

Looking Ahead Downtown Y Renewal | Y 2025

Following a lengthy property review, the Board of Directors of the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island announced this past summer the sale of the Downtown Y building to Concert Real Estate Corporation.

Concert's purchase agreement allows the Downtown Y to remain in operation in its current facilities for up to seven years, enabling the organization to plan for relocation without business interruption. This sale enables the Y to move forward and pursue opportunities to relocate and build a new, modern Y in Victoria's downtown core.

At the Y's three branches; Downtown, Westhills, and Eagle Creek:



23,698

INDIVIDUALS

improved their health and well being with Y Memberships!



2514

CHILDREN AND TEENS

improved their swimming skills in Y swim lessons

"This is an excellent opportunity for Y participants and the Victoria community. For more than a decade, the Board has contemplated the Victoria Y's aging facilities at 851 Broughton Street."

"As we look to the future with a desire to remain relevant, viable and accessible to all citizens, we have an exciting future ahead and a responsible path forward. Victoria is becoming more urban, and we are optimistic about relocation opportunities given the renewal and investment that is taking place in the core. We have received some strong interest to date, and now that we have a final sale, we can begin to engage with greater certainty." Christine Gleed, Chair of the Board of Directors, YWCA-YMCA of Vancouver Island.

– Christine Gleed | Chair of the Board of Directors, YWCA-YMCA of Vancouver Island

The Y's Holiday Campaign

Tuesday November 27th, is Giving Tuesday - the opening day of the giving season. Charities, companies and individuals join together to share commitments, rally for favourite causes and think about others.

At the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island, GIVING TREES will be at each of our branches: Downtown / Westhills / Eagle Creek

Each tree will display colored tags highlighting important YMCA-YWCA Programs and Services. Please select a tag from one of our trees and make your donation to the Y program that is meaningful to you. **Your gift can offer hope and help at a time when it is needed most.**

Give a holiday gift in a loved one's name! Over the holiday season, you can make a donation of any amount to the Y's Strong Kids Campaign, receive a tax receipt, and have it recognized in the name of a special person. They will receive a special holiday card from the Y describing who made the gift for them and the impact this donation has on the important programs that the Y's Strong Kids Campaign supports.

This is the season to help someone else.

TO DONATE: vancouverislandy.com and click DONATE or visit any branch to make donation in person.

Y Impact



FALL/WINTER
2018-2019

YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island | #202 – 1314 Lakepoint Way V9B 0S2 | P: 250-386-7511 | www.vancouverislandy.com

Honoring Vera Wille

Vera was born in Germany, in the small village of Hausen near Frankfurt. She grew up working in the family greenhouses, seeding, nurturing and harvesting the vast array of vegetables and flowers that were sold to local shops and villagers.

As a young teen she met Frank Wille through the local church youth group and they married at the end of WW2. In 1953, with two young children in tow, they immigrated to Canada, first to Edmonton where their third child was born and then settling in Victoria where they were blessed with six more children. Vera was filled with endless energy as she tended to her growing brood, all the while supporting her husband as he grew his vast business and real estate portfolio. She stood fast as the matriarch of the family, always fair but firm.

Vera's connection with the Downtown Y began by sending her children to swimming lessons and various other youth programs. Summers at Camp Thunderbird were a favorite for the children and Vera, as their absence brought her a brief respite from the ongoing household responsibilities. She began to make time for herself by attending Shirley Main's fitness class on Wednesday evenings. From there Vera explored all the Y had to offer, Yoga with Shirley French, step classes, weight training, swimming and eventually finding her true passion in marathon running at the young

age of 50!! The Y became somewhat of a second home for Vera where she cultivated many enduring friendships.

Frank passed away in 2004, but Vera remained active through her golden years attending thrice weekly training sessions with her trainer and friend Blaise Eagleheart. She always kept Sundays reserved for family, and you could find her walking the trails of Mt. Finlayson or Jocelyn Hill with her dog and various children and grandchildren. Vera is survived by her 9 children, 23 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

The YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island is incredibly honored to have received a significant bequest from the Estate of Vera Wille. The Y recognizes part of this bequest as the first Major Gift towards the Capital Campaign for the new Downtown Y. The other part of Vera's bequest will fund a new roof for the Main Dining Hall at the Y's Camp Thunderbird. **We are very grateful for Vera's financial commitment to the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island. This gift will pave the way for generations to come.**



GIVING CREATES A LEGACY

What others have given before us is what we have today. There is great joy in giving and those who do not give to their true capacity will never know that joy. They will miss the opportunity in their lives to make a difference in someone else's...

– E. Robie Wayne

For more information on Planned Giving to the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island, please contact **Fione Wilson**, General Manager Fund Development.

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Vision: Healthy People, Strong Communities.



Mission Statement

To work together to enhance individual and community potential through participation, learning and leadership.



It Starts Here

The **Y's Strong Kids Campaign** is an annual campaign that raises funds through donations to help provide financial assistance for Memberships, Camperships, and access to the Y's Community Health Programs.

Programs at the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island help individuals develop a healthy outlook and become part of a supportive community. Participation in Y Programs can be life changing.



600

INDIVIDUALS

are assisted with memberships at our three branches on average every month



171

YOUNG PEOPLE

have experienced the Y's Camp Thunderbird this past summer with assistance.



727

DONORS

supported important programs and services at the Y



CAMP THUNDERBIRD

My son Cody recently turned 13 and is now in grade seven. He has gone to the Y's Camp Thunderbird for the last two summers.

Cody has significant learning disabilities. His dyslexia impacts everything he tries to do. From grades 4-6, he experienced severe bullying and was called stupid and dumb. He hated school.

During this time his father and I divorced. Cody's dad was homeless, and I was back to work and trying to support a family after being a stay at home mom for 10 years. With all this happening, along with the death of his four year old cousin, Cody became very sad. It was very difficult to watch. He missed his dad, I was working all the time, and I was grieving and tired too.

"As a single mom, I can't tell you how grateful I am to the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island."

Through the Y's Strong Kids Campaign, we received Financial Assistance the first summer to make Camp Thunderbird possible. Cody went with one of his

classmates and spent a week at camp. When I picked him up, he had more joy then I have ever seen. His counsellors described him as a generous, kind person who was a leader on the hikes and kayaks. He loved camp! He also built a bond with his classmate and now had an ally at school. At Camp Thunderbird, Cody felt as though he counted and was valued.

Cody's brother is also dyslexic and struggles at school, and I cannot wait to have him attend Camp Thunderbird and feel the same joy in such a safe place, because that is truly what Camp Thunderbird is. **It is a place where ALL children can be kids, get dirty, laugh and feel loved. It is a place where children are challenged and supported, and where they come to realize they are capable and good.**

The Chair's Round Table

Do you donate \$500 - \$750 annually to the Y's Strong Kids Campaign? Do you believe in the life changing benefits of Y programs and services and want to make a bigger difference this year?

We encourage you to increase your annual donation slightly and **join the growing group of donors who donate \$1000 or more.** Receive greater tax benefits while making a difference for so many more individuals and families who need extra help.

The **Chair's Round Table** is a very special group of individuals, companies, organizations and foundations who demonstrate the vision, leadership and philanthropy that cultivates the quality of life in our community. Chair's Round Table donors provide financial leadership at the highest level to ensure the YMCA-YWCA of Vancouver Island can fulfill its mission to be accessible to everyone.

The Y hosts a Chair's Round Table reception event every year, and Chair's Round Table donors have a special listing in the Y's Annual Report.



Y Mind

YMCA Mindfulness Groups were launched in early 2018.

"Y Mindfulness gave me effective tools to navigate anxiety attacks and the day-to-day anxiousness and stress that often prohibits me from living the kind of life I want to live. This course helped me identify thoughts and feelings I had been ignoring and trying to push away, and gave me strategies for embracing these feelings while making daily choices that are in line with my values. It was also great to work in a group setting and have the chance to support and be supported by my peers. I can't recommend this class highly enough and have been encouraging everyone I know in my life who wrestles with anxiety to look into attending." – Youth Mindfulness Participant

Y Mind programs offer a free weekly mindfulness-based psychoeducational and support group for young adults and teens who experience anxiety and/or depression. **For more on Y Mind Programs visit:** vancouverisland.y.com/program-services/community-health

Very Special Thank You's to...

THE AMES FAMILY FOUNDATION for generously supporting the Y's Camp Thunderbird with funding for a variety of Capital Improvements since 2011, and the Pandora Youth Apartments Program.

COAST CAPITAL SAVINGS is positively impacting youth and young families at-risk through financial support for the Y's Youth Independence Training offered at the Y's Pandora Youth Apartments and the Young Moms Programs.

THE TOM HARRIS TEAM for establishing the Tom Harris Fund for Families in 2018. Their generous commitment will help send kids to Camp Thunderbird every summer through this fund.

THE TRUDY & DOUG PEDEN FOUNDATION who have generously sponsored the Y's Power of Being a Girl Program through two consecutive multi-year commitments, impacting young girls with the tools to empower themselves and build self-esteem during YWCA Week Without Violence.

THE HARBOURSIDE ROTARY CLUB impacts youth at-risk with funding for additional staff support at the Y's Pandora Youth Apartments Program.

CANADIAN WESTERN BANK for their generous gift to support programming that empowers and builds leadership in girls.

GOLF FOR KIDS for their generous support of the Y's Strong Kids Annual Campaign



133

ENTHUSIASTIC VOLUNTEERS

contributed 17,333 volunteer hours



19,859

VISITS BY CHILDREN

to the Y's Playcare Centres while their parent had a workout!



Meet Basil Boy!

Over the years, John Kelley has initiated numerous creative ways to generate funds for the Y's Strong Kids Annual Campaign to help children and families access opportunities to lead healthy lives. Every summer, John's basil plants are for sale by donation at the downtown membership services desk, and John has hosted annual themed cyclefit classes for Halloween and Christmas where downtown members donate and participate, raising hundreds of dollars.

John joined the Downtown Y 32 years ago because he couldn't catch his eight-year-old daughter when she would run away from him. It was then he decided to dedicate himself to a cardio regime on his lunchbreak. Soon he could proudly outrun his daughter when she would train for cross-country races. Ten years later, John wanted to spread his enthusiasm for cardio fitness as a volunteer cyclefit instructor. His classes quickly grew in popularity as a fun, yet challenging workout. However, volunteering as a cyclefit instructor was not enough for him. The world of volunteering has always been a part of John's life. Besides his efforts with the Y, he was East Sooke's Fire Chief for eight years, and has been involved with fundraising for Help Fill a Dream Foundation for 23 years.

John has a passion for going over the top and thinking outside the box with whatever he sets his mind to. Once he had a whole band playing in the cyclefit room for his Celtic Craze class. Another time he organized cycling wine tours. "This community loves to give!" says John, which inspires him to continue to develop new fundraising strategies.

On top of his fundraising efforts, John always seems to be mentoring a new volunteer cyclefit instructor. His passion for the Y and cyclefit consistently inspires his participants to follow his lead and dedicate themselves to helping create healthy communities through volunteering. He says his motivation to volunteer, mentor and fundraise in new and creative ways is simply for selfish reasons.

"It just feels good to give back."