

# Gratitude

## 2020 Donor Impact Report



YMCA of  
Southwestern Ontario



[ymcaswo.ca](http://ymcaswo.ca)

## Because of you...

Every gift to the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario makes a real impact in our community. By giving, you provide children, individuals and families with opportunities to realize their potential and overcome challenges. Last year 3 out of 10 people accessing Y programs were able to do so with financial support because of our donors.

# With Gratitude...

We want to share some stories of inspiring community builders and the impact they make by supporting our YMCA. **Thousands of participants, countless lives changed... forever.**

The pandemic has changed many things in our daily routines, lives, and communities. We understand that the need for connection in spirit, mind, and body will play a critical role in how our community recovers both economically and socially. That is why the Y is here. We are ready to reconnect people from all walks of life with each other.

**When you donate to the Y, you are helping build a vibrant, healthy, and inclusive community.** This will be our most important work moving beyond COVID-19 and for our future generations. On behalf of everyone at the Y, we offer our sincere gratitude for the generosity of our communities.

We are stronger together.

**Andrew Lockie**, CEO  
YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

**Mike Hodgson**, Board Chair  
YMCA of Southwestern Ontario



*"Your financial donation makes it possible for the YMCA to ensure that 3 out of every 10 people who use Y programs have the financial support they need to access them. Thank you for your generous support of the YMCA!"*

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**Marjie Macoun**, Donor and past Board Member  
and **Heidi Peever**, VP Development

# A Legacy For a Healthy Community

I have been a grateful member of the Y since 1983. I have received innumerable opportunities to better myself through the Y's many programs and to get connected to many very special and dedicated people - staff volunteers and other members like me who always seem to bring out the best in each other.

It is in this spirit that several years ago I decided I could perhaps make a difference not only while I am alive, but to preserve the opportunity for future generations to enjoy and grow with this wonderful organization.

I made a choice to leave a Planned Gift to the Y in my will and trust through the wisdom of those who follow me that it will allow others to benefit as I have.

**Bill Stewart**, YMCA Member and Donor

YMCA  
**STRONG  
KIDS**  
CAMPAIGN



I was 13 when my Dad left and my Mom became a single mom of 5 kids under the age of 13. She struggled to find a job that would allow her the ability to look after her kids and eventually we found ourselves on social assistance.

Our local Y offered subsidized memberships to families in our situation and we gladly accepted the opportunity to access Y programs. We became “Y kids”; we spent our evenings in the pool, playing games like foosball, shooting basketball in the gym, and eventually volunteering and then working at the Y.

I was trained to assist with the toddler’s swimming program and soon every Saturday became a “Y day.” Learning in the morning, volunteering in the afternoon. My experiences and skills grew each week. What felt like fun and games at the time was so much more than that! I was learning valuable skills that set a foundation of volunteering, leadership, fundraising and community building that set me on a career path I would not have otherwise had.

If it were not for the Y I can honestly say I would not be where I am in life today. Being able to access the programs with a subsidized membership was the change maker in my life. Such a small investment of a membership for a child can make all the difference for a lifetime – I am proof!

When I have the opportunity to give – I think about how life changing a subsidized membership was and I believe strongly that every kid, regardless of life circumstance, deserves that opportunity.

**Don**, Strong Kids Donor

## Deepening our commitment to our communities, together

The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult for all of us. Many of us are feeling disconnected, isolated and are struggling with our wellness, finances and connections. As we continue to move through this pandemic, the Y plays a vital role in the recovery of our community and everyone in it.

This year with the support of our members who converted their membership fees to donations during our closure and the support of donors and funders, we have been able to support the essential needs of our programs and reach our communities in new ways.





## Supporting the Y during COVID-19

We have been supporters and active users of the YMCA for many years. Health and fitness are important to me, and good for my sanity, so I visit the YMCA at least twice a week. I go upstairs to workout, and on the weekend I take in a spin class. John is more of a reluctant exerciser, and will visit the Y in winter, once a week, usually on Sunday mornings.

But it is not only the fitness activities that keep us involved. We really appreciate the vital role the YMCA plays in the community. We recognize the value of the Resource Centres and Friendship House. We are grateful for the way the YMCA supports Sarnia-Lambton's newcomers. Other activities that we know are vital to our community's well-being are the summer camp, employment services and school recreation programs. We also know that nearly 40% of those that use the YMCA facilities can do so because their costs are subsidized.

In short, the Y builds strong kids and builds strong and healthy communities.

John and I chose to continue paying our membership fees through these difficult COVID times because good programming continues. As a health care provider, I understand why some services are restricted, and I look forward to the time when all services are running at full speed.

**Cheryl DeGroot**, Member and Donor

The Denning Family



It has always been important to our family and family business, to support initiatives and charities in our community of Strathroy.

In 2019 we were excited to support YMCA SWEAT for Strong Kids as a sponsor for the first time. Our family joined the Y in 2015 after hearing about all the children's programs, swimming lessons and activities that happen there. I have been so impressed with the diversity of people I have met at the Y. There is no exclusivity that would hold families or individuals back from being part of the Y which is so important in our community. This financial support offered to families, who would have trouble affording membership fees, makes me proud to be associated with an organization like the Y and happy to support it through our SWEAT sponsorship.

I would love to see our Y grow its impact in Strathroy, so the broader community is able to expand and make more families feel welcome to live here and be part of this community. With a warm, welcoming and calm space to connect, the Y is an important community space here. I love the mission and vision of the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario and that makes donating to support my local Y an easy choice.

**Brett Denning**, Denning's Funeral Home  
*Corporate Sponsors of SWEAT for Strong Kids*

During the Y's closure, the generosity of many of our members were a bright light in a difficult time. Petrolia Y members Dave and Sheila Hewett responded with a generous gift and enclosed a thoughtful note of encouragement which meant the world to the Petrolia Y team.

Both Dave and Sheila have deep roots in Petrolia, are passionate lifelong learners, educators and community builders, parents and grandparents. They had previously supported our Fill the Bus campaign to give kids an opportunity to attend camp, regardless of their family's ability to pay.

After retiring in 2001, Dave would regularly visit the Jerry McCaw Family Centre in Sarnia where he kept a family membership so he and daughter Olivia could work out, and where swimming was his preferred activity. As a regular, you get to recognize other members. Dave shared a story of a member who often worked out at the same time as he did, and over a year, completely transformed his fitness level and self-confidence thanks to the YMCA. It's an enduring memory that rings true when we say the Y is for all ages and abilities.

A couple of years ago, after a visit to their local Petrolia Y, their granddaughters Sophie and Emma wanted to swim. After seeing their delight at trying out the pool, Dave and Sheila restarted their membership. When the Petrolia Y had to temporarily close when COVID-19 began, Dave and Sheila wanted to do something to support it.



Dave & Sheila Hewett

"The Y needs our help. We're very fortunate to have their programs in our community. It's truly one of those organizations where you can be involved almost from the time you're born and is there for you for every stage of life. The Y promotes health and wellness – not just of the members, but by positively impacting the health of the community. The Y is a place of meaning. A place to develop strong relationships."

**Petrolia Members & Donors**



# SWEAT FOR STRONG KIDS

Our annual SWEAT for Strong Kids event looked a little different this year! Hundreds of members, donors and families tuned in for our live events on Facebook to SWEAT it out for YMCA Strong Kids Campaign.

**Together with our sponsors, we raised over \$100,000 across our communities.**





# MOVE-A-THON

**This year over 100 child care and school-aged sites raised \$37,000 through our annual Move-A-Thon for the YMCA Strong Kids Campaign.**

“Our annual Move-a-Thon is something that we look forward to each year because it allows us to support families in our community that could not otherwise access the wonderful programs the Y has to offer. This event allows us to develop the children’s understanding of philanthropy as we plan and have conversations about Strong Kids and how it helps others.”

**Kristen Smith**, Wortley Child Care Director



# JORDAN'S RUN THE RUNWAY

Although different from our past events, this year's Jordan's Run the Runway was a wonderful tribute to Jordan Strickland - a young man who persevered, through every challenge life gave him.

Almost 300 runners took to the runway of the London International Airport for a physically distanced 5KM race. Runners arrived in small heats throughout the day with just 2 runners leaving the start line at a time.

**Together we raised over \$87,000 to support sending campers to YMCA Camp Queen Elizabeth**, who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford it. It also provided much needed capital dollars for the camp. Thank you to our sponsors, donors, runners and volunteers for an amazing day.





## Janice, Paul and Daniel Strickland

"Paul, Daniel and I would like to express our gratitude to all of you who continue to support Jordan's legacy year after year, by walking and running, both live and virtually, and for your very generous donations so that we can continue to help send kids to camp for many years to come.

As most of you know, it was Jordan's favourite place to be, and we continue to have wonderful memories of his experiences and the amazing young people he met. We are truly overwhelmed by this community's continued support of the YMCA of Southwest Ontario so that it will continue to be here, providing such vital community opportunities for all."

**Jordan Strickland Family Fund**

# We want to support our local community.

Caroline and I support a number of charities and organizations in London and Southwestern Ontario. We really like how the Y provides a healthy, available, accessible place for people of all ages to enjoy. The Y provides a place of community for kids of all ages regardless of their ability to pay. I was lucky to experience that as a child when I learned how to swim at my local Y.

Caroline and I live in a community that has many ways of making life better for those in need. We are delighted to be able to give back and in a small way make life better for others less fortunate.

## Rod & Caroline Hancock

Capital and Annual Donors



# NOVA Chemicals, Corporate Donors

This year, NOVA Chemicals was the lead sponsor of **Project North** and **Leaders of Tomorrow** – an innovative leadership development program that creates change in young lives. Designed for both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous youth and focused on experiential learning, teamwork, and collaboration, Project North's pillars are philanthropy, community service, fitness, and leadership development.

With participants unable to gather for team building and mentorship, and travel to Alberta curtailed – the solution was to run a two-day Virtual Youth Symposium followed by a Good Deeds Day to give back to their communities.

Because of the flexibility of NOVA Chemicals, the Leaders of Tomorrow program funding was redeployed to provide for urgent needs for local First Nations communities. Throughout July and August, 705 kits of non-perishable food, fresh produce, craft supplies, sports equipment, and mental wellness activities were distributed to meet immediate needs and make life a little easier, especially at the height of the pandemic.

NOVA Chemicals demonstrated their strong commitment to community by funding these projects and embracing changes to programs impacted by COVID-19. Because of their support many youth were able to experience a unique and valuable personal growth and learning opportunity while giving back to their communities.



ENBRIDGE  
Date: Nov 2, 2020  
Pay to the order of: Jerry McCall YMCA  
\$10,000.00  
TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS

J.D. LAWN SERVICE  
519-337-0690  
HIGH PERFORMANCE  
ICE MELT

"Enbridge recognizes the challenges faced by communities across Ontario as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are proud to support the Sarnia YMCA as they continue to provide exemplary services to Sarnia and Lambton County residents during these difficult times."

### **Enbridge Gas, Corporate Donors**

**Steve Jelich**, Director Southwest Region Operation Enbridge Gas, **Tracy Ranick**, Development Officer YMCA, **Paul Skuza**, General Manager Sarnia (JFMC) YMCA, **Vik Kohli**, Director Eastern Region Operations Enbridge Pipelines, and **Mark Ramsey**, Supervisor Operation Enbridge Gas London Office

"Giving back to my community through my own personal time, as well as through resources has been a priority for me for many years. Being an employee of the Y is a unique opportunity to do both through my direct role in newcomer services and in supporting our Strong Kids campaign as an ongoing donor.

Though I never lacked basic needs growing up, I did feel I missed out on the type of social and skill building opportunities that our Y programs provide children, youth, and families. Opportunities that I am proud of are made possible for many across our region through our wonderful charity."

**Hugo Vega**, Regional Manager of Settlement & Integration Services







*Nawaz Tahir*

"I got involved with the Y because of all the people that the Y reaches that may not have other opportunities.

Whether it is newcomers in classes, youth programming or child care, the scope of what the Y does and who it reaches is truly amazing. There is an energy in the organization – from front line camp counsellors up to senior admin and the Board, everyone is dialed in to serve the community and the people in the community, regardless of background.

It is that inherent belief that anything is possible for anyone, and that makes me want to continue to invest my time and money in the organization."

**Monthly Donor & Board Member**



A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, smiling and holding a young child. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent maroon color. The text "Thank you." is written in a large, white, sans-serif font on the right side of the image.

# Thank you.

At the Y, we are so grateful for all you have done to make a lasting impact on our shared communities. Together we were able to provide over \$4.4 million in financial subsidies last year, ensuring everyone can access Y programs. With open hearts, you have invested in the health and wellbeing of your community. At a critical time in history, the impact of your gift is greater than ever.

**Mission:**

The YMCA of Southwestern Ontario is a multi-service charity that provides opportunities for growth in spirit, mind, and body for people of all backgrounds, beliefs and abilities.

**Vision:**

Together, our YMCA will be a recognized leader in building healthy communities.

**Values:**

Honesty, Respect, Caring,  
Responsibility, Inclusiveness

**Development Team**

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