



Worthington begins new Y journey as President & CEO

There's a new leader at the helm of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver—one who brings extensive past involvement with the Y and a passion for the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve.

Heidi Worthington officially took over as President & CEO in March, bringing a tremendous background as a respected community leader and an appreciation for the YMCA developed over years spent as a program user and volunteer.

"The Y does such important work in the lives of our members and communities, supporting people from all backgrounds, ages and abilities to help them and their families reach their potential," said Worthington. "I can't imagine any more important work than that."

Worthington took on the new role following more than six years as Senior Vice-President & Chief Revenue Officer for Pacific Blue Cross but her history with the YMCA goes back much further, as her first Y experiences came in youth swim lessons. Worthington's relationship with the YMCA reached a deeper level once enrolling her daughter, Brooke, in Before and After School Care upon reaching Kindergarten, and later as a camper at YMCA Camp Elphinstone.

"I have to say those staff members didn't just look after her, they made her feel valued and loved," said Worthington. "I'll be forever grateful for that."

Numerous positive experiences like these motivated Worthington to join the YMCA of Greater Vancouver board.

continued on next page...

Message from the Chair



This edition of Newsworthy arrives at a time when we are finally starting to achieve a return to normalcy following the challenges presented by a global pandemic over the past two years. It is also coming at an exciting time of change at the Y.

As you've likely read on the first page of this issue, we're excited to welcome Heidi Worthington as the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's new President & CEO. Her arrival also means the departure of our longtime leader and friend, Stephen Butz, who has transitioned into retirement following an astounding 42-year career with the YMCA. We thank Stephen for his tremendous guidance, vision and dedication that saw him leave the YMCA in an even stronger position than he found it.

The beginning of Heidi's tenure also coincides with the exciting move toward unification of the YMCA of Northern BC, YMCA-YWCA of Kamloops and YMCA of Greater Vancouver, each of which will become stronger as one

larger association. You'll find more details about this process and the path forward for our organization in this issue.

Although much is changing, we're also pleased to see some of the Y's traditional offerings return to prominence, such as YMCA Camp Elphinstone. The beautiful Sunshine Coast facility hasn't been able to welcome campers over the past two summers due to provincial health restrictions, so it's wonderful to see youth signing up in droves to join us again in 2022.

No matter what challenges present themselves, one thing always remains a constant—the Foundation's commitment to strengthening our communities by supporting the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's impactful offerings. We wish you and your family the best for the summer ahead.



Melinda McKie,
Chair, YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation

Worthington begins new Y journey as President & CEO continued...

While serving as a director from 2017 to 2020, she was inspired by the Y's wide range of community programs and services.

"I am passionate about Health Equity, which I define as ensuring all British Columbians have equal access to care and support, to have the best health outcomes possible," she said. "Guided by a mission to improve health and wellbeing for British Columbians, I am proud to have helped drive initiatives to close the gap for women, new parents, retirees, and First Nations communities in BC."

During her time at Pacific Blue Cross, Worthington drove profitable growth and innovation for the organization. She spearheaded strategy and execution for product development, innovation, and marketing while overseeing two operational teams. She holds a commerce degree in marketing from McGill University and a master's in arts from Belgium's Leuven University.

"Like Pacific Blue Cross, the YMCA is an important partner in the building of strong and healthy communities," said Worthington. "The Y's mission is even broader, and I look forward to making a difference for individuals and families across British Columbia. It is an honour and privilege to return to the Y in this new role to serve our communities at a time when YMCA services are needed more than ever."

Worthington looks forward to meeting many of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation's supporters during next month's Heritage Club Luncheon.

"Our Y couldn't possibly strengthen the fabric of our communities without the very generous donations of our members, stewarded so adeptly by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation," she said. "I am looking forward to meeting our donors in my new role and to share my gratitude."

Becoming a stronger YMCA, together

For more than 135 years, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver has played a key role in building healthy communities, transforming lives and connecting people of all ages, stages, backgrounds and abilities. It has provided residents of the Lower Mainland, Fraser Valley and Sunshine Coast with opportunities to learn, grow and reach their potential.



On a provincial scale, British Columbians are well served in many communities by other YMCA associations that share our commitment and values. That is why we are excited to share that work is underway to amalgamate with the YMCA of Northern BC and the YMCA-YWCA of Kamloops to become one unified association.

After an extensive evaluation process revealed that uniting under a single umbrella would bring significant benefits to each association, their members and communities, the three respective YMCA boards unanimously supported this initiative in early 2022.

Put simply, unification is an opportunity for our Y teams to deliver even greater services, programs and supports to individuals in our communities as a collective association—a chance to do more, with more.

This move to link our three associations is consistent with other YMCAs in Canada that have bonded together to strengthen their futures. One recent example is the YMCA of Southwestern Ontario, a merger of two YMCAs into a single entity that now serves more than 240,000 people at nearly 200 locations.

It is important to note that all three of our YMCA associations are entering this alignment process from a position of strength. By leaning on and learning from each other as a unified team, we will have access to more resources,

more expertise, more experience, more efficiency, greater opportunities for growth and a better-connected staff team. Together, we ensure a more sustainable future while effectively meeting all future challenges.

Although, collectively, we will share a larger geographic footprint, our commitment to the local communities we serve will remain unchanged. We are excited to lean into the unique strengths and experiences each association brings while acknowledging how our local teams meet the evolving needs of the people they serve and the longstanding relationships they have nurtured. We will tap into the strongest parts of each association while operating more effectively as a larger team.

There will be very little change to the Foundation during this process. Our constitution already has a broad scope of supporting YMCAs across BC and Canada. We have wonderful donors like you interested in supporting specific areas of focus—such as YMCA Camp Elphinstone—and your wishes will always be honoured. This unification will open new doors of community impact and introduce us to new donors, making this a positive and impactful direction for the YMCA and the Foundation alike.

Much work has already taken place behind the scenes to make unification a reality and plenty more is yet to come. We look forward to sharing further updates with you in the months ahead as this process continues.



Foundation supports aid efforts amid Ukraine conflict

The violence and humanitarian crisis resulting from the invasion of Ukraine has displaced millions and affected countless lives around the world. In response to the frightening situation, YMCAs in Ukraine and their volunteers have been providing crucial support and resources for those in need with the help of the global Y community.

Over the past 15 years, our friends at YMCA Calgary have held an international partnership with YMCA Ukraine, sharing expertise and resources with the common goal of making their communities better. Shortly after war broke out in late February, a call for financial assistance to address the emerging crisis was issued. Through the support of the Foundation, the YMCA of Greater Vancouver was able to contribute a \$10,000 donation directed to YMCA Calgary to include in its aid for Ukraine.

This contribution was among more than \$1 million (CAD) in initial donations worldwide that assisted more than 15,000 children and families fleeing violence within Ukraine, plus 40,000 more refugees arriving in neighbouring countries.

As of early April, 17 of the 25 volunteer-driven YMCA locations in Ukraine were still functioning to serve their communities with a wide variety of much-needed support. Many of these centres have been providing shelter, meals, medicine and supplies to displaced families and animals, while others have helped keep children occupied with activities and entertainment.

“Thank you very much for your solidarity with Ukraine,” said YMCA Ukraine general secretary Viktor Sebulov. “We appreciate this very much. We will stay for our Ukraine, for peace, for justice, and together with you, we will overcome.”

Though the first round of financial aid helped address urgent and immediate needs, further support will be crucial in helping affected Ukrainian communities. A YMCA global planning meeting in late March identified three key areas of broad support moving forward:

- Psychological first aid for traumatized Ukrainians, including the “Heal the Smile” project launched by YMCA Georgia to provide free mental-health assistance.
- Continuing sports and arts-and-crafts programming for displaced children both in Ukraine and at YMCAs in countries receiving large numbers of refugees.
- Ongoing training for youth dealing with conflict through a continuation of YMCA Europe’s long-running Roots for Peace program.

Donations toward Ukraine relief efforts continue to be accepted. To contribute online, visit gv.ymca.ca/donate, direct your donation to Area of Greatest Need when prompted and type “Ukraine” in the Further Detail box. Donations are also accepted by phone on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. by calling Evan Caros, Manager, Fund Development, at 604-622-4959.



Betty Allard YMCA in Coquitlam on track for 2022 opening

The new Coquitlam YMCA will be Canada's first centre of community under the YMCA umbrella to be named solely after a woman when it opens to serve the Tri-Cities and Burnaby communities later this year.

Construction of the Betty Allard YMCA is nearing completion, remaining on target for a fall opening. The 55,000-square-foot facility is projected to accommodate one million visits per year, serving an anticipated 16,000 children, teens, adults and seniors seeking opportunities to be healthy, connected and engaged.

Betty Allard was revealed as the centre's namesake during a special event in September marking approximately one year out from opening of the facility, which has come about through a unique partnership with the City of Coquitlam and Concert, as well as the generosity of donors. This gathering welcomed many friends, valued Y supporters and Allard family members who participated both virtually and in person to mark the occasion.

The Betty Allard YMCA will include carefully designed spaces to deliver a wide range of YMCA programs and services. These spaces will be safe, inviting, accessible and vital community gathering spaces where everyone can come together to connect and grow.

- **Active Living:** Gymnasium, walking track and fitness studios for group classes and strength and conditioning zones.
- **Aquatics:** Features include a swimming pool for exercise and a warm water tank for family play, swim lessons, therapy and fitness.
- **Social Connection:** Places to connect with others—including a café, plazas and rooftop terraces—will be available throughout the facility.
- **Family-Focus:** A dedicated Family Development Centre and 'Y Play' area will provide opportunities to play, learn and strengthen relationships.

Betty's son, Peter A. Allard, is the naming donor of the new facility and chose his mother as the centre's namesake. We are grateful for his generosity, which will leave a lasting legacy in the community for the Allard family.

About Effie "Betty" Allard (1915–2004)

Betty Allard was a passionate and effective advocate for the role of community in helping people reach their potential and thrive. She raised four children as a single mother in the 1950s in Vancouver. As her children grew older, she studied at the University of British Columbia—earning an Education degree with a major in Librarianship—and supported her family by teaching for many years at Burnaby-area schools.

Betty was decades ahead of her time with her concern for a sustainable environment and was a dedicated volunteer throughout her life, serving the Brock House, Vancouver Planetarium and Vancouver Aquarium. Betty greatly enjoyed her later years and was happiest doing what she loved most: cooking, travelling, volunteering and spending time with her family, friends and grandchildren.



Campers set to come back to Elphinstone

For nearly all of the past 115 years, YMCA Camp Elphinstone has been a bustling site of activity each summer, providing youth with unique outdoor experiences and cherished memories. Sadly, that hasn't been the case each of the past two years, as public-health orders and restrictions related to COVID-19 made regular camp operations impossible.

With provincial safeguards now lifted, excitement is starting to ramp up once again at the Sunshine Coast facility, which will welcome back campers and staff for a full slate of summer-camp programming in 2022. Day and overnight camps for youth, family camp sessions and outdoor education programs are also returning this year following a long hiatus.

"We are thrilled to welcome campers and staff back to Elphinstone this summer," said YMCA Camp Elphinstone Director Lenea Grace. "After two years of closure, we are so happy for the return of the energy and laughter that make Camp Elphinstone so special. We are looking forward to a safe and strong return to overnight camping."

The enthusiastic response that came after announcing that YMCA Camp Elphinstone would be back open this summer shows that it's not just the staff who are excited to return. Since registration opened in mid-January, there has been a steady stream of campers signing up to join us—we've nearly reached our capacity for the summer, and there are still several weeks until the first group of campers arrive.

Due to the Foundation's support, those arriving at YMCA Camp Elphinstone this summer will also notice several improvements that were undertaken during the two-year closure, including painting on some camp buildings, an upgraded pier ramp, major landscaping projects and more.

The YMCA is grateful for Foundation donors, whose generosity endured throughout the absence of camp programming. Your patronage ensured that we were prepared to invite campers back for youth and leadership development and ready for a fun-filled summer ahead.

YGV Foundation's 2021 Community Investment



**Social
Infrastructure**

\$690,000



**Children
and Youth**

\$483,741



Leadership

\$361,281



Global

\$87,393



**Healthy
Living**

\$800,982



Inclusion

\$337,309



Total

\$2,760,707



Foundation providing crucial support for Plusone Mentoring

Tong Louie Family YMCA is one of three program sites nationwide for Plusone Mentoring, which pairs adult volunteers with youth who face barriers to their engagement with schooling, their community and peers. Thanks to the Foundation's support, this important initiative has continued operating in Surrey at a time when these social connections are as crucial for vulnerable young people as ever.

Youth participants aged 10 to 17 typically come to the program with multiple identified risk factors. Matching them with an adult volunteer mentor provides them with a positive role model and the tools to overcome the challenges they are facing. Mentors and mentees set goals that allow both to grow on multiple levels while working together for six months to one year.

"The idea is to reduce those risk factors that they have and increase their social connection," explained Bobbi Terrell, Manager, Youth Programs, YMCA of Greater Vancouver.

Since it was first offered locally in 2015, Plusone's results speak for themselves. The vast majority of youth who complete the program report improved engagement in school, as well as a reduction in social isolation and offending behaviours.

"I used to be depressed and cover my face with my hood," said one youth participant. "I am not like that anymore."

Recognizing the need for these important connections to continue through the pandemic, Plusone was among the first Y programs to return to in-person operations but also developed several creative, virtual mentoring options to link mentors and mentees. Plusone has also made a shift this year to amalgamate with the Youth Leadership Development program, providing an extended network of support through the Y.

"That gives the youth a group aspect so that once they're done their six months (in Plusone), they are staying connected to the YMCA afterwards," said Terrell. "And it's working so far."

The Foundation contributed \$30,000 toward Plusone operations in 2021, a total that made a measurable difference in the lives of program participants. Funding from the Foundation alone provided 1,500 hours of mentorship support.

What's more, national funding for Plusone officially came to an end in July last year, making the Foundation's backing that much more critical, as the program is financially secure through the end of 2022 thanks to the generosity of donors.

"It's because of the Foundation that we were able to maintain support for this program," said Terrell. "It's huge, because any donation that we get means we can go that much longer and support more youth in the program."

Plusone is always seeking additional volunteer mentors to be paired with youth on a program waitlist. Volunteers need to be aged 19 or older and be able to commit to meeting with their mentee at Tong Louie Family YMCA at a consistent time each week for six months to a year. Those interested in learning more may contact plusonementoring@gv.ymca.ca for more details.

In Memoriam - Mark Zlotnik (1950–2022)



It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the passing of Mark Zlotnik, a dedicated, longtime governance volunteer board member of the Foundation, known as YMCA of Greater Vancouver Endowment Fund during his tenure.

Mark passed away March 6 at the age of 71, survived by wife Laurie, his four children, one granddaughter and brother Marty.

Mark was a 14-year member of the Endowment Fund board, serving from 1998 to 2012. During this time, he chaired and helped launch a professional advisory committee that created a new revenue stream for the Endowment Fund by raising its profile among those in the estate-planning community.

Well known within Greater Vancouver for his business acumen, Mark started out as a Chartered Accountant before joining the Zlotnik family business at ZLC Financial in 1985. Beyond the YMCA, he was actively involved in many other local charities, including several foundations and institutions within the Lower Mainland's Jewish community.

"He was the one you turned to for advice, whether personal or business. He was the most gentle, kind-hearted, patient and caring man," his obituary stated.

"Mark's optimism, his easygoing demeanour and sense of humour will be missed by all."

Our hearts are with many families that have experienced loss. Our YMCA family will be recognizing Mark and several other Heritage Club members who have passed in recent years at our upcoming Heritage Club luncheon on June 15. We will join you in remembering.

YMCA Foundation Trustees

Melinda McKie (Chair)
Katerina Anastasiadis
Mary Beck (Past Chair)
Virginia Bird
Heather Holden (Vice-Chair)
Gavin Hume, Q.C.
Ameet Johal
Dallas Leung
Hugh Matthews
Stephanie Nesbitt
Farzin Remtulla
Angela Spanjers
Heidi Worthington (Secretary)

YMCA Foundation Staff Support

Darlene Hepburn
Heather Duross

Heritage Club Luncheon returns June 15

It has been nearly three years since we were last able to gather for a Heritage Club Luncheon—we've missed you!

Thankfully, the loosening of public-health restrictions means we are getting set to welcome you back for the annual luncheon in a matter of weeks.

The 2022 event will take place on Wednesday, June 15, running from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club.

The luncheon will provide an opportunity to catch up with old friends, meet our new CEO & President Heidi Worthington and enjoy a terrific meal while hearing about the Foundation's inspirational recent work.

We look forward to having you join us. For more information, please contact YMCA of Greater Vancouver Foundation Director of Operations Heather Duross at heather.duross@gv.ymca.ca, or by calling **778-887-5609**.

To learn more:

Phone 604.622.4958 | Email at giving@gv.ymca.ca
10–620 Royal Ave, New Westminster, BC V3M 1J2
Charitable registration: 803976471 RR0001

Would you rather receive Newsworthy by email? Let us know at giving@gv.ymca.ca
Printed on paper with 10% post-consumer recycled content.

