



Jeff Devins

Message from the Chair

As the new Chair of the Endowment Fund of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver I am excited and honoured to have the opportunity to continue to work with the talented staff and volunteers at the Y. After 15 years on the YMCA Board, I look forward to my new role, working with the Endowment Fund Trustees to support the great work of the YMCA. I will strive to fill the shoes of all those who have been here before me. In fact, it was two very dedicated past chairs, Gavin Hume and Bruce McQuaid, who convinced me that I could continue to help.

As past Chair, Bruce has been a tireless contributor to the Y. He has done so for many years, somehow balancing a very active business career, family life, boating, and now, being a new grandfather. I know we all want to thank Bruce for the outstanding contribution he has made to the Y and welcome his continuing involvement.

Over the past 15 years I have seen incredible growth in the ability of the YMCA to serve the community. When I first started working with staff, volunteers and other board members all those years ago, we had a plan to build the new Tong Louie Y in South Surrey and a dream to replace the old Y downtown, somewhere. We had a vision to build more child care centres and replace the old Nanook trailer with a bright, new facility. Looking back, we've seen many of these dreams and visions come to fruition. These successes, along with great efforts by staff and volunteers, have allowed us to reach out and help more children and families. I appreciate the opportunity I was given to benefit our community. Being a part of our YMCA has been one of the most fulfilling things I have been able to do. Now, I look forward to helping in new ways.

Thanks to the support of our Heritage Club members, the Endowment Fund is funding several excellent YMCA programs this year. Included in this newsletter is the inspirational story of Francesca, who is building a new life for herself and her young daughter with the help of the YMCA. Through her story we are able to illustrate the impact of your generous gifts. Through the combined legacy gifts that we have all pledged to make, we are building together, the opportunity for many more deserving families like Francesca's to have the chance to thrive.

In closing I'd like to acknowledge the great work of my fellow Trustees, and thank them for their ongoing commitment.

On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees I would like to wish you and yours a very happy holiday season, and thank you for your continued support.

Jeff Devins, Chair
Endowment Fund of the
YMCA of Greater Vancouver



Unassuming Transformational Moments

Each year the Endowment Fund of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver hosts The Power of Giving Breakfast to increase awareness in the business community about the YMCA's impact. This year's keynote speaker was Dr. John Corlett, Provost and Vice-President Academic at MacEwan University and member of the board of the YMCA of Northern Alberta, who spoke about the Y's impact on his life. The following is a condensed version of his presentation.



Dr. John Corlett

The YMCA is not just a job or a place to work out or a chance to volunteer to build a resume. It's a calling—a passion—and it's always an honour to meet others whose lives have been deeply connected to the

YMCA. I am particularly fascinated by how seemingly small things can have a massive influence on how things turn out. We've all heard the question that asks whether a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil can create a tornado over Texas. I think back to 1959 and the Niagara Falls Evening Review. There's a picture of an 8 year old boy holding up a basketball that's about five times bigger than his head. The setting is a morning basketball session, and the boy in the picture is me. I had just moved to a new town, and until then, I had never touched a basketball. I remember that day at the Y very well, and even remember the staff instructor who put us through our paces: a young man who, when I returned to that YMCA 50 years later, was still volunteering.

I didn't know it then, but that day I was set on a path that would influence so much of who I would become. An instant infatuation with a new sport changed the course of my life and took me through decades as a basketball player and coach, and as a physical educator, where I still find great joy in my professional life. Maybe I would have come to the game on my own, but I don't know for sure and I am, to this day, grateful for that first positive and happy interaction with the YMCA—to that one flapping of a butterfly's wings in my life that caused a tornado of excitement inside me. I wonder how many lives the

YMCA has fundamentally changed for the better in ways that only decades of experience and hindsight can illuminate.

The YMCA reaches into the homes, hearts and minds of the entire Lower Mainland. The YMCA makes people's lives better, by far in my view, than if the Y were not a part of the community. No one who works at the Y just works at the Y—the amazing dedicated staff are there for those who look up to them for support.

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As supporters of the YMCA we share a commitment to bring about positive change far beyond the denomination of individual dollars donated. We share the sense of being in something truly great, together. The Y is such an enduring feature of our Canadian landscape that it's hard not to take it for granted. But no Y is immune to the economic, social and political forces that affect every organization. And no Y stays strong without the engagement of the community it serves.

To all the Heritage Club members who have made a provision in their will for the YMCA—every time a child walks through the door of the Bob and Kay Ackles YMCA Nanook House or eats a hot lunch at the Woodward's YMCA childcare centre—or picks up a basketball for the first time at one of our community outreach locations—those who have made the Endowment Fund a priority see their legacy in action. You might never see each seed that you've planted grow strong, but you know that you have done something truly remarkable.



Kurt Gagel and friends cut the ribbon at the Grand Opening of YMCA Exploration Hall.

Exploration Hall: Introducing an Inspirational Legacy

What started as a dream a few years ago came to fruition on October 24th at YMCA Camp Elphinstone when, surrounded by YMCA staff, Board Members and Endowment Trustees the ribbon was cut and YMCA Exploration Hall was officially opened.

Located in the upper campus of YMCA Camp Elphinstone, Exploration Hall will be the heart of leadership and learning at camp. It's the first thing campers see when they arrive at camp and provides a beautiful and bright space for them to grow as leaders, while developing a deeper connection to the natural world.

Exploration Hall was made possible thanks to the generous support and dedication of Kurt Gagel. Kurt believes and knows that taking action today helps to ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to grow and thrive. He has actively and generously supported the YMCA over the last several years, starting with the YMCA Youth Leadership Development program at Camp Elphinstone, and now with the legacy that is Exploration Hall. "The building means so much for Camp Elphinstone," said Lisa Stiver, General Manager, Camp and Youth Engagement at the opening ceremony. "We can't thank you enough Kurt for your commitment to helping youth reach their potential."

A walk through the building reveals a tip of the hat to past campers and young leaders, with historical camp artifacts adorning the walls. Opening day was filled with the promise of the future and excitement for the next generation of leaders who will grow, develop and learn at YMCA Exploration Hall.

"The future depends on what you do today." ~Mahatma Gandhi



YMCA Exploration Hall



Kurt with Utta (daughter) and Colin (grandson)



Russ Johnston, Lisa and Utta react to speech

Photos courtesy of Jennifer Strang Photography

We Found Support and Hope



Francesca and Charlotte

The Endowment Fund of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver helps thousands of children, youth and families in our community by supporting much needed YMCA programs. Last year our YMCA provided \$2,132,843 in financial assistance to more than 12,279 people. And each person has a unique story, all their own.

At the recent YMCA Power of Giving Breakfast we were fortunate to hear from one of those people. Francesca led a typical life; she had a comfortable steady job at a large corporate office in Vancouver, supported organizations like the United Way and sat on numerous diversity and fundraising councils. Everything changed

when she had to flee from an abusive relationship with her 4 year old daughter in tow and nothing but the clothes on their backs. What followed were very difficult and lonely times with serious housing and food security issues.

Francesca was fortunate to receive a referral to the Bob and Kay Ackles YMCA Nanook House, where her daughter receives healthy, nutritious lunches and snacks and consistent, calm care from the attentive staff. Francesca is rebuilding her life, and credits the caring staff at Nanook for getting her through some of the hardest times. "The staff provided a place for me to go to and someone to listen," she says. "Community support is what the Y does best. They have provided me with resources to help navigate any community issues. They have been there for me."

Francesca now looks positively into the future with hope and is grateful to the donors who support the YMCA. "If you've ever wondered whether your donation reaches the people who need it, I'm here to tell you that it does," she says, then adds "the Y never once made me feel like I'm too poor and therefore can't participate in something. Falling the way I did, from the top to the bottom, comes with a lot of shame, harsh self-judgment and guilt. The YMCA has done a wonderful job making sure we feel comfortable, and a part of the family."

In Memoriam

We're sad to announce the passing of some long time YMCA Heritage Club members and supporters. Beverly Sleeman, Jim Humphries and Audrey Cook will be warmly remembered by all their YMCA friends and associates.

Endowment Mission

Since 1952, the Endowment Fund of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has been there to ensure a legacy of good health for the YMCA and the people we serve for generations to come. It attracts charitable gifts to support the YMCA in building strong kids, strong families and strong communities— today and tomorrow.

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