

Igniting Potential

2023 Community
Impact Report



Message from the Chair, Board of Directors and President & CEO

“Just make your way to the YMCA,” as suggested by the reimagined YMCA song from Walk Off the Earth, serves as an invitation to seek support and assistance in times of need.

The reimagined lyrics, published in 2023 in support of the Y Mind program, convey the YMCA’s role as a welcoming and inclusive space where individuals can find help, guidance, and a sense of belonging.

This message aligns with our commitment to empowering individuals across all stages of life through our diverse programs and initiatives within the YMCA ecosystem.

Our dedicated employees at the YMCA represent our sustainable energy, driving forward our mission with passion and commitment. Without them, there would be no YMCA ecosystem!

In 2023, we embarked on a remarkable journey with the unveiling of our new Strategic Plan aimed at igniting potential and saving lives. Central to this plan is *Shine On*, our newly revitalized YMCA brand, reflecting our dedication to fostering inclusive environments where every individual can thrive and shine brightly.

Throughout the year, we prioritized equity and inclusion, addressing systemic barriers and upholding dignity and compassion for all. Our *Y Saves Lives* campaign exemplifies our charitable mission, offering vital support in times of need, particularly for youth and seniors who face socio-economic challenges.

Our comprehensive array of offerings, spanning health and wellness, child care, housing support, youth leadership development, and mental wellness programs, cater to individuals across the lifespan. We’re committed to empowering community members through our employment and immigration services, ensuring they have access

to the support they need when they need it most and igniting their potential to achieve great things.

In our commitment to community building, we’re collaborating with partners to provide housing support for vulnerable groups, ensuring stability and security, including for the residents in the YMCA Men’s Residence in the Hamilton downtown core.

Aligned with Ontario’s early learning initiatives, our child care centres serve as nurturing environments where young minds flourish, offering families peace of mind. The YMCA implemented the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care initiative, leveraging its expertise and resources to contribute to the goal of making child care more affordable and accessible for families across Canada.

In 2023, our strengthened Child Safety and Protection policy reaffirmed our commitment to prioritizing children’s well-being, earning families’ trust. We are committed to ensuring the highest standards of safety and protection by having every staff member at the YMCA complete the necessary training.

The *YMCA Alternative Suspension* program in Hamilton serves as a beacon of hope for students involved in progressive discipline measures, guiding them towards positive behavioural change and successful school reintegration. Our *LiveWell* partnership empowers seniors to reclaim their well-being and fosters active community engagement beyond health programs.

YMCA Wanakita’s 70th anniversary celebrated a legacy of fostering outdoor appreciation and lifelong bonds, complemented by the recent opening of the Heming Welcome Centre, a heartwarming hub for community gatherings and celebrations.

As we continue to innovate and make a lasting impact, we extend our deepest gratitude for your unwavering support. Together, we can build a future filled with hope and endless possibilities, where every individual can be a spark and shine!



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alyssa Lai'.

Alyssa Lai
Chair, YMCA Board of Directors



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manny Figueiredo'.

Manny Figueiredo
President & CEO

2023 Volunteers and Staff Leadership

OFFICERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Genevieve Hladysh, Vice President, Health, Fitness and Aquatics

Lily Lumsden, Vice President, Employment and Immigrant Services

Christina Martin, Vice President, Child Care, Day Camp and Community Outreach

St. John O'Neill, Vice President, Information Technology, Business Administration and Management Information Systems

Jen Stoddart, Manager, Governance and CEO Support, Office of the CEO

2023 Impact at a Glance



83,356

community members served across our program areas by **1,183** passionate and mission driven YMCA staff.



58,812

members of all ages served in our 5 Health, Fitness & Aquatics centres.



7,246

clients accessed free Employment Training Services & Immigrant Settlement Services both in-person and online.



7,022

children were welcomed to YMCA Child Care, Beyond the Bell™ and EarlyON Centres across our region.



8,861

campers built resiliency, made memories and found life-long friendships at YMCA Wanakita and YMCA Day Camps.



226

men found clean, safe and affordable transitional housing in the Hamilton Downtown Family YMCA Residence.



1,002

generous annual donors made YMCA experiences possible, enabling access for **29,452** individuals across our communities.



Spotlight on Young Voices...



Momina, an 11th-grade student at Glendale Middle School, found a sense of belonging at the YMCA Newcomer Youth Centre. She made connections and friendships, and now she volunteers as a team leader helping others navigate challenges and work toward their goals. She is now working to achieve 1,000 volunteer hours before her graduation in 2025, to empower others to shine just like she does.

"It feels like we're all growing and learning together."

Yousif came to Canada from Imam, Iran with his family in 2021 and found a lifeline at the YMCA. He's involved with the Newcomer Youth Centre and with the help of our generous donors, he was able to attend overnight camp at YMCA Wanakita. From improving English and his grades, to helping him create friendships, Yousif says the Y has changed his life in different ways by improving his English and helping him academically.

"The YMCA has helped me with communication and making new friends, but most importantly, the Y has helped me with my confidence."



Meet **Ella**, a 12-year-old athlete who has belonged to the YMCA community since she was a baby. Ella plays soccer, does gymnastics, skates, swims and does weight training and her strength and skills will only continue to grow. With the support of the Y, Ella and her family have found a place to shine together.

"I like to swim and go on the bars. I have fun at the Y!"



Maggie's journey with the YMCA began in childhood. She went from being in YMCA before-and-after-school care to becoming a YMCA Day Camp counsellor and program specialist. At YMCA Camp Chippewa, Maggie made friendships, grew confidence and developed her leadership skills, while also empowering other young people to reach their full potential. When the summer was done, Maggie joined the YMCA Beyond the Bell™ team, supporting children in before-and-after-school care. Maggie has come full circle, and she has the Y to thank for helping her shine!

"Camp is a judgment free zone. I saw the counsellors being silly and that made me want to be like them."



Meet **Faisal**. He found the YMCA through the Newcomer Youth Centre in 2011 after immigrating from Syria. With guidance from YMCA staff, he pursued his dream of studying policing, graduating from college, and earning a minor degree. Now, as a youth settlement worker, Faisal ignites potential in newcomers and helps guide them to success. He believes in the transformative impact of the YMCA, creating potential in others and fostering hope, growth, and strength for the community.

"The YMCA kind of saved my life by providing that safe place for me to go to after school."

Meet **Keeler** and **Dekard**, twins who find belonging at YMCA Wanakita each summer. Keeler has special needs which means he has one-on-one support, but over the years Wanakita staff have worked with his family to allow him to experience camp independently. For Dekard, camp has been transformative and a place to embrace his true self. For the twins, Wanakita is more than just a camp, it's a place where they can bond, grow and ultimately, shine.

"We've made a lot of memories here. We're so close when we're here. The inclusion program really lets Keeler be just like everyone else."



Meet **Honza**, a lifeguard and YMCA swimming instructor, where he helps young people develop confidence and lifesaving skills. His journey at the Y began with a Bronze Medallion course, which led to a job at the YMCA that fell in line with his passion for teaching. Now, Honza is a spark that inspires others to reach their potential, just as his instructors ignited the potential in him. He is grateful for the friendships and opportunities the YMCA has given him.

"It's great to see others succeed because I know with each obstacle a person overcomes, they are one step closer to achieving their true potential."

Edgar's Story



Meet Edgar Hernandez, the 35-year-old Program Manager and leader behind the YMCA Newcomer Youth Centres. Over the last 18 years, the YMCA has been there to ignite Edgar's potential. He has shown resilience, dedication, and adaptability in his effort to help newcomer youth in our community. Through his leadership, Edgar has not only transformed the Newcomer

Youth Centre experience, but he is also building a legacy within the YMCA community.

Edgar came to Canada from Colombia when he was 13 years old. He says he didn't speak the language well and felt disconnected from the community. One thing he had in common with his neighbours was a love of soccer.

"I had a good friend who was a little bit older than me, who said, 'You know what, let's go to the Y, and let's get you to play soccer there,'" says Edgar. "My first experience [at the YMCA], I thought it was great. It was a beautiful facility, a place where you can connect with people."

At the end of high school, Edgar found a part-time job as a YMCA Beyond the Bell™ Educator.

"I think that's when I started to understand my passion for working with youth," says Edgar. "One of the biggest things I got out of it was talking in front of people and facilitating group programming and activities for these young kids."

In 2010, personal circumstances forced Edgar to pivot from his academic pursuits at Mohawk College and seek full-time employment. With the support of his YMCA coaches, Edgar learned about a new opportunity as a youth settlement worker on the YMCA Immigrant Services team. Working with his coaches and colleagues at the Y, Edgar prepared his resume and applied for the job.

"I got that full-time youth settlement worker job," he says. "**Seeing the leadership of my supervisors and mentors to do what they needed to do to help me out as a person...I think that's what makes the difference at the Y**—the employees are also looked at as people who need support."

The Newcomer Youth Centre became a project for Edgar and the YMCA after the former centre, run by a different organization, was shut down. Looking to garner some trust and rapport in the community, Edgar came up with an idea.



"One of the first things that I did was to organize a FIFA video game tournament, FIFA 2010," he says. "Immediately, we had about fourteen kids sign up for that tournament, and we started playing."

The FIFA tournament has been a monthly activity at the NYC ever since, and it is one of the activities that attracts the most youth.

"The biggest thing for me was that she felt safe enough to come and talk to me at that time so I could help her through it, and she understood that I was someone she could turn to get help."

Under Edgar's guidance and leadership, the Newcomer Youth Centre has grown into a place where youth from all cultural backgrounds and circumstances can build community. They tell their stories and have fun together, but it's also a place where they can find academic help and seek guidance about their future. Edgar has led the growth of the Newcomer Youth Centre, from four or five youths a day to hundreds of young people walking through the doors regularly.

Edgar says it always comes back to his work with youth. He recalls one young woman struggling with her cultural identity as a newcomer to Canada.

"I talked to her and tried to support her through it. But then, I received a call from her at two in the morning, and she was going through a situation where she was contemplating suicide. Thanks to the training I had through the YMCA, I was able to talk her through the situation," he says.



"The biggest thing for me was that she felt safe enough to come and talk to me at that time so I could help her through it, and she understood that I was someone she could turn to get help."

Edgar says he recently spoke with this young woman, and while she is still working through some challenges, she is doing well.

Edgar is a vital part of our YMCA. From his first experiences finding a welcoming place as a newcomer youth to his first role as a Beyond the Bell™ Educator and supervisor, to Youth Settlement Worker and finally to Program Director. Today, Edgar leads a team of 12 staff, manages three Newcomer Youth Centre locations, and manages multiple programs that foster opportunities for growth and belonging.

The YMCA has changed Edgar's life; now, he is changing the lives of the next generation of youth, igniting their potential to shine.



Dorothea and Deborah's Story

Meet Dorothea. She's 83 years old and 12 years ago she had a stroke that forced her to make some changes in her life. That's when she started coming to the Les Chater Family YMCA.

"When I was ready to leave the Hamilton General Hospital, they suggested I continue with rehab at the YMCA and I've been here ever since," Dorothea says.

Dorothea participates in the YMCA LiveWell program created in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences and McMaster University. This 12-week program is designed for prevention and rehabilitation for individuals recovering from a health event—like a stroke or heart attack—and for those living with chronic health conditions. The goal is to improve mobility, strength, balance, gait and coordination, while also creating a space of belonging and community.

"It's great! People are here to help you. If you're not here, they worry about you," she says.

Now, Meet Deborah. She's 58 years old and she started coming to the LiveWell program at the Les Chater YMCA following a heart attack in 2020. She's also Dorothea's daughter.

After she had undergone at home rehab during the pandemic, Deborah was asked if she would like to participate in the Healthy Hearts program—a branch of the LiveWell program—and having seen how much it helped her mother, she immediately said yes.

"It's great! People are here to help you. If you're not here, they worry about you."

Dorothea



Deborah says it feels good to be part of these programs because you no longer feel alone in your experience.

"We've all got the same problem. My mother is in the stroke program, so everybody's had a stroke. I'm in Healthy Hearts, so everybody's had something wrong with their heart," she says.

"You'll say something like, 'I really thought I was going crazy after my heart attack, because I just wasn't getting better.' And now that you're here and you're talking to people, you realize that you're not the only one going through this."

"Coming here has given me a sense of community and belonging," says Deborah.

It's that sense of community that keeps the mother and daughter coming back, even on the days when it feels difficult.

"It's okay to have a day when you don't feel well, and you don't feel like coming in. It doesn't mean you're giving up; it just means you need a day of rest, and that's okay," says Dorothea.

"I call them my 'Heart Family,'" says Deborah. "They really help. If somebody is struggling, we're here for each other. We text each other or we talk to each other. If they don't want to come to work out, we tell them to just come for coffee."

Deborah and Dorothea have become so close with their YMCA community that they even help organize monthly lunches for the group. It's a chance for them to connect in a different way and they often bring family or friends along. Deborah even helped organize a surprise bridal shower for one of the staff.

"We had her mom and dad, her grandma, her sister, brother-in-law and her husband, they all came, and we surprised her with all of them. It was so nice, because all of us Healthy Hearts did it together."

"The Y has changed my life. I love getting up and getting ready to come to Healthy Hearts. Everybody is great and it's just given me another purpose."

Deborah

It's a testament to the strength of community created every day at our YMCA. Deborah and Dorothea both came to the Y following life-altering health events, and years later, they're still here—being supported by their community and supporting them in return.

"It's been a lifesaver. After my heart attack I couldn't go back to work. I wasn't getting out of bed," says Deborah. **"The Y has changed my life.** I love getting up and getting ready to come to Healthy Hearts. Everybody is great and it's just given me another purpose."

Deborah has a final message for anyone thinking about participating in the LiveWell Program or joining the Y.

"Join. Don't hesitate! Try it because it really helps your mental health. The Y and the people here, they make you want to get up in the morning."

2023 Fundraising Report

\$808,633

Community Outreach

\$294,456

Wanakita

\$393,608

Enabling Access

\$307,484

Beyond the Bell™

\$982,664

Other

\$1.89M

Value of Financial Assistance

1,002 Donors | \$2.79M

To our donors, with gratitude...

The YMCA is passionate about creating opportunities and continuously advancing the well-being of the communities we serve—and so are you. It is because of your support and generosity that we can ignite the potential in every person, helping them grow, lead, and give back to their communities.

Thank you to our 2023 Key Supporters*

Estate of Eileen Dorothy Connor

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We couldn't do it without you.



Financial Highlights

Year Ended December 31, 2023

The report includes selected financial information extracted from statements audited by Deloitte LLP. Complete financial statements are available upon request.



Statement of financial position

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Assets		
Current assets	8,591,986	7,562,006
Investments, and LT Receivables	10,472,546	9,518,244
Capital assets	59,702,836	59,454,982
Total Assets	78,767,368	76,535,232
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	16,531,609	16,856,251
LT Liabilities and Deferred capital contributions	37,483,804	38,326,867
Total Liabilities	54,015,413	55,183,118
Net Assets	24,751,955	21,352,114
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	78,767,368	76,535,232

Statement of operations

	2023 \$	2022 \$
Revenue		
Programs and Services	40,470,039	32,225,873
Donations, Grants and Fundraising	26,490,204	20,186,448
Investment (Loss) Gains	374,715	(34,411)
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	1,502,591	1,509,537
Total Revenue	68,837,549	53,887,447
Expenses		
Programs, Service, Compensation, Administration	62,273,637	56,024,937
Interest Costs/Bank Service Charges	154,369	146,044
Amortization of Capital Assets	3,009,702	2,994,987
Total Expenses	65,437,708	59,165,968
Excess Revenue over Expenses	3,399,841	(5,278,521)





GET INVOLVED

The YMCA relies on the financial support of donors and funders who share our vision.

The Y Saves Lives.

[YMCAHBB.CA/Donate](https://ymcahbb.ca/donate)

Charitable Registration #10808 3825 RR0001

OUR VISION

Creating a vibrant and healthy community where everyone thrives, igniting their fullest potential.

OUR MISSION

The YMCA of Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford is a charitable organization that creates spaces to belong and promotes healthy living for people at all stages of life.

OUR VALUES

Caring. Honesty. Inclusion.
Respect. Responsibility.

[YMCAHBB.CA](https://ymcahbb.ca)



Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge that we are situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes.

We further acknowledge that this land is also covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We also recognize the contributions of Metis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening our communities, provinces and country as a whole.

This continues to be the home to many Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful for the opportunity to work in this community on their territory. As settlers we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land for thousands of years. We recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land so that we can better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.