



YMCA Camp Elphinstone boat fleet bolstered

Campers had an especially memorable summer at YMCA Camp Elphinstone over the past couple of months thanks to improvements made to the waterfront courtesy of the YMCA BC Foundation.

This summer-camp season represented the second year of a three-year commitment from the Foundation to fund a refresh of boating equipment for campers and visitors to the Sunshine Coast facility to navigate on the waters of Howe Sound.

"We've been seeing the impact of these contributions from the Foundation each day through the smiling faces of our campers on the water," said Pete Carson, YMCA BC Director of Camping and Outdoor Education.

In 2024, the work included thorough assessments of the camp's canoes, kayaks, stand-up paddleboards and sailboats. Following that, the Foundation grant covered the refurbishment of two-dozen canoes, the procurement of boat launch-and-retrieval systems, and three new Hobie sailboats.

The canoe repairs in particular were timely, as many were showing signs of being well-used by campers.

"Almost half of them were worn through the hull or close to it," said Carson. "Now, they have bash pads on the front and back. That makes them more durable, and they won't degrade from the rocks and sand along our shore for some time."

This year, grant funding went toward the purchase of five new Laser sailboats and a Hobie Getaway catamaran, which will replace the watercraft that have been retired from the camp fleet. The Lasers will be delivered in time for the 2026 camp season. Pieces of ancillary sailing and maintenance equipment to ensure the fleet can be enjoyed by future campers for years to come were also obtained with Foundation support.

"We're looking forward to getting the Lasers in the water next summer," said Carson. "They are going to provide a great foundation to enhance our sailing programming going forward."

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Message from the Chair

Be it as a member, a volunteer or a donor, one of the joys of my lifetime has been my involvement with the YMCA movement—and seeing the significant impact our charity can make for members of our communities.

As an organization, YMCA BC has experienced much growth in recent years, and it has been a pleasure to see the YMCA BC Foundation expand and diversify its support accordingly. The number of lives that we have the potential to touch in a positive way has only increased as the Y's presence reaches more areas of British Columbia.

Seeing YMCA BC at these crossroads, poised to deliver even more life-enhancing programs and services, the Foundation is presented with an exciting opportunity to make a difference. The need for continued, intelligent funding of the programs

we support has never been greater.

I thank the members of our Heritage Club for your commitment to the YMCA BC Foundation. Your patronage helps to provide a valuable look into the future for the YMCA, and your generosity guarantees that we can continue to make meaningful investments to uplift the good people of this province.

Whether it's fitness, child care, health and wellness, youth programming and more, there are so many areas where YMCA BC not only steps up to meet the needs of communities but excels in doing so. That's why you can be assured that your selfless gift to the YMCA will leave a lasting impact.

Bob Chan-Kent
Chair, YMCA BC Foundation



Chan-Kent succeeds McKie as Chair

There's a new Chair of the YMCA BC Foundation Board of Trustees who will be a familiar face to many within our Y community.

Bob Chan-Kent officially assumed the role following the Foundation AGM in June. He succeeds Melinda McKie, who served as Chair since 2021.

"I am humbled and honoured to be the Chair of the YMCA BC Foundation," said Chan-Kent, who reflected upon the "terrific job" that McKie did in leading the Board. "She brought such a great sense of compassion and aptitude to the role and really helped define it."

Chan-Kent has been a passionate YMCA champion and leader for decades. A Past Chair of the YMCA of Greater Vancouver Board and a current member of the YMCA

BC and YBC Properties Foundation Boards, he is also Past co-Chair of the What Really Matters Capital Campaign cabinet.

Chan-Kent has held Board positions with YMCA Canada and the World Alliance of YMCAs, and earned the prestigious appointment of Companion to the YMCA Fellowship of Honour. Our centre of community in Chilliwack was named the Bob Chan-Kent Family YMCA in 2022 to acknowledge his generosity and dedication.

McKie, who remains on the Board as Past Chair, is seen on Page 5 being honoured during a special presentation at the Heritage Club Luncheon in June.





"We really appreciate that so many people care deeply about Camp Elphinstone, our programs and our ability to deliver for campers"

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Overall, it's been another wonderful season at YMCA Camp Elphinstone. More than 2,500 children and youth took part in our Overnight Camp, Day Camp or Family Camp programs between late June and the end of August.

All of those campers were able to benefit from the reopening of the camp dock and pier, which had been undergoing structural upgrades in recent seasons.

"It was awesome to see campers jumping off the dock into the swim pen again," said Carson. "All of the improvements that we've seen along the waterfront have only enhanced the Elphinstone experience for our campers and helped our staff deliver programming more effectively."

The recent launch of our YMCA Camp Alumni program has also been a big success. On Aug. 9, more than 100

past campers, staff and their family members came out for Alumni Day at Camp Elphinstone, reminiscing about their visits to camp in years past and seeing what changes have been made in the time since. Dozens also attended the Alumni Picnic & BBQ held in Vancouver's Stanley Park in June, and more events are being planned to bring the camp community together.

Although another Camp Elphinstone summer has passed, it will remain a busy place in the months ahead when welcoming students for Outdoor Education programs and private events. Staff are also working to launch a new Women's Weekend program this fall..

"We really appreciate that so many people care deeply about Camp Elphinstone, our programs and our ability to deliver for campers," said Carson. "The support of the Foundation strengthens our team and our ability to take advantage of the opportunities this amazing place presents."

Volunteerism vital for Ellen Bell honourees

Giving back was of great importance to Ellen Bell during her lifetime, so it's only fitting that the 2025 recipients of the scholarship bearing her name have strong roots in volunteerism.

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Claire O'Brien and Manpreet Dhesi were jointly awarded this year's Ellen Bell YMCA Memorial Scholarship, recognizing the tremendous contributions both have made to strengthen their communities.

Bell was a dedicated YMCA volunteer who was well-respected in BC's advertising industry before her passing more than 30 years ago. Bell's friends and family, led by Shirley Broadfoot and Dr. Nicholas Voss, founded the scholarship to support other remarkable young women pursuing a career in marketing. Today, nieces Wendy Allen and Jennifer Foreman lead the selection committee.

O'Brien said she felt a connection to Bell when applying for the scholarship after learning of her propensity to help others.

"I've been brought up with this importance of giving time back to people and giving a part of yourself, so that really resonated with me," said O'Brien.

A Bachelor of Commerce student in the UBC Sauder School of Business, O'Brien's roots in volunteerism stem from her time in Girl Guides—an organization she remains connected to today as a mentor for girls aged 9 to 11. The 21-year-old has also ventured into philanthropy as VP of Events for the UBC Commerce Community, a club for Sauder students promoting social responsibility through fundraising.



Claire O'Brien



Manpreet Dhesi

"I think it's really important to start young because money is not the only resource you have," said O'Brien, who calls Parksville home. "You also have your time."

O'Brien is serving her second summer internship as a Marketing and Administration Coordinator for the BC College of Family Physicians, which has sparked her interest in a career set in the non-profit sector.

Dhesi, 20, has used her time to help people in her home city of Surrey bridge the generational gap. She is a co-founder of GenConnect, an organization that brings youth and seniors together to foster mutual understanding and help quell the feelings of isolation many seniors experience.

"Seeing the smiles on people's faces after events, seeing the impact you feel the appreciation and it just makes you want to do more," said Dhesi.

Herself a Sauder Commerce student specializing in marketing and human resources, Dhesi also facilitates Bhangra programming for the Kohinoor Folk Arts Club and hosts the In Real Life podcast.

Forging relationships between people has been a recurring theme of Dhesi's volunteerism, which is something she hopes to carry into her professional life—especially in an increasingly virtual and tech-focused world.

"I think that human connection is something that people are still going to strive for," said Dhesi.



Gabriele Scully with Howard & Caroline Malm

41st Heritage Club Luncheon: In Photos

Thank you to all who were able to join us June 12 at the Royal Vancouver Yacht Club for this year's Heritage Club Luncheon. Please enjoy looking back on some of the scenes from one of our favourite annual gatherings!



Lily & Derek Lee



Melinda McKie receives a token of appreciation for her efforts as Foundation Chair



Teresa Ross (centre) with Donald & Marguerite Shepherd



Linda-Mae Chan-Kent with Martin & Sharee Reynolds



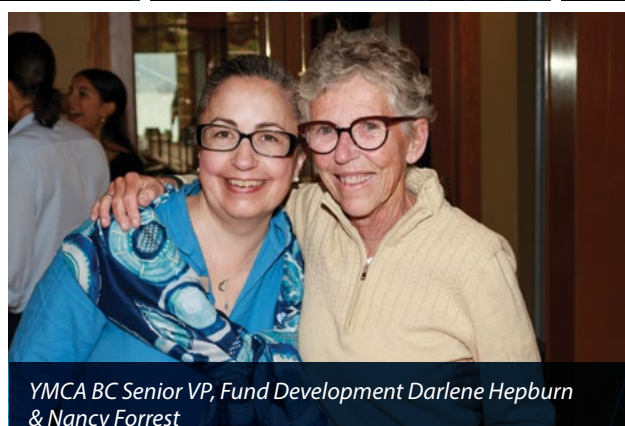
Foundation Trustee Rikki Beaudet



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Lorraine Blackburn, Megan Stowe & Diana Carter



YMCA BC Senior VP, Fund Development Darlene Hepburn & Nancy Forrest



YMCA BC CEO Heidi Worthington

Heritage Club member named to Order of Canada

A lifelong YMCA champion, George Rodger delights in seeing the Y in action, building healthy, connected communities.



George Rodger (right) with Gavin Hume, K.C., (left) and former YMCA of Greater Vancouver CEO Bill Stewart at a YMCA of Greater Vancouver event from years past.

"I often go to the Y to see the kids wear out the water," said Rodger, thinking on what keeps him inspired after decades of service to the YMCA movement.

A longtime member of the YMCA BC Foundation's Heritage Club, Rodger's dedication to the Y was officially acknowledged in June when he was named as a Member of the Order of Canada.

Rodger humbly sees the award as a reflection of the YMCA's impact across communities rather than a personal accolade. His contributions to the Y span across multiple provinces, including transformational projects in BC. His leadership and fundraising expertise supported major capital initiatives, including the Tong Louie Family YMCA and Robert Lee YMCA, the Bob and Kay Ackles YMCA Nanook House and YMCA Camp Elphinstone. Rodger also helped jumpstart capital

investments in the Bob Chan-Kent Family YMCA and Bettie Allard YMCA.

His YMCA journey began in Halifax through the Hi-Y youth program, and the early experience of learning how to speak in public, make friends, and give back sparked a lifelong commitment to the Y's purpose and values. Over the decades, he moved into senior leadership roles, volunteered with YMCAs across Canada, and consulted with associations nationwide. While working for the Y in Ontario, Rodger played a pivotal role in what became the YMCA's national child care movement, helping expand access for working families.

"The Y is developmental, it's voluntary," said Rodger. "It exists because it meets a real need, and it builds strong, safe, and caring communities for everybody."

Also a legacy donor with other Canadian YMCAs, Rodger advocates for giving in perpetuity so the Y can "refound itself each and every year to meet evolving community and societal needs."

"Service to others is the way that legacy is built," he said, reflecting on his approach to living and giving. "The creation of philanthropic capital is the largest strategic issue facing the Y for the last 10 decades and it will remain so for the next 10 decades."

For Rodger, the Order of Canada recognizes not just his lifetime of contributions, but the enduring spirit of YMCA service. He hopes others will be inspired to get involved, give, or help build the next YMCA centre of community. As he puts it, "We don't build YMCAs for today—we build them for generations."

Grant helps connect global YMCA leaders

The global YMCA movement exists in more than 120 countries, with some 12,000 branches worldwide.

And while all of them share a common vision to better their communities, each provides that support in unique and innovative ways.

For the past 50 years, the YMCA World Urban Network (YWUN) has been a vital forum for Y leaders across the planet to connect, share ideas and learn from one another's varied experiences.

"Through a global lens, the World Urban Network exists to help CEOs from around the world be better equipped to lead their YMCA," explained former YMCA of Greater Vancouver CEO Stephen Butz, who has served as the CEO of YWUN since retiring from the YMCA three years ago.

Having held several YMCA leadership positions during his 42-year career, Butz said YWUN was an impactful learning opportunity that shaped his understanding of the global scope and impact of the YMCA.

"When you talk to people from Africa, South America, different corners of Europe and Asia, you see that the Y is not monolithic—it's a very different thing around the world," he said.

Butz said he's often taken inspiration from YWUN colleagues working to make positive social change in extremely challenging circumstances. He pointed to CEOs in war-torn regions, with limited facilities or means, finding ways to deliver crucial services and

programs relied upon by their communities.

"I have stories upon stories of people making amazing things happen with a fraction of the resources we have in Canada ... doing remarkable work and making a huge impact just on the sheer notion of wanting their YMCA to be the best it can be," said Butz.

The impacts of the network can be seen here at home, too. In one example, Butz said that the YMCA BC Innovation Fund, which dedicates Foundation funding to new programs or initiatives put forward by YBC staff, was an idea first gleaned through his connection to the network.

Today, YWUN has participation from dozens of CEOs representing 27 member countries of the YMCA World Alliance. The network is supported by contributions from 15 of the world's leading YMCAs, which includes a grant courtesy of the YMCA BC Foundation. The funding helps the network's outreach to engage Y leaders in developing nations, and in 2025 supported delegates from Ghana and Ethiopia to attend this summer's YWUN Conference in Osaka, Japan.

"The Foundation has been helping YBC make a difference in the lives of others for decades," said Butz. "Your contribution to the WUN demonstrates that commitment exists beyond our borders, and in a tangible and meaningful way, illustrates YBC as a leading global YMCA."

(ABOVE) YMCA Ethiopia Executive Director Befekadu Bezabih and YMCA Charlotte CEO Sue Glass interact with a student at the YWUN Conference in Osaka, Japan this summer. Bezabih was able to attend the conference through grant funding from the Foundation.



Santos joins Foundation Board

The YMCA BC Foundation is pleased to introduce Michele Santos as the newest member of its Board of Trustees.

Santos has a wealth of experience in YMCA governance, having previously served on the Boards of Directors for both the YMCA of Northern BC and the Kamloops Community YMCA-YWCA prior to our unification as YMCA BC. Professionally, Santos has more than 25 years of expertise in investment strategies, risk management and financial planning. Based in Kamloops, she currently serves as a Senior Wealth Advisor with Wellington-Altus.

Santos also has a long history of volunteerism with community organizations beyond the YMCA, including the Rotary Club, Prince George Hospice Society and more. Her appreciation for the power of philanthropy, combined with her knowledge of YMCA BC's operations and the communities we serve across the province, will be a great asset to the Foundation Board going forward and we are delighted to welcome her as a Trustee.

Coronation medals presented to Y leaders

Four members of the YMCA BC Foundation Heritage Club—Mary Beck, Stephen Butz, Roy Funk and Gavin Hume, K.C.— were presented with King Charles III Coronation Medals in March, recognizing their outstanding service and dedication to the YMCA movement over many years.



Each of the recipients have served YMCA BC and YMCA Canada in a leadership or volunteer governance role for many years and fulfill the award's criteria of making "a significant contribution to Canada or to a particular province, territory, region or community of Canada, or have made an outstanding achievement abroad that brings credit to Canada."

Beck, Butz, Funk and Hume are among 30,000 Canadians receiving a medal commemorating Charles III's ascendance to the throne as King of Canada. All four were nominated for the medals at the initiative of YMCA BC or YMCA Canada.



The recipients are pictured here at a special event hosted by YMCA BC on March 28 in Downtown Vancouver to congratulate all on their distinguished achievement. Scan the code to learn more about each honouree.

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