



Orillia YMCA

connections



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Family Programs at the YMCA

We now offer a number of programs that provide opportunities for parents and children to stay healthy and active together. Preschoolers and their parents can participate in Parent & Tot Aquafit, and parents can join their school-aged children in Family Cycle Class or Fit Family, an exciting new program that will include a variety of activities geared toward fun and fitness for all ages. We have also added an Open Gym time just for families on Saturdays and Sundays. We will continue to offer an Open Swim just for families. See our winter brochure for details on the days and times for all these programs.

Orillia YMCA's Spirit of Giving Campaign

An enormous thank you to all our YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka supporters, donors and volunteers who helped us raise over \$239,000, for last year's 2006 YMCA Annual Giving Campaign. We are getting ready to kick off our 2007 *YMCA Strong Kids Campaign* over the next few months.

Funds raised through the Campaign are directed to our YMCA Spirit of Giving Fund and support individuals who are unable, not unwilling, to pay full-fee for our programs and services. Last year, the Fund supported over 7,000 individuals across our Association to participate in YMCA Camping; Child Care; Employment and Newcomer Services; Health, Fitness and Recreation; and Leadership Development programs.

At our Orillia YMCA your support really made a difference. Thank you!

A big thank you to all those individuals who supported this year's YMCA Spirit of Giving campaign – as a canvasser, a donor or both. Our ability to continue to meet the needs of everyone in our community is directly connected to a successful annual fundraiser. The mandate of the YMCA is to never turn anyone away due to an inability to pay.

Thank you in particular to Elizabeth Cragg, our 2006 Campaign Chair and Tony LeBlanc, Team Leader for the business gifts track. We truly appreciate the time and energy you put into this year's event.

The Kitchen Family

Mike Kitchen joined the YMCA as a teenager. Now married and the father of three, his entire family is involved in the YMCA as a place to exercise, make friends and be a part of their community.

Mike originally joined 20 years ago to improve his fitness level and take advantage of the Friday night activities the Y organized for young people. His wife, Laura, joined the YMCA 15 years ago. The children, 11-year old Matthew, 9-year old Sarah and 2-year old Emma, have been members all their lives.

"It's a win-win situation," Mike said, "You're spending time with your family and you're getting healthy as well."

Mike and Laura both do weight training and cardio. Laura started a running program a year ago, something Mike thinks she might not have done if the YMCA had not supported her in her ambitions.

"She's busy, working as a photo technician and raising three children," he said. "Having a YMCA program to join when she started running made a great deal of difference. She can timetable herself to take the time for that exercise, participate in it and enjoy it."

All the children take swimming lessons and Matthew has participated in leadership programs, which helped him become classroom president at school this year.

The Kitchen family finds the YMCA a friendly place. Over the years, they've gotten to know the staff, shared stories and experiences, and made many friends. "You know when someone takes the time to talk to you at the YMCA, it's not because they are following a policy of being nice to paying customers," he said. "It's just because the people who work there share the values of the YMCA and its Mission and go out of their way to make you feel like you belong. That's what makes the YMCA such a great place."

Recently Mike has furthered his connection to our YMCA and has started volunteering. He's now on the Orillia YMCA Membership Advisory Committee. Personally, Mike feels that he's gotten so much from his YMCA, that volunteering is one way he can give something back. Professionally, Mike is a police officer who works with community members on a daily basis. "I really see the value of what the YMCA has to offer the community. I'd like to support the YMCA to be a success just as it works to support others to be their best."

The Kitchen family lives just outside of Orillia, but they are at our Orillia YMCA three times a week. Mike knows it helps keep them active, especially in the winter, when it's tempting to stay indoors, sit on the couch and watch television.

The Kitchen family plan to continue using their YMCA. "I'm truly fortunate to have the family that I have — I get a lot of intrinsic rewards from them," Mike said. "Our YMCA allows us to celebrate that. We go there and don't ever have to worry about anything except enjoying each other's company and getting exercise."

YMCA Helping Communities Get Active

Active 2010 – Lake Country

The logo for Active 2010 features the words "ACTIVE 2010" in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The text is positioned within a white, swoosh-like graphic element that curves around the bottom and right sides of the text.

All it takes is 10,000 steps a day to be physically active enough to maintain a baseline for a healthy life style. Only about 27% of us, in Ontario, are doing it.

At the Orillia YMCA, we are committed to helping people in our communities be healthy in spirit, mind, and body. In 2005, we chaired a community round table process that resulted in the development of a Community Action Plan that outlined collaborative ways for people in Lake Country communities to become more physically active

The YMCA and the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation funded this planning process under its new Active 2010 strategy.

The planning is over and the community initiatives have begun. The committee's mandate is to promote increased physical activity in the Lake Country communities (City of Orillia, Ramara, Severn, Oro-Medonte Townships and Mnjikaning First Nation), through try-it-on activities, public education and community collaboration. For more information, please call Gilda Evely (Chair) at (705) 325-6168 or email gilda_evely@ymca.ca

Thank you: Ida Herbert

At 90 years of age, Ida Herbert is still an active volunteer and valued instructor at our Orillia YMCA. She joined the YMCA 20 years ago when she and her husband moved here from Toronto after retiring. Ida has been a regular at our YMCA ever since.

Ida has a special way of teaching yoga that makes it accessible for all. From novice to expert everyone feels welcome in Ida's classes. "I don't do the really difficult positions, like 'neck stands'," says Ida. "I like to lead classes in a way that appeals to people who think they can't do some things and then find out that they actually can do them."

"I guess I have a similar philosophy to the Y," reflects Ida "I like to see everyone feel welcome and provide them an opportunity to participate."

With a house and garden to maintain and so many friends that there were five separate parties to celebrate her 90th birthday, Ida still finds that

our YMCA fits into her busy schedule. "It's a very friendly place," she says. "Every time I turn around somebody is saying "hi" to me."

Ida says that if she hadn't kept up a regular exercise program, she probably would be immobile by now, sitting in a wheelchair. "Good genes are important" she adds, "but you have to keep working out to get the benefit of them."

Not only a committed volunteer yoga instructor, Ida also supports our YMCA Spirit of Giving Campaign. For many years, Ida's Christmas gifts to her friends include donations in their name to the YMCA Spirit of Giving fund that provides financial assistance to community members who are unable to pay full fee. "The YMCA offers our community a variety of great programs that everyone can benefit from. I'm glad I can help others enjoy what's available at their YMCA."

Ida, we're delighted that you continue to be a part of our Orillia YMCA community. Your involvement and support help us make our YMCA a better place for everyone in our community. Thank you.



YMCA Peace Medallion

Every year in November the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka along with other YMCAs around the world celebrate YMCA International Peace Week and urge people to make peace their personal cause. Let's believe that we can make this world a better place – a place where each of us can live free from conflict, violence and war, from greed and hunger and from inequality and injustice.

This involves determination, courage, compassion, hope and sometimes forgiveness. Building peace begins with you and me, through changes in our relationships with those around us. Let's begin by using our values to shape how we act every day with our families and in our communities.

At the YMCA, through games and activities during Peace Week, children and youth explore the meaning of inclusion, respect, commitment, responsibility, equality and justice. They are able to translate values into actions by exploring topics such as cooperation, empathy, positive communication, conflict resolution, and parallels between community and global issues.

The highlight of YMCA Peace Week is the awarding of the YMCA Peace Medallion to recognize the best person or group, who through their volunteer efforts, demonstrate and model how each of us can contribute to peace at the Volunteer and Donor recognition event held in November at Horseshoe Valley Resort.

The Orillia YMCA Peace Medallion was awarded to John Mayo

John was nominated for this recognition by the Big Brothers-Big Sisters organization of Orillia. John Mayo is a kind hearted and modest citizen who offers his time and his financial support to Big Brothers-Big Sisters with no expectation of recognition or reward. His volunteer involvement began approximately five years ago, when he became one of the first mentors in a school-based friendship program. John was an outstanding role model, spending time reading, playing quiet games and teaching a young boy to play chess.

John is now matched in the one-to-one program with two little brothers. Within these relationships, he has practical opportunities to deal with issues of conflict and has seen the boys through difficult times with peers. He also ensures that their parent is able to attend community and school meetings, which also assists in the development of the boys. He provides opportunities for families to work through conflict, enabling them to help themselves, thus bringing an end to a cycle of difficulty and despair. John has been instrumental in guiding the lives of the young people in this organization. He goes well above and beyond in ways that most people will never know. Yet, within all of his activities and his giving, he avoids recognition. As he often says, "I probably get much more out of this than anyone else". John is also a leader in the Kiwanis Club of Orillia, has been involved on a number of boards of directors for local organizations, helps coach his daughter's lacrosse team and is actively involved in Project Umbrella Burma, a charitable organization which works to provide medical and educational assistance to people displaced by civil unrest. As stated in the Peace Medallion nomination form, "No one is more deserving of this recognition than John." The Orillia YMCA is proud to recognize John as our 2006 Peace Medallion recipient. Through his charitable and volunteer work, he demonstrates in his life and his actions that each of us has the power to make a difference.

Elizabeth Cragg

Elizabeth Cragg, the 2006 Chair of the Orillia YMCA Spirit of Giving campaign, never had a home town until she moved here two weeks after her first child was born.

"I spent my childhood traveling the world with my parent's work. I went to high school in England and visited my family in various parts of Africa, during my years in university," she said. "I was determined to give my own family a place to live where they knew people and people would know them, so as soon as my daughter was born, we came to Orillia."

Even though Elizabeth had no experience with the YMCA while growing up, her husband's family has been with the YMCA in Orillia for decades. His grandfather's picture, in black and white, from the 50s, is on the wall here at the Orillia YMCA. Her father-in-law was a member of the Y's Men's Club for years.

"The Y for us has a real sense of history and family," she said. "I think that's why the YMCA thrives in Orillia because so many people want to be involved in community and want to contribute."

"The Orillia YMCA has so many dedicated volunteers who do a lot to make it a special place. It seems everyone has volunteered in some way."

Our YMCA was waiting for a chance to bring Elizabeth on board as a volunteer. She had been working long days at Casino Rama. When she announced she was leaving her job, we realized she may have some time to spare and we asked her to consider volunteering. To our good fortune Elizabeth said yes and then agreed to chair this year's YMCA Spirit of Giving Campaign.

Elizabeth has campaigned widely for our Orillia YMCA. "I believe in the values of the YMCA and in the effectiveness of its community programs and services," she said. "I have seen the benefits first hand. Sharing the YMCA story and asking people to make a donation is easy for me."

"People tend to think of the Y as a place to do physical activity. In fact, the YMCA offers a whole range of health-improving and community-strengthening services. I see the growth of people who get involved. It's especially apparent in the children and youth. For example, the young teenagers who taught our kids to swim three years ago are now confident, responsible, giving individuals who are 18 and 19 years old — they have become contributing members of our community thanks to the YMCA."

Elizabeth, thank you for your belief in our YMCA and your commitment to supporting our efforts through sharing your time, talent, and treasure. Volunteers like you make our YMCA family stronger for all.

Making Friends at the YMCA

- Chris Rutte



Chris isn't really sure why it took him so long to join our YMCA, "It had been something I always meant to do, but never got around to" reflected Chris. In September, 2005, Chris joined and he says "it's one of the best things I've ever done."

"Right from the start, I liked the facilities which are always clean and the equipment is in good condition. That's not always been the case at other gyms that I've used. But it doesn't take long when you're a member at the Y to realize it's different to other gyms, because it's more than a gym. At the Y, all the staff are great. They are friendly and welcoming and really make you feel part of the YMCA community right from the start. I can't say enough good things about them. It's not just the staff that generates this great community feeling. The other members are also welcoming and friendly; enjoying being at the Y together. It's a great feeling of camaraderie."

Chris initially joined our YMCA to enjoy basketball, work with weights and improve his overall fitness level. Chris was already in great shape. He was a member of the Canadian Half Pints basketball team that toured schools throughout North America using basketball to share the important 'don't tease' message.

Chris is pleased with the results of his weight training program at our YMCA. He has started to see improvements with his overall strength and he's proud of his accomplishments. "I can lift a lot more than I used to, and it's satisfying to see the improvements I've made," says Chris.

"What took me by surprise at the YMCA is how it has positively affected the rest of my life. I came to improve my health but I didn't expect to improve my social life as well. I've made some great new friends here and we often hook up at the Y and then afterwards go out and do something together."

Chris is thinking about what he'd like to do in the future too. "One of the things I enjoy at the Y is [the presence of] all the kids. I think because I stand out from everyone else they will often come and chat with me. They have so much energy and enthusiasm - it's great. I would love to work with kids in some way, perhaps here at my Y too," shares Chris. "I wish I had belonged to a place like the YMCA when I was a kid," says Chris, "I can't believe it has taken me so long to join and find this great community that I can be part of."

"You know, the Y builds a stronger community for everyone. It's a wonderful community place," states Chris.

**Chris Rutte, Member,
YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka.**

Did You Know?

One hundred and eleven years ago, William G. Morgan, who was an employee of the YMCA Chapter in Holyoke, Massachusetts, developed the first game of Volleyball. Morgan called the game "Mintonette" (from Badminton) and created it for businessmen as a game that afforded less physical contact between players than Basketball which he knew from YMCA colleague, James Naismith. Morgan borrowed aspects from several games in creating Volleyball: tennis (the net, though it was 6 foot 6 inches high, so it was just over the heads of average men), a German game called Faust ball, basketball, baseball, and handball. It was during one of the demonstration games of the sport that Volleyball got its name when one of the spectators commented the game was more about volleying.

One hundred years ago, the first official game of volleyball was played at the YMCA's Springfield College and became a pet sport at a variety of different colleges. By 1900, volleyball was popular enough to have its own ball. Amazingly, volleyball became an international sport in its early days and to this day remains popular.



General Manager Message



Over the past few months we have seen familiar faces return to our facility and new members experience the YMCA for the first time. Welcome, or welcome back, to all!

I would like to take a moment to thank our YMCA volunteers. Throughout the summer and fall they have continued to provide

exceptional group fitness programs in both the gym and the pool. As an organization that is volunteer-driven, we are always looking for ways to engage members of our community in meaningful volunteer opportunities. To find out about the many ways you can make a difference at our YMCA, please give me a call.

In June, we were sorry to say goodbye to Judy Stafford, Program Coordinator for Aquatics, Youth and Teens, who has relocated to British Columbia. We wish Judy and her family well in their new home.

We would like to welcome Samantha McLean to the position of Supervisor, Aquatics, and Youth & Teens. Sam comes from YMCA Geneva Park, where she was responsible for family and leadership programs. Sam began her new duties in mid-August and has been actively connecting with our members and providing high quality programs in both the gym and the pool.

We are also happy to welcome Will Wong to our staff, as a Personal Trainer. Will has been busy developing individualized training programs for many of our members, as well as leading orientation sessions and teaching fitness classes.

We are happy to report that our swimming lessons are exceptionally popular and our many new non-aquatics programs for children and youth are very well received.

During YMCA Peace Week (November 18-25), we were reminded that each of us has the power to make our community and our world a better place. Through the generosity of our members, we collected over 150 non-perishable food items which were donated to the Sharing Place Food Bank. We also raised almost \$500.00 through our pancake breakfasts which will go to support programs at our partner YMCA in Sierra Leone. Thank you to all our members who demonstrated such a strong commitment to helping others.

With the New Year here, many of us will re-commit to our personal health and well-being. We anticipate a very busy times ahead at our YMCA. Check out our Program Guide for all the details about our programs and services.

Wishing everyone good health and happiness in 2007!

Gilda Evely
General Manager
Orillia YMCA



Increasing access to recreational activities for children and youth

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka has created a new service to increase access to quality recreational programming for children and youth in our communities. Children involved in recreation programs build self-esteem, become healthier and are more productive. The purpose of our Health Star program is to help families who are unable to enroll their children in recreational activities due to limited financial resources. With Health Star, children can be fully or partially funded to participate in programs such as minor hockey, skating, soccer, and swimming, etc. Health Star is part of our healthy living strategy and is funded through the National Child Benefit Program. Health Star is also endorsed by the Child, Youth and Family Coalition of Simcoe County.

For more information about the YMCA Health Star programs please contact Cathy Mills, cathy_mills@ymca.ca, (705)792-7822 ext. 229; or visit our website at www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca

Membership Advisory Committee

We are seeking new members to sit on our Membership Advisory Committee. This committee works together with the General Manager to support the Mission and Vision of the YMCA, and provides support and advice with respect to programs, services and facility issues. Please call Gilda Evely if you would like to find out more about being involved with this Committee at (705) 325-6168 or email gilda_evely@ymca.ca

What's Happening!

- The Lifesaving Society of Canada has made some new recommendations for pool safety. Since our YMCA is always concerned about the safety of our members, we have implemented some new pool ratios. If you would like to know more about these new safe swimming protocols, please stop by our Membership Service Desk for an information sheet.

- We continue to encourage all our members to participate in a free exercise orientation session. This overview will show you how to use the exercise equipment correctly and safely which will enable you to make the most effective use of your workout time. Sign up at the membership service desk today!

YMCA Youth Leader Program

Kudos to our YMCA Youth Leaders who took part in an exciting four day canoe trip to Temagami in late June. The weather was excellent and everyone had a wonderful time, barring the odd mosquito bite and some damp (!) clothing. A big thank you to Amanda Hooykaas, who organized this trip and to Judy Stafford who accompanied our intrepid participants.

YMCA Youth Leaders is a program designed to help young people develop leadership skills in a supportive and experiential environment. We emphasize community and citizenship, skill building, fun, and friendship. The YMCA Youth Leader Program runs from September to June and is open to anyone 12 years and older. See our program brochure or call Samantha McLean for more information.

Supporting Communities, Shaping Their Future

*YMCA Child Care; Conference Services; Day and Residential Camps;
Employment and Community Services;
Health, Fitness and Recreation, International and Philanthropy.*



What a great year it was at our YMCA.

It was wonderful to see our Health, Fitness and Recreation (HFR) Centres filled with community members cooling down from the summer's extreme heat - our swimming pools were especially popular. Now, with winter upon us they are still popular.

Under the care and guidance of our camp counsellors we watched children in our Summer Day Camp programs enjoying their programs and learning through camp activities and games.

Our resident camp YMCA Camp Kitchikewana had another great summer with more children and youth attending this year over previous years, and we had a full summer of families enjoying the wonders of YMCA Geneva Park on Lake Couchiching. I am glad to report that as severe storms blew through our communities our Kitchi campers and Geneva Park cottagers remained safe.

Our Employment Resource Centres were busy this summer too. Our staff provided resources and programs that helped students find summer jobs and aided our communities' unemployed youth and adults to return to the workforce. This fall we relocated our Midland Employment Resource Centre to be more accessible and serve more people.

This summer was also exciting for us at the YMCA as we moved forward with our 2012 Strategic Plan. In the fall, our YMCA opened the new Wasaga Beach facility and construction is proceeding on the new Innisfil YMCA, which will open in late fall of 2007.

The Child and Family Development Department has undergone significant growth this fall opening 9 new locations across Simcoe and Muskoka allowing to serve hundreds more children. Thanks to the generous support of the municipal and provincial governments.

Last year's 2006 *YMCA Spirit of Giving Campaign* raised over \$238,000 to support our YMCA financial assistance program which helped over 7,000

children, youth, and adults participate in YMCA programs they otherwise wouldn't be able to afford. This year's success is due to you – our donors, funders and volunteers – and I am sincerely grateful for your tremendous support. Thank you.

Our YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka has over 700 volunteers, and in November we celebrated and recognized their efforts at our annual Volunteer Recognition Event at the Annual General Meeting. In November, we also recognized the tremendous efforts of our communities' peacemakers as our YMCA celebrated YMCA World Peace Week at events held across the communities we serve.

Our YMCA is blessed by the support and involvement of the individuals and communities that our Association serves. It is a privilege for me to give staff leadership to your YMCA and work in partnership with our many outstanding volunteer leaders as we build strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

Tom Coon
Chief Executive Officer
YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

mission: The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka is a charity that excels at strengthening our communities by providing opportunities for all to grow in spirit, mind and body.

vision: The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka will be the recognized leader in lifelong health and personal growth.

values: Caring, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Respect, Responsibility.

Comments & Contributions

Please contact Lynda Inglis, Editor, YMCA Connections Newsletter regarding the articles and information provided in this issue of YMCA Connections at (705) 726 9622 ext. 245.



PRIVACY STATEMENT: The YMCA strives to ensure that volunteers and staff conduct their relationships with each other, participants and all other Association contacts with integrity, good judgment and fairness. The YMCA respects the right of individuals to the protection of their personal information. The YMCA is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy and accuracy of personal information it collects, uses and discloses about its participants, members, donors, parents/guardians, staff and volunteers.

Orillia YMCA

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