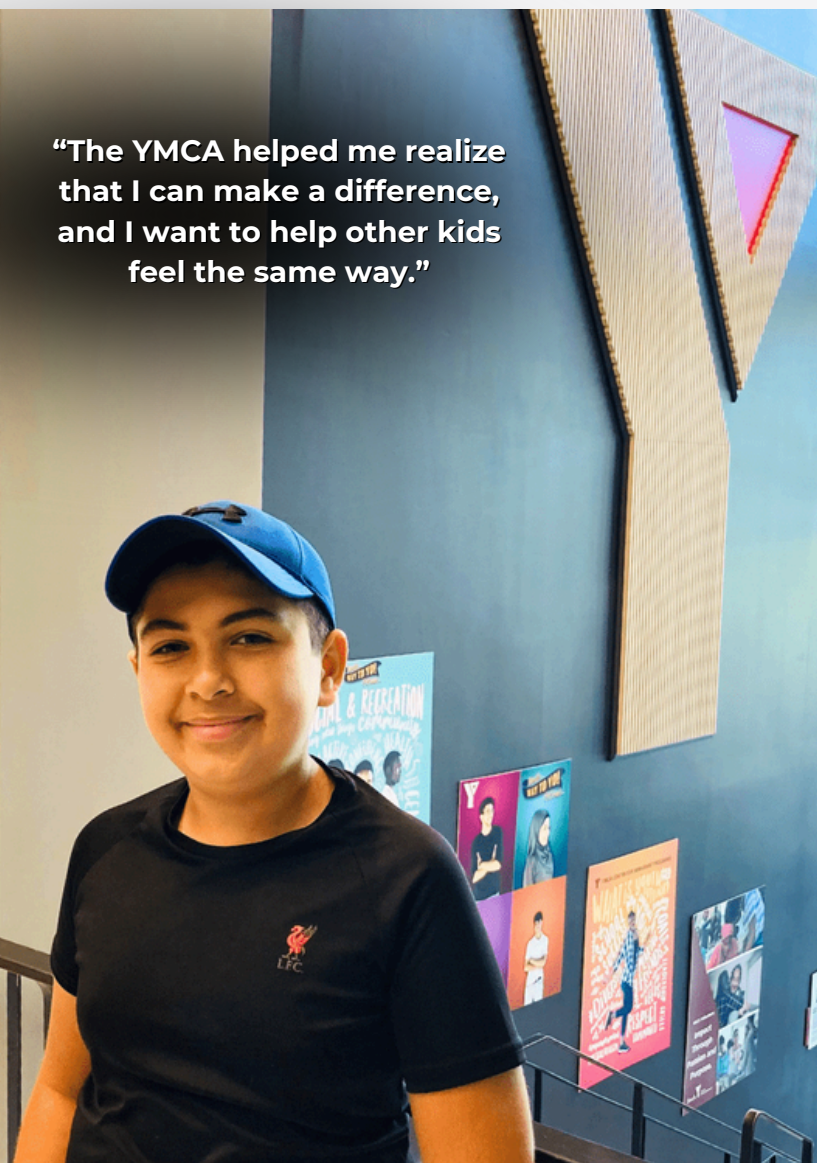
**NO PERSON
LEFT BEHIND**

Igniting the Potential in Young Leaders of Today

At the YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth, we believe in the power of youth and their ability to lead today and shape tomorrow. Guided by our commitment statement, “No Person Left Behind,” we aim to empower families to move forward while ensuring that children flourish in an environment where creativity and purpose thrive. Through our programs, we ignite the potential of young people, giving them the tools and opportunities to succeed as leaders in their communities.

Among the many inspiring youth in our programs, Moustapha Aljallad and Nada Al Ali stand out as shining examples of youth leadership. Their unique journeys reflect the transformative power of mentorship, shared experiences, and the profound impact of community engagement.

Moustapha Aljallad: A Young Leader on a Mission to Inspire



“The YMCA helped me realize that I can make a difference, and I want to help other kids feel the same way.”

As a summer day camp volunteer, Moustapha took on responsibilities beyond his years, showing an eagerness to contribute to his community and grow as a leader. “Usually, people my age don’t get this opportunity, and I took it. I don’t regret it for a second,” Moustapha says proudly.

His involvement began with the Swim Pizza Movie program at the John W. Lindsay YMCA, and soon, his role expanded to include various summer day camps. Through these experiences, Moustapha learned invaluable life skills. “Patience and teamwork were big ones for me,” he shares. “I learned how to stay calm when things get busy, and I figured out how to work together with people of all ages. That’s something I’ll carry with me forever.”

What sets Moustapha apart is his ability to inspire others. “A lot of young kids now want to be volunteers because they’ve seen me do it,” he says, beaming. “It makes me feel proud that I can be a role model for others, even though I’m still learning myself.” His journey at the YMCA has ignited his passion for giving back and helping others discover their potential.

Looking ahead, Moustapha is excited about continuing his journey with the YMCA, with plans to work part-time and eventually create programs for other youth. “I want to develop a program that teaches kids about volunteering—how important it is, and how much you can learn from it,” he says with determination.

Through his volunteer work, Moustapha has discovered his passion for leadership and a deep sense of community engagement. “The YMCA showed me how to turn small actions into big changes,” he says. “It’s not just about the tasks you do; it’s about the people you meet and the ways you can help them. That’s what keeps me motivated every day.”

Nada Al Ali: Empowering Youth Through Support and Creativity

Nada Al Ali, another shining leader at the YMCA, reflects the organization’s purpose of igniting the potential in children and youth.

One of her most memorable moments was guiding her day campers through an end-of-summer talent show. “At first, the campers were nervous, but after days of practice and encouragement, they built the confidence to perform. The excitement and pride they showed during the performance were unforgettable,” Nada recalls. “Seeing them overcome their fears and shine in front of their friends was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.”

Throughout her journey, Nada has also discovered the personal fulfillment that comes with youth development. “The best part of working with the campers is watching them grow, not just in their skills but in their confidence. They come in shy and uncertain, but by the end of the summer, they’ve developed friendships and leadership qualities of their own,” she explains.

Her experience at the YMCA has equipped her with invaluable leadership and communication skills while deepening her commitment to youth development. “It’s not just about organizing activities; it’s about building relationships and creating an environment where every child feels valued and supported,” Nada shares. “I’ve learned so much from the campers, and I’m grateful to be part of their growth, just as much as they’re a part of mine.”

“The best part of working with the campers is watching them grow, not just in their skills but in their confidence.”



Thanks to our community, and donors like you, these transformational experiences are possible.



Brianna Cromwell
Director of the
Community YMCA

The Power of Community

by Brianna Cromwell

At the YMCA, we truly live by the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child,” no truer words could be said about what goes on each day at the Community YMCA. Every day, we lift each other up—whether that be through a hot meal, holding each other accountable, or challenging systemic oppression. By supporting one another, we are creating opportunities for our youth who need it most.

As Director, my goal is to continue to support our youth—from the 5-year-olds that first enter our after school program, to the teens in high school participating in our leadership programs.

In 2024 alone, the YMCA supported over 1,000 youth in leadership programs, offered financial assistance to 1 in 6 members, and helped thousands of families access programs tailored to their needs.

The result? Healthier, kinder, and more empowered youth. When young people thrive, families and communities succeed.

By supporting our youth, we are strengthening our vibrant community.

As an African Nova Scotian woman, connecting with my community through my work is more than just meaningful — its a gift. It allows me to uplift, support, and create spaces where culture, voices, and experiences are recognized and valued. Even more powerful is witnessing equity-deserving groups come together—newcomer kids finding common ground with our north end youth despite past tensions, holding space and sharing in Nova Scotian culture.

At the Y, we’re building bridges between communities and creating a space of belonging.

Tek's Journey:

GROWTH, BELONGING, AND GIVING BACK

Tek was born in Ethiopia's Gambela region and spent her childhood in a Kenyan refugee camp. In 2017, she arrived in Canada, full of hope for a new beginning but faced significant challenges. Like so many newcomers, Tek had to navigate cultural adjustments and didn't speak English.

That's where the YMCA stepped in.

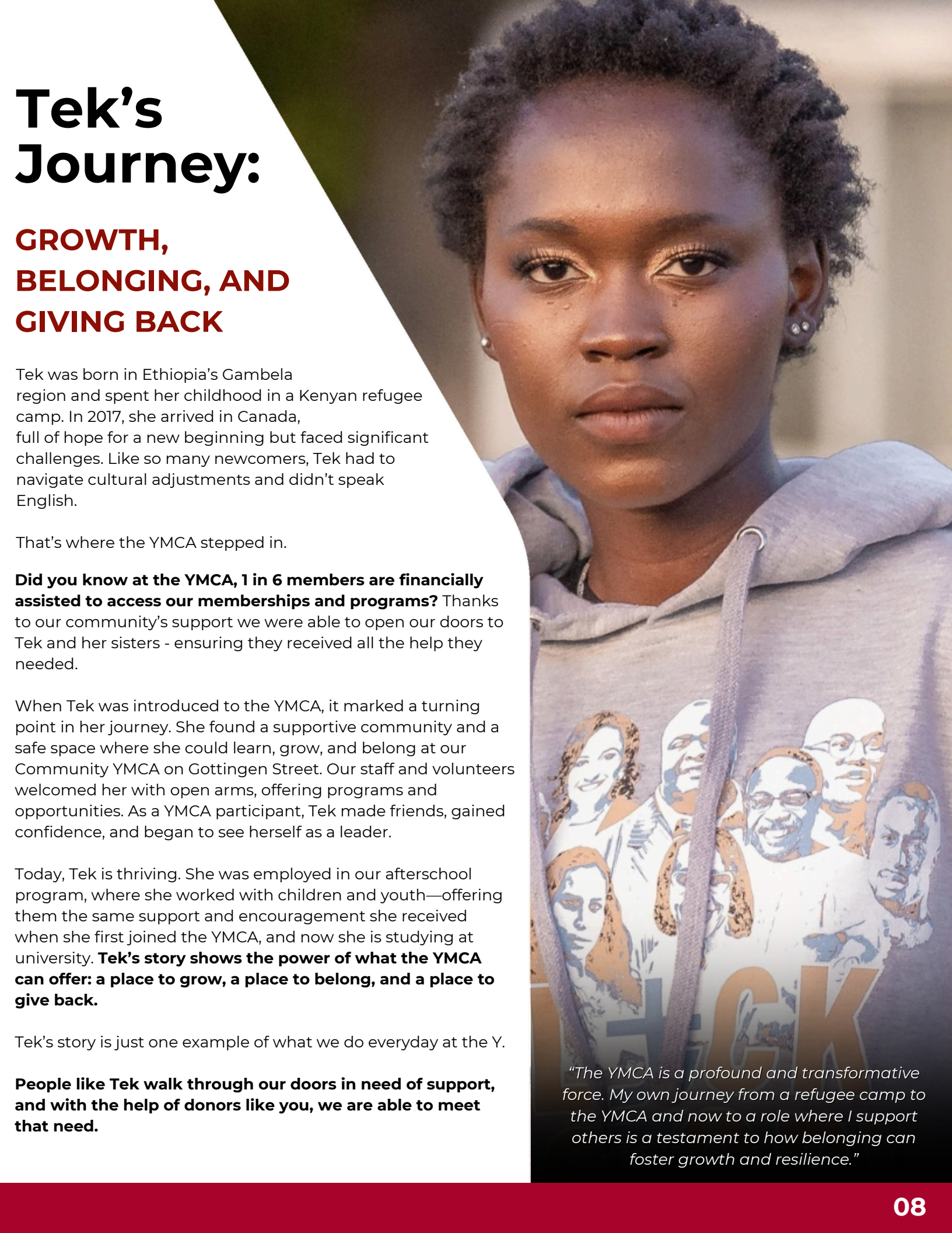
Did you know at the YMCA, 1 in 6 members are financially assisted to access our memberships and programs? Thanks to our community's support we were able to open our doors to Tek and her sisters - ensuring they received all the help they needed.

When Tek was introduced to the YMCA, it marked a turning point in her journey. She found a supportive community and a safe space where she could learn, grow, and belong at our Community YMCA on Gottingen Street. Our staff and volunteers welcomed her with open arms, offering programs and opportunities. As a YMCA participant, Tek made friends, gained confidence, and began to see herself as a leader.

Today, Tek is thriving. She was employed in our afterschool program, where she worked with children and youth—offering them the same support and encouragement she received when she first joined the YMCA, and now she is studying at university. **Tek's story shows the power of what the YMCA can offer: a place to grow, a place to belong, and a place to give back.**

Tek's story is just one example of what we do everyday at the Y.

People like Tek walk through our doors in need of support, and with the help of donors like you, we are able to meet that need.



"The YMCA is a profound and transformative force. My own journey from a refugee camp to the YMCA and now to a role where I support others is a testament to how belonging can foster growth and resilience."

CELEBRATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS



In November, our YMCA youth, **Rakim Gray, Alex Desaulniers, and Nada Al Ali**, shared their inspiring YMCA stories and helped present the **YMCA Peace Medals** to this year's honourees, *Thane Smith, Rhonda Atwell, and Ellis Pickersgill* for their service to peace-building work in their communities. These youth exemplify the YMCA's belief that young people are not only the leaders of today but also the change-makers of tomorrow.

The YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast is a fundraiser that goes towards providing more access for youth to YMCA programs and services. Through connection, inclusivity, and opportunities, the YMCA is committed to empowering youth to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to our communities. Rakim, Alex, and Nada, are shining examples of what it means to lead with empathy and purpose, embodying the values of advocacy, allyship, and service.

A special thank you to all the youth volunteers who joined us in celebrating stories of commitment, resilience, and service, and helped make this event a success, we had **over 80 youth in attendance!**



(Left to right: Thane Smith, Rakim Gray, Alex Desaulniers, Rhonda Atwell, Ellis Pickersgill, and Nada Al Ali)

Thank you to our sponsors



A sincere **Thank You** to our inaugural **YMCA Peace Medal Planning Committee Members**; Lorna MacMillan, Cecilia Moore, Debra Wilson, Jennifer Logan, Gail Sloan, Safia Rahemtulla, and Lana MacLean for their dedication to making this fundraiser a success!

Mark your calendars!

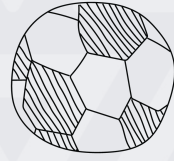


2025 YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast

Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21

November 19, 2025

MAGIC MOMENT



KICK FOR A CAUSE



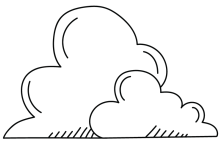
In the fall, we demonstrated the power of partnerships and a shared commitment to philanthropy at our YMCA Staff Soccer Fundraiser, *Kick for a Cause*, held at the Wanderers Grounds. Staff from all departments came together for a day filled with energy, teamwork, and community spirit—all in support of our **No Person Left Behind** annual campaign.

A heartfelt thank you to Certainly Cinnamon Catering for stepping up as our first-ever team sponsor and to the Halifax Wanderers for their incredible generosity in providing their facilities, players, and support. This event is a testament to how collaboration strengthens our purpose of igniting the potential in people.

It is through partnerships like these, and the unwavering support of our community, that the YMCA continues to make a lasting impact on the lives of so many.

Stay tuned for more information about our 2025 Kick for a Cause with The Halifax Wanderers!





GIVE THE GIFT OF CAMP

In the summer, we welcomed over 3,000 campers to our YMCA Summer Camps ensuring that more children experience adventure, learning, and personal growth. Of those, **1 in every 5 require financial assistance.**

Research shows that camp is more than just fun — it's an investment in a child's future. **80% of children who attend camp report increased self-confidence and improved social skills.**

Thanks to you, we were able to provide 1,187 weeks of camp totalling \$178,322 to families that need it most.

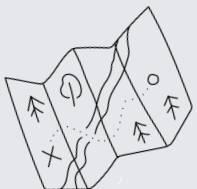
These funds also helped to provide inclusion and support staff for children and families who needed a little more care.



Through our accessible registration for Summer Day Camps, we welcomed a family from Ukraine who had arrived just three weeks prior. The mother, still navigating local systems, was searching for childcare for her son.

Based on need, we were able to offer a 90% reduced camp rate for the summer. Overwhelmed with gratitude, the father used a translation app to confirm: **"Just to clarify, before my wife begins to cry from happiness, this is the total amount we will pay?"** When we assured them it was, the mother tearfully exclaimed, **"This is such a gift! We have been blessed!"**

We've heard many moments like these, because of people like you.



Join us **March 10, 2025** as we launch the **2025 Gift of Camp.**

This year, **our goal is to raise \$25,000, sending 145 kids** to summer day camps. With your support, we can ensure every child — regardless of financial circumstances — has access to the experiences that shape bright futures.

Let's give more children the chance to shine brightly this summer.

Moments that last a lifetime, are ignited by you.



GIVE THE GIFT OF
CAMP



www.ymcahfx.ca/give

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