



## Supporting 'Camp K' experiences for all

For more than 15 years, YMCA Camp Kanannaq has been providing memorable summer experiences for children and youth in the Prince George area. Located on the shore of Nadsilnich Lake, a short drive southwest of the city, the camp welcomes hundreds of day camp and outdoor education participants every year.

"I like to say that 'Camp K' is as close to an overnight camp as a day camp can be," said Samantha Bussieres, YMCA BC Director of Health, Fitness and Aquatics.

With programs tailored to campers aged 5 to 17 based around YMCA core values of honesty, caring, respect, responsibility and inclusivity, Camp Kanannaq offers a full slate of typical summer-camp activities, leadership opportunities and more. The camp places significant emphasis on inclusion, with programming that is accessible to children and youth of all backgrounds and diverse abilities.

**"We firmly believe that every child deserves a camp experience," said Bussieres. "We really lean into inclusivity and strive to ensure no child is left out. It's a really special place."**

Beyond supporting those applying directly for financial assistance, Camp K works with multiple partners who refer children and youth for subsidized campership opportunities. These include local community organizations like Carrier Sekani Family Services and the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society of Prince George, area elementary schools and—for the first time in 2024—Lheidli T'enneh First Nation.

The camp also receives referrals from the Ministry of Children and Family Development's special needs division to welcome children of different abilities.

"There's a lot of intentional work done on the ground for those campers to feel included in the experience," said Bussieres. "For children with more diverse needs, an overnight camp experience may not be feasible

*continued on page 2...*



## Message from the Chair

I hope you have enjoyed a fantastic summer. It was wonderful having the chance to meet with many of you during the YMCA BC Foundation's 40th annual Heritage Club Luncheon in June.

The theme of this year's milestone luncheon was "Impact Through the Decades," allowing us to reflect upon the Foundation's tremendous legacy of supporting YMCA programs, offerings and operations dating back to the 1950s.

If you were unable to join us for this memorable gathering, we're pleased to be able to share some of the highlights captured during the day within the pages of this issue of *Newsworthy*.

You'll also find that the same theme of celebrating our longstanding impact permeates the stories we're proud to share with you today. That includes looking back upon the Fraser Valley community support provided through the Chilliwack Family YMCA Endowment Fund, how the late Ellen Bell's contributions to the Y continue to inspire a new

generation of young leaders, and how initiatives within our expanded YMCA BC are set to thrive with receipt of Foundation funding for the first time.

It is clear that our impact will not be limited simply to decades past, but will extend to many more in our future. Of course, none of this difference-making support for YMCA BC's life-enhancing programs would be possible without the generosity of Foundation donors. We thank you for your unwavering dedication to the Y and its purpose to achieve healthy outcomes for each member of our communities.

Sincerely,

Melinda McKie  
Chair, YMCA BC  
Foundation



Read our 2023 YMCA BC  
Foundation annual report online  
at [gv.ymca.ca/about-us](https://gv.ymca.ca/about-us)

### *Supporting 'Camp K' experiences for all continued*

for them, but at Camp K they still get to have that summer camp experience."

Around one in every four campers enrolled in Camp Kanannaq programming receives some form of financial assistance to participate. The total cost to support those campers has increased in the post-pandemic years.

This summer, a grant from the YMCA BC Foundation helped ensure about 175 campers were able to access Camp Kanannaq via financial assistance despite the rising costs.

The Foundation's support also funded enhancements to camp programming and staff training, development of a framework for more structured outcomes in camp activities, and several other small program touches that add to the overall "camp magic," said Bussieres.

"Providing a connection to nature and land and an unplugged experience is all such a big part of what we do," she added. "Summer camp programs build resiliency and problem-solving skills that, more than ever, our kids need to learn."

## Community and culture inspire new Nanook House mural



Vibrant greens, reds and browns immediately catch your eye as you step into the newly renovated Family Room at Bob and Kay Ackles YMCA Nanook House.

A stunning new mural, painted by Indigenous artist Adam Lewis, does more than brighten the space. It symbolizes safety, protection and the strong bonds fostered within this special community.

Nanook House, part of the YMCA BC's Healthy Family Network, plays a vital role in Vancouver's Mount Pleasant neighbourhood by providing essential services to children and families. These include child care, meals, parenting resources and literacy courses, all designed to create a safe and nurturing environment.

The Healthy Family Network supports families in some of Vancouver's most challenging areas, where many residents live below the poverty line. It provides not only essential resources but also a range of enriching programs, including Indigenous cultural education, support for diverse needs and access to YMCA facilities.

Over the past year, the Family Room at Nanook House was renovated and the mural added, thanks to a grant from the YMCA BC Foundation.

"The Family Room at Bob and Kay Ackles Nanook House is more than just a room—it's a place where families gather, learn and connect," said Laura McBride, Nanook House Indigenous Family Support Worker. Lewis's beautiful mural has made this space even more special. Lewis, a proud member of the We Wai Kai Nation, was

inspired by the Indigenous art he admired as a child in Cape Mudge Village (We Wai Kai) on Quadra Island. After years of painting street art-style murals, he shifted focus in 2021 to traditional Kwakwaka'wakw art forms, continuing to create vibrant, contemporary pieces.

The mural features a mother bear and her cub, a fitting image for Nanook House. "Nanook" means polar bear in Inuktitut, symbolizing the safety and protection provided to every child who comes through the doors.

Kay Ackles, whose longtime support has been instrumental to Nanook House, admired the mural during the YMCA BC Kids Walk sponsor reception on May 29.

"I'm very proud of what you've done for the community. Thank you," she remarked as she acknowledged the vital support Nanook House provides to families in need of additional support.

The mural is a testament to the power of community and the importance of creating spaces where all are safe, supported and feel a sense of belonging. Thanks to your support, Nanook House will remain a beacon of hope and a place where families can build brighter futures together.



*Kay Ackles, fourth from right, joins YMCA BC staff under the new Nanook House mural at the YMCA BC Kids Walk reception this summer.*

## Chilliwack Family YMCA Endowment Fund: Building a brighter tomorrow

Since its inception in 1989, the Chilliwack Family YMCA Endowment Fund has ensured the YMCA remains a vital resource for children, families, seniors and individuals in the Fraser Valley. What began with a modest \$1,000—thanks to the commitment of loyal Chilliwack donors and members—grew into a robust fund that now provides thousands of dollars annually to enhance facilities and services at the Bob Chan-Kent Family YMCA.

“We started small, but we had a big vision—to create something lasting that could support the Y through thick and thin,” said founding member Amelie Koloska, who also acknowledged Rod and Irma Cooper’s work in establishing and growing the fund. “It wasn’t easy, but seeing the impact today, I’m glad we persevered.”

The vision of the Endowment Fund has always been to support those in our community most in need, particularly children and families.

“Instilling values in young people and keeping them active and off the streets is one of the things I would like to support the most,” said Koloska.

Over the years, the fund has supported numerous initiatives, from providing accessible equipment to funding the annual YMCA Seniors’ Holiday Luncheon,

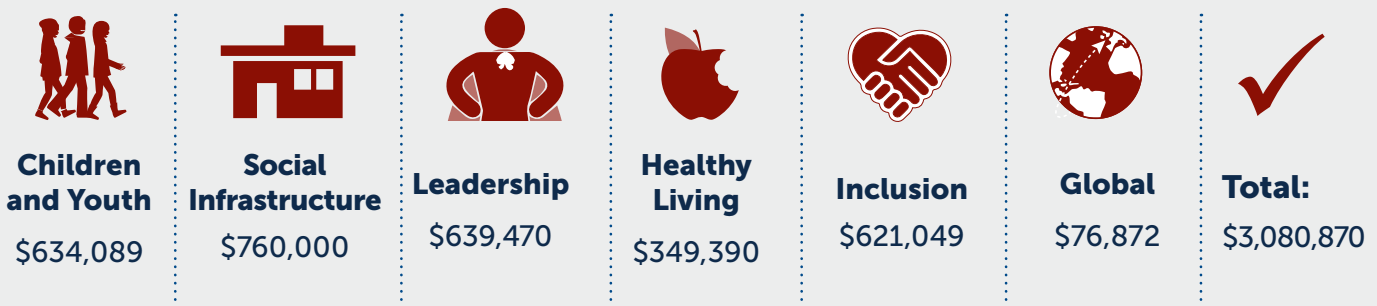
a cherished tradition for nearly 40 years. The luncheon brings together older adult Y members for a festive meal and social gathering, offering them a sense of belonging and joy.

The fund has also been crucial during disruptive, challenging times, such as when the Y was closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and for the refresh of the facility in 2017-18. Thanks to the fund, the Y was able to continue community programming and support staff during these periods of uncertainty. Post-pandemic, the fund played a key role in rebuilding our aquatic program and helping to attract and train young leaders as new staff. Over that time, the aquatics staff team grew from just two members to more than 30 and now offer 450 swim lessons each week to equip children with life-saving skills and confidence.

Looking to the future, the fund will continue to adding to its history as an important source of support to the Fraser Valley. The Chilliwack Family YMCA Endowment Advisory Committee is still in place today, working to promote the fund with Y members and the community, and overseeing annual interest contributions.

**“I hope we can inspire others to give, to help create a better future for our community,” said Koloska. “It’s about leaving a legacy that will continue to support the Y’s purpose for generations to come.”**

### How the Foundation invested in community in 2023



# 40th Heritage Club Luncheon: In Photos

Here are highlights of our milestone Heritage Club Luncheon, held June 13 at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club. Thank you to those who joined us for this memorable occasion!



Stephen Butz



Advancing Philanthropy Committee members Stephanie Nesbitt, Eddy Mejlholm & Kelsey Dunwoodie



Farzin Remtulla & Bob Chan-Kent



YMCA BC President & CEO Heidi Worthington



Howard Malm



Gabriele Scully, Norman Shuto & Patricia Wallace



Wendy Allen & Jennifer Foreman



Susanne & John Gloag



Mary-Ellen & John Essex



Darragh Vamplew

## Introducing our new Board members

**The YMCA BC Foundation Board of Directors is pleased to introduce its four newest members, each of whom joined the Board this June following our Annual General Meeting.**

Jane Adams, Bob Chan-Kent, Grant Stockwell and Raphael Tachie are all wonderful additions to our Board. We are thrilled to have their expertise and diverse experiences for the Foundation to draw upon. Learn a bit more about each new Director below.



### Jane Adams

Jane is an award-winning non-profit leader who recently retired as President & CEO of the Surrey Hospitals Foundation. During her 16

years in the role, she helped raise \$150 million to support health facilities and services in Surrey. Previously, she served as Executive Director of the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation. Jane was named to the Women's Executive Network's Top 100 Most Powerful Women CEOs in 2020. Kwantlen Polytechnic University recognized her life's work with an Honorary Doctorate in 2014.



### Raphael Tachie

Raphael is a partner in the Trusts, Estates and Wealth Preservation group based in Dentons Canada's Vancouver office. He is also a member

of the Dentons Family Office and High Net Worth sector group, providing cross-practice services to family offices and high-net-worth individuals. Raphael is active in the legal community and engaged in advocating for equal, diverse and inclusive professional spaces. He is immediate Past President of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers.



### Grant Stockwell

Grant is Senior Vice-President and Chief of Operations for Evo Car Share, Roadside Assistance and Auto Service Centre at

BCAA. In 2015, along with three others, he led an innovation team to ideate and commercialize Evo Car Share. He is a two-time recipient of BC Marketer of the Year Award and previously held Marketing Director roles at Bell Mobility, Boston Pizza and Rocky Mountaineer. Grant has also served the United Way BC Cabinet for the past six years, chairing the Cabinet in 2021.



### Bob Chan-Kent

The namesake of the Bob Chan-Kent Family YMCA has been a champion of the Y for more than five decades. Bob started in the family business, Aero Garment Ltd.,

and later founded Quantum Apparel Group, which he ran for 15 years until his 2017 retirement. Among his wide-ranging service to the YMCA of Greater Vancouver and YMCA BC, Chan-Kent has been part of the Y's volunteer governance leadership team for more than 15 years. He has also held similar YMCA roles at a national and international level. In 2016, he was named a Companion in the YMCA Fellowship of Honour, the highest award in the Y's national movement. Bob is also Chair of the Chan Kent Foundation, which has provided hundreds of scholarships to BC art and design students.

## Scholarship recipient strives to extend Bell's legacy

*Sofia Napolitano*

Sofia Napolitano considers herself a storyteller at heart, so to have an inspiring figure like Ellen Bell now woven into her personal history comes as a significant honour.

Napolitano was selected as the 2024 recipient of the Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship, awarded annually to a female student pursuing a career in marketing or advertising.

**"I want to be able to share the story of who Ellen was, and to mimic the values that she upheld and her family upholds: treating others well and supporting my community," said the 23-year-old.**

Bell was a dedicated YMCA volunteer who valued giving back to her community and was highly respected in BC's advertising industry before her passing more than 30 years ago. Bell's friends and family, led by Shirley Broadfoot and Nick Voss, founded the scholarship to support other remarkable young women with similar aspirations.

Napolitano is a fifth-year business administration student at Simon Fraser University and a management consulting summer intern at KPMG, where she works with health agencies to examine how environmental conditions and climate change impact personal wellness. She has previously held roles in logistics with Adidas in Germany, Deloitte in Toronto and the Vancouver Airport Authority. Those experiences aren't that of a traditional marketer, but Napolitano said marketing strategies are "consistently" part of her daily work.

"I think sometimes when people think of marketing, they think of promotion and pricing, but one that they always kind of miss is the persuasion part of it," she said. "It's the skill of how you persuade people and how you share a story that makes marketing great."

Having spent two years on the SFU debate team, Napolitano is well-versed in the art of persuasion. Also an accomplished water polo player, many of her formative experiences came in team settings, so she's proud to have given back as a coach for youth soccer in the past, and now for the SFU JDC West debate team. Her previous volunteerism includes working with the Hastings Sunrise Community Police Centre as a citizen patroller. She credits her extracurricular activities and community with instilling her values of giving back.

"I really tried to embody that in my everyday life and things that I do," she said. "I think it's just important to give back to the community that has given me so much."

Napolitano was officially presented with the scholarship during the 40th annual Heritage Club Luncheon, which Voss also attended alongside Bell's nieces and scholarship selection committee members Wendy Allen and Jennifer Foreman.

"I'm inspired that they saw something in me that reminded them of Ellen," said Napolitano. "I hope that I can use these financial means to follow along her journey, explore and live up to her core values."

## Save the date: Inaugural Heritage Club Tea

The YMCA BC Foundation is excited to be hosting the first annual Heritage Club Tea this fall! The event is set for the afternoon of Oct. 10 at the Bob Chan-Kent Family YMCA and is designed to celebrate and honour the longstanding members, volunteers and supporters of the YMCA across the Fraser Valley.

We are looking forward to acknowledging the invaluable contributions of our dedicated community members who have consistently supported the Y's

purpose to build healthy, vibrant and inclusive communities.

This special gathering will feature guest speakers, an assortment of sweet and savory high tea treats and refreshments, and great conversation with old friends and fellow YMCA champions.

Look for formal invitations to arrive in the mail soon; your RSVP will be appreciated. We hope you can join us for this inaugural gathering to celebrate the Y's impact in the Fraser Valley—and the generous individuals like you who make it possible!

---

## Our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation

**With the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation approaching on Sept. 30, this month presents a great opportunity to reflect upon YMCA BC and the YMCA BC Foundation's commitment to recognizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, this commitment requires intentional effort throughout the year, not on just a single day of the calendar.**

With support provided by a Foundation grant, YMCA BC is developing an action plan that will inform and expand meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities across BC, particularly within the regions of the province served by our Y.

This will include a thorough review of YMCA BC programs, policies and practices through a decolonization

lens, completed in consultation with Indigenous peoples and partners.

As we observe this important occasion on Sept. 30, we encourage you to acknowledge the tragic history and ongoing impacts of the residential school system, to consider wearing an orange shirt in the spirit of healing and reconciliation, and to learn about the diverse cultures of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

### YMCA BC Foundation Directors

Melinda McKie  
(Chair)

Jane Adams

Katerina Anastasiadis

Rikki Beaudet

Joanne Bonderud

Bob Chan-Kent  
(Vice Chair)

Gavin Hume, K.C.

Ameet Johal

Dallas Leung

Stephanie Nesbitt

Farzin Remtulla  
(Vice Chair)

Grant Stockwell

Raphael Tachie

### YMCA BC Foundation Staff Support

Darlene Hepburn

Andrea Wall

### To learn more:

Phone 604.622.4957

Email at [giving@bc.ymca.ca](mailto:giving@bc.ymca.ca)

10-620 Royal Ave,  
New Westminster, BC  
V3M 1J2

Charitable registration:  
803976471 RR0001