



2024/2025

Annual Report



*YMCA Summer
Campers: Christabel
and Abbie*

2024/2025
Board of Directors

Kevin MacEachern (Chair)
Jill Perry (Vice Chair)
Jackson Tighe (Treasurer)
Kelsey Harvey
Stephanie Sawler
Christine MacDonald
Mark Tambal
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YMCA of Cape Breton
Senior Leadership Team

Sabrina Vatcher,
Chief Executive Officer

Heather Somerton,
Director of Finance & Admin

Anita Vosman-O'Rourke,
Director of Member Relations,
and Health Fitness & Aquatics

Jeff MacNeil,
Manager of Fund Development

Nicole MacDonald,
Senior Manager, Childcare

Valerie Dolhanty,
Executive Director, Employment
Services

Tanya Wilneff,
Director of People and Culture



Established in 1886, the YMCA of Cape Breton is the oldest, most diverse charity on Cape Breton Island. The YMCA is a volunteer-driven, charitable organization serving several areas of the Island and has expanded its services into mainland Nova Scotia.

With a commitment to nurturing the potential of children, youth and seniors, promoting healthy living, and fostering social responsibility, the YMCA ensures that every individual has access to the essentials needed to learn, grow and thrive.

Serving over 35,000 individuals, the YMCA of Cape Breton provides vital services such as health, fitness and recreation, child care, education, training and employment programs. The YMCA strives to be an inclusive organization connecting people to life-building opportunities, to each other and to programs that will enhance their quality of life.

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Message from CEO and
Board Chair

When people belong to a community, they shine their brightest. This annual report will tell the story of how our YMCA of Cape Breton (YCB) continues to strengthen the foundation of community and how we've ignited a spark for individuals across Cape Breton and into mainland Nova Scotia.

As we look back on another year of impact at our YCB, we are so grateful to our staff, board, volunteers, partners, donors, and friends in our communities that have ignited the potential in people across our region.

YCB programs and services reached thousands of people this past year, growing to 15 sites across our region, as well as numerous community programs and partnerships, more people are finding their place at our YMCA. And thanks to generous donors and program/service partners, we are working to make our programs more accessible to everyone.

Most notably in the past year, is how YMCA of CB has stepped up to provide increased childcare, employment and housing services in our communities. Opening new early learning centres, expanding our geographic reach outside Sydney with our Youth Essential Skills Strategy (YESS) and Opportunities Fund employment programs, as well as stepping into the sector of housing and homelessness in western Cape Breton, represent some significant milestones reached in this, our last year of our three-year strategic plan.

At our YMCA, we believe in people. We see their potential. We find strength in our differences and inspiration in our diversity. Thank you for helping us deliver on our promise each day to ignite the spark in others, and for keeping us looking forward to the future. As we enter our 140th year of service next year, we thank you for allowing the YMCA to be part of your story.

Sincerely,

Sabrina Vatcher
Kevin MacEachern



Kevin MacEachern
Chair, Board of Directors
YMCA of Cape Breton



Sabrina Vatcher
Chief Executive Officer
YMCA of Cape Breton

Our Vision:

Thriving communities where everyone can shine and feel they belong.

Our Mission:

Connect and ignite the potential in people, helping them grow and give back to our communities.

Our Values:

Honesty. Responsibility.
Inclusiveness. Caring. Respect.

Thank you!

to all of our volunteers, staff, members, board of directors, donors and partners who contributed to another successful year at our YMCA of Cape Breton – we couldn't have done it without YOU!



COMMUNITY IMPACT

Stories that Shine

YMCA of Cape Breton Signs 10-year agreement with Membertou

The YMCA of Cape Breton and Membertou officially renewed their partnership, signing a **10-year agreement to continue to see YMCA of Cape Breton operate the gym facility in the Membertou Sports and Wellness Centre.**

Since opening in 2016, the partnership has provided access to high-quality health, wellness, and recreation programs, supporting the well-being of the community of all ages. Between 2019 and 2024, the branch had over **124,000 visits and saw an 18% increase in membership** in 2024 compared to 2023.

This past year, the Membertou YMCA branch offered **twenty-two different group fitness classes and children and senior's programs** as well as a well-equipped wellness centre and group fitness studio.

The YMCA of Cape Breton is focused on serving the region with accessible and impactful programs that inspire personal growth and community engagement.

The 10-year agreement with Membertou marks a milestone in this mission, ensuring investment in the well-being of Unama'ki.

From left to right: Membertou Chief Terry Paul, Sabrina Vatcher, CEO, YMCA of Cape Breton and Sheldon Googoo, YMCA Membertou Branch Manager



Breakfast With Inclusive Employers

In October 2024, we hosted an Employer Appreciation Breakfast celebrating businesses in Cape Breton that participated in our **Opportunities Fund** program and are making a real difference by supporting inclusive hiring practices. **We are thankful for all the local employers who focus on people's skills, making our community a better place for everyone!**

Grant Sullivan's legacy gift for YMCA of Cape Breton

A dedicated community volunteer, **Grant Sullivan** played a vital role at our YMCA through his leadership in the **Sydney Riverview Y Service Club**, where he was recognized with a Lifetime Honorary Membership from Y's Men International. Over the years, he served as president, held the position of treasurer for over two decades, managed the local youth centre, and was a key organizer of the Club's annual Home Show fundraiser. **Before his passing in April 2022, Grant made a planned gift to our YMCA, a bequest left in his will totaling \$590,000.**

"YMCA of Cape Breton's planned gift from Mr. Sullivan has been strategically invested to support the long-term sustainability of our Frank Rudderham Family YMCA facility, ensuring continued access to youth, adults, families and seniors in our community," said Sabrina Vatcher, CEO.

The YMCA's ability to provide welcoming spaces and accessible programs is made possible through the generosity of people like Grant. **Planned giving is a powerful way to support the Y's mission and Grant's donation will live on in every child who learns to swim, senior who finds connection, and individual who walks through our doors for years to come.**

Grant harvesting fresh produce at the Sydney Riverview Y Service Club's community garden project for Loaves & Fishes in Sydney.

Photo from Sydney Riverview Y Service Club



Meet the Unofficial Mayor of our YMCA - Spencer

For Leanna, the YMCA isn't just a place to go—it's a place that gives her family a chance to grow, connect, and thrive.

Leanna is the proud grandmother and legal guardian of three beautiful children: Spencer (8), Parker (6), and Olivia (5). From day camp and swimming lessons to Mini Chefs, Creative Y, and Active Y, the YMCA has become a second home for their family. Just recently, all three children were filled with excitement as they started Hip Hop class with Adrian at our Frank Rudderham Family YMCA.

Eight-year-old Spencer, who receives one-on-one support in our Day Camp program, is especially well known at our YMCA.

"Everyone calls him the 'Mayor of the Y'—he's just so friendly and full of life," Leanna laughed.
"The staff here have made us feel like we truly belong. I honestly don't know where we'd be without the Y."

Thanks to our YMCA's Financial Assistance Program, Leanna has been able to give them the experiences every child deserves – a safe and welcoming space for kids to have fun and make meaningful connections. Thank you "Mayor Spencer" for lighting up our community with your spark!



Leanna with Parker, Olivia and Spencer at Frank Rudderham YMCA

Local Volunteer
Awarded with King
Charles III Coronation
Medal for Decades
of Service

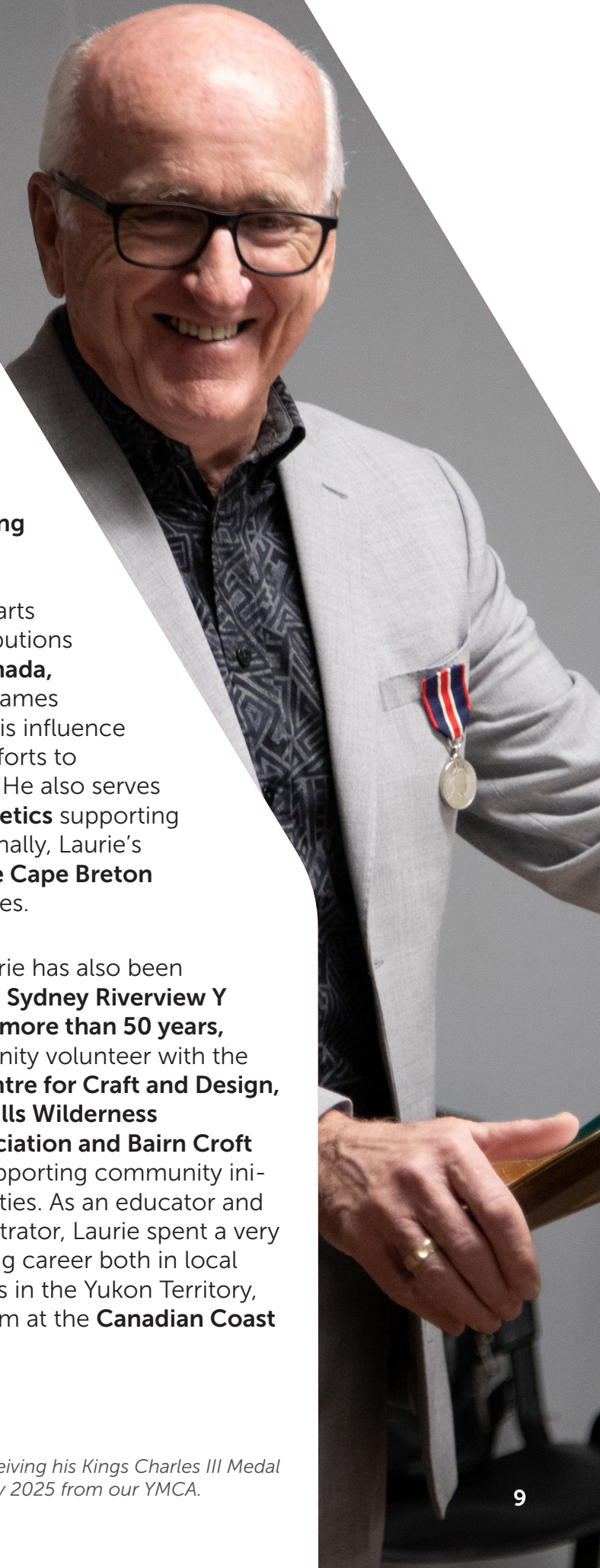
The YMCA of Cape Breton was proud to recognize **Laurie Murchison** as the recipient of a King Charles III Coronation Medal in early 2025, an honor awarded to **outstanding individuals who have made a significant difference in their communities.**

For more than 50 years, Laurie has been a driving force behind numerous community initiatives, including youth development, sports leadership, community fundraising, and advocacy for local arts and culture. Laurie has made remarkable contributions as a referee and mentor with **Speed Skating Canada**, serving as Chief Referee at the Canada Winter Games and mentoring countless officials in the sport. His influence extended to **Sport Nova Scotia**, where he led efforts to enhance sport accessibility across the province. He also serves as an auctioneer at **Cape Breton University Athletics** supporting their annual fundraiser for varsity teams. Additionally, Laurie's fundraising initiatives for **Hospice Palliative Care Cape Breton** have provided vital support for healthcare services.



Beyond that, Laurie has also been involved with the **Sydney Riverview Y Service Club for more than 50 years**, as well a community volunteer with the **Cape Breton Centre for Craft and Design**, **The Coxheath Hills Wilderness Recreation Association** and **Bairn Croft Incorporated** supporting community initiatives and activities. As an educator and a school Administrator, Laurie spent a very satisfying teaching career both in local schools as well as in the Yukon Territory, ending with a term at the **Canadian Coast Guard College**.

Laurie Murchison receiving his Kings Charles III Medal at a ceremony in early 2025 from our YMCA.



Strategic Plan 2023-2026

Moments That Matter

In April of 2023, our YMCA of Cape Breton launched a three-year strategic plan which outlined our vision statement, introduced new mission statement, aligned areas of priority with our values and identified three focus pillars: CONNECT, THRIVE and PEOPLE. The following is snapshot of some key moments over the past year in achieving our Association’s goals in our strategic plan:

April'24
Enhancement of housing support with two new Housing Support Workers in western Cape Breton.

June'24
Over 680 members accessing our membership financial assistance program.

August'24
A successful 8 weeks of summer camp wrapped up, serving 220 children.

October'24
Youth Employment and Skilled Strategy (YESS) launched in Port Hawkesbury and Glace Bay.

December'24
Three year agreement signed with Employment Nova Scotia to continue delivering services in CBRM, Port Hawkesbury, Inverness and St. Peter's.

February'25
STEM children and youth program introduced to community.

May'24
Indigenous Cultural Sensitivity Training with YMCA staff.

July'24
Three new board members join our volunteer board of directors.

September'24
Canada wide launch of our YMCA's new brand platform Shine On!

November'24
Annual YMCA volunteer symposium held to support learning and development of our health, fitness and aquatics volunteers.

January'25
Three-year Medavie Foundation donation secured to support our member financial assistance program.

March'25
One year anniversary of our Early Learning Centre in Guysborough.

Our Strategic Objectives



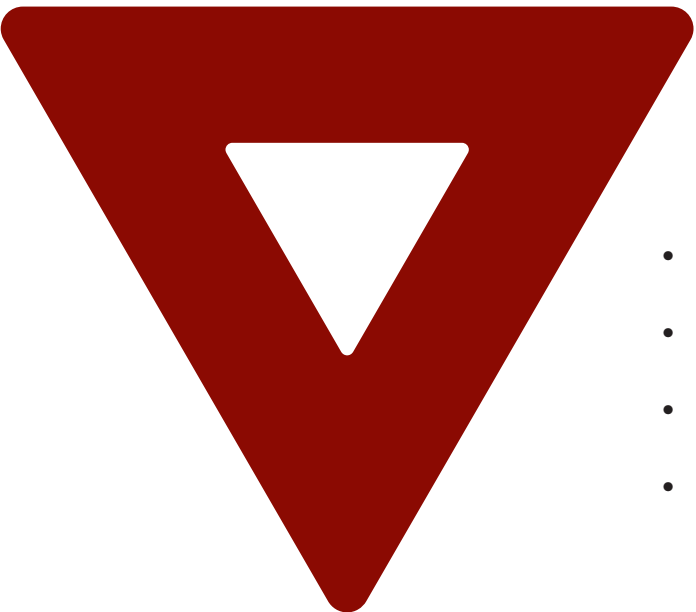
Strategic Priority #1: CONNECT

- Build and strengthen partnerships and connections
- Share our story
- Offer programming and services that cater to a wide range of individuals
- Be a center of service in emergency response



Strategic Priority #2: THRIVE

- Strengthen path to financial sustainability
- Advance our philanthropic culture
- Continue to provide high quality programs and services
- Help build strong communities



Strategic Priority #3: PEOPLE

- Become an employer of choice in Cape Breton
- Build an engaged and connected organization
- Support holistic approach to individuals' health and well-being
- Served by a staff and board that reflects the communities we serve

Strategic Priority #1: CONNECT

YMCA Peace Week 2024 Medal Recipients

YMCA of Cape Breton recognized three extraordinary individuals for their commitment to **fostering participation, empathy, advocacy, community and empowerment**. This past year's recipients were: **Newell Johnson, Paul Ratchford and Dodie Hanna**.

As Principal of Allison Bernard Memorial High School, **Newell Johnson** is the heart of Eskasoni. She organizes Nitap Day, or Friend Day, a celebration to honor her students and encourage them to be proud of their identity and community.

As a retired police officer, **Paul Ratchford** has poured his time and heart into supporting vulnerable populations in Cape Breton. He's the driving force behind J-Street Community Space in Sydney Mines and the Clifford Street Youth Centre in North Sydney—two nonprofits providing programs and support for children and their families.

For nearly 40 years, **Dodie Hanna** has dedicated her life to mentoring youth and advocating for LGBTQ+ community. As a mentor to thousands of Air Cadets, she offers essential support and is always available for guidance.

Expanding Employment Opportunities for Rural Cape Bretoners

Our YMCA has been **providing employment services for over 35 years**. Offering employment assistance services that connect people to jobs and jobs to people. With the expansion of our Nova Scotia Works centres across the Island in recent years, we positioned ourselves to expand some additional employment programs across the Island.

Youth Employment Skills Strategy (YESS), a program to help youth overcome barriers to employment, expanded into Port Hawkesbury for the first time. Over 20 weeks, 5 participants completed training and were matched with employers for a work experience in their community.

Opportunities Fund, a program to support persons with disabilities, saw 60 clients access the program in multiple ways such as job readiness preparation, wage subsidies for employers, upgrading and skill building, as well as self-employment streams. We were excited to support clients in **rural Cape Breton including Arichat, Petit de Grat and Port Hood**.

Through wrap-around services provided by our NS Works Centres and dedicated staff, our clients and employers were supported in meeting their goals and igniting their potential.



Housing Support in Western Cape Breton

On April 1, 2024, our YMCA proudly began our journey in supporting individuals facing homelessness and housing insecurity in Port Hawkesbury and surrounding communities. In our first year, our two Housing Support Workers housed 61 individuals!

Supporting Carolee to Find a Home

"At the time I was introduced to this program, I was searching for housing. The property where I have been a tenant for 11 years was being sold. I had been with a company for over 11 years that was restructuring and temporarily closed, so I just began working a seasonal job. Finances and housing were causing a great deal of stress to my everyday life and well-being.

I was at a stage in my life where I was feeling overwhelmed and was unaware of where to find or how to access resources I was in need of. When I became a client of Chloe Chetwynd, she went above and beyond to help me find housing and resources. Just having a "friendly listener", was very important for me to begin to rebuild my confidence and security.

Once I was a participant in the Y program, with housing secured, resources explored, and with the help of Chloe, I was able to regain my confidence and determination to ensure a promising future for myself. I found, and began a new job, which, not only removed me from seasonal work, but also provided me with a higher income."

Shared by Carolee Farrell.



Map of Cape Breton representing communities and number of participants served through our YMCA's housing support.

Strategic Priority #2: THRIVE

Wellness & Vitality Program Success Featuring Anna Moore



Anna Moore,
YMCA Member &
Program Participant

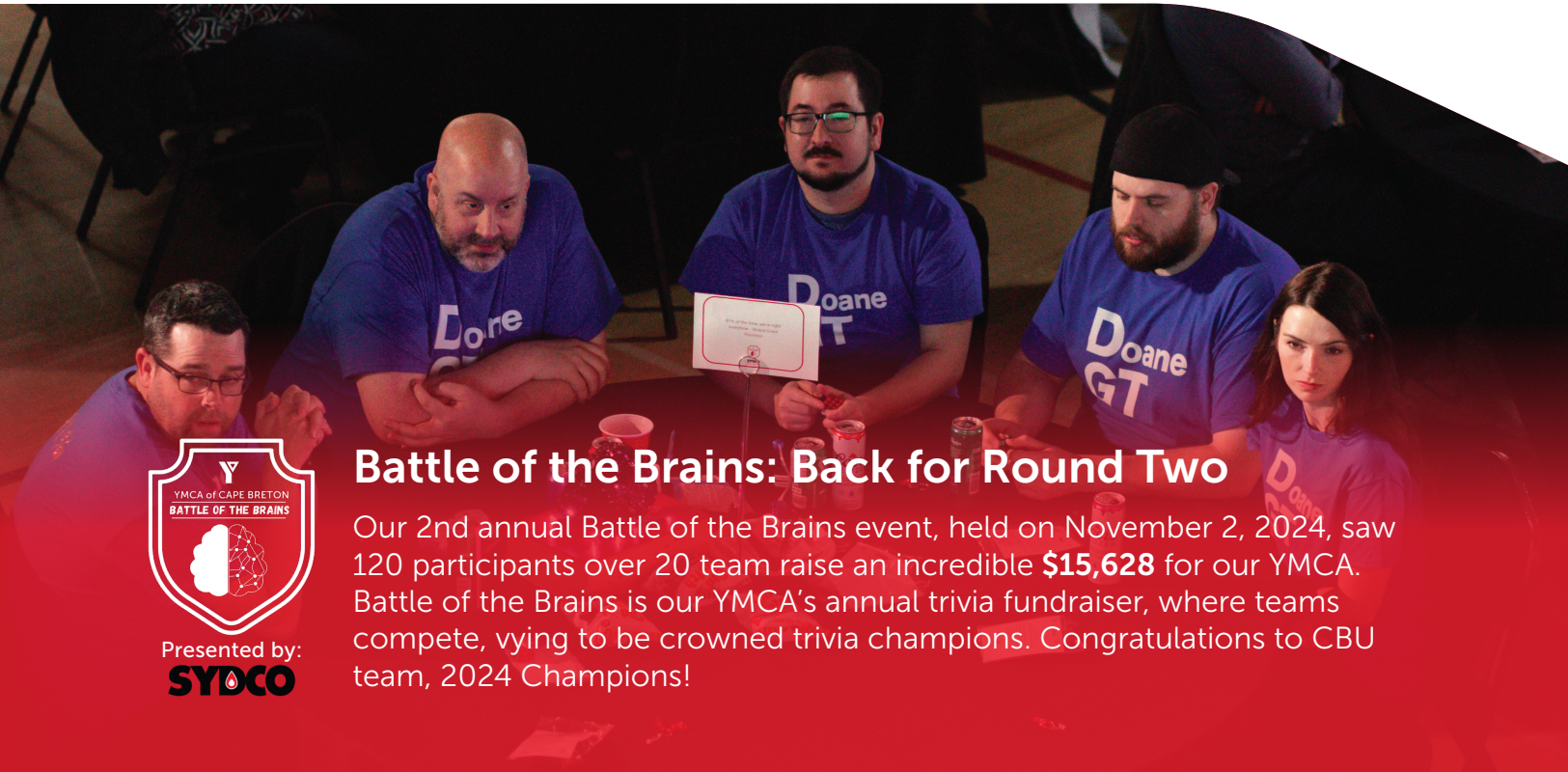
Funding for the program was provided by a New Horizons for Seniors grant. Here is Anna’s story, a YMCA member and program participant:

“I have been coming to the Y for the past 6 years, and after undergoing a surgery it is even more important for me to stay active. The Wellness and Vitality program was great, but I also really enjoy chair yoga, Stay Strong, and spending time in the pool. It’s great to have so many options that fit what I need as I get older. Our YMCA is a place where I always feel welcome and supported, I hope that this wonderful facility is accessible to people of all ages for generations to come”.



Giving the Gift of Camp Campaign 2024

\$27,629 was raised in 2024 supporting **91** Cape Breton children to attend **240 weeks** of summer day camp at a subsidized rate.



Battle of the Brains: Back for Round Two

Our 2nd annual Battle of the Brains event, held on November 2, 2024, saw 120 participants over 20 teams raise an incredible **\$15,628** for our YMCA. Battle of the Brains is our YMCA’s annual trivia fundraiser, where teams compete, vying to be crowned trivia champions. Congratulations to CBU team, 2024 Champions!



New Programs For Children & Youth

Excited to have launched two new children and youth programs to our YMCA: NHL Street Hockey in Fall 2024 and a STEM program in early 2025.

NHL STREET is a floor hockey program for kids between 6 and 11 years old that teaches teamwork, creativity, and resilience. With a low cost to join and limited rules, it allows families to have unlimited fun!

STEM started as a pilot program but is now offered on a regular basis. It is all about science and experiments: building a volcano and making slimes from scratch is more fun than school chemistry lessons.



Expanding Our Reach - New Early Learning Centre at NSCC Waterfront Campus

YMCA of Cape Breton opened our third Early Learning Centre in a new location at NSCC Waterfront Campus in Sydney on September 23, 2024. The total capacity is 52 children (10 infants, 18 toddlers, 24 preschoolers) and as a part of partnership with NSCC, priority spaces are given to children of staff and students.

The unique feature of this new centre is that it serves as on-site Lab School for the NSCC ECE program, facilitating Lab visits and field placements for both 2nd year and 1st year ECE students.

Strategic Priority #3: PEOPLE

Vital Award Recipients: Jeff MacNeil and Emily Dueck

Congratulations to Jeff and Emily! Both received **Next Gen Cape Breton Unama’ki Vital Employee Excellence Award** for outstanding leadership and contribution at the workplace.

Jeff holds the role of Manager of Fund Development at our YMCA and Emily is a volunteer Board Director.



Membertou Branch Growth

Thank you to Membertou band, council and community for supporting our YMCA and for enabling us to provide health, wellness and recreation programming to children, teens, adults and elders in our communities.

Connected to the community, Sheldon Googoo, Membertou Branch Manager, has been building relationships with the band and elders for years leading to progressive membership growth with currently over **700 members and over 37,000 branch visits in the last fiscal year.**

“In my four years at the Y, from the front desk to Branch Manager, I’ve seen how much this place means to the community. It’s more than a gym—it’s a space for connection, support, and growth. As someone with strong ties to the local Mi’kmaq community, I’m proud to help create a welcoming, inclusive environment where everyone can shine,” shares Sheldon.



Sheldon Googoo,
Membertou Branch Manager

Family’s Lifelong YMCA Journey

For siblings Brennah and Liam, the YMCA has been more than just a place to swim—it’s been the foundation for growth, leadership, and lifelong connection.

Brennah started swim lessons at age seven, alongside her older brother. A few years later, she joined the Junior Lifeguard program, spending five years learning water safety, teamwork, and discovering her passion for lifeguarding. **At just 14, she started teaching. By 17, Brennah had stepped into a supervisor role and earned her Lifesaving Instructor certification.**



“It was a responsibility I was proud and excited to take on. Each new certification was another opportunity to grow. I’ve been lucky to have mentors, coworkers, and friends who believed in me every step of the way. And through it all, my brother has remained a part of my journey. We started this together and I’m grateful for how our shared experiences at the Y helped shape who I am today,” shared Brennah.

Liam became a swim instructor and lifeguard and has been in that role for the past 3 years. *“This place has been a constant in my life, and I’m thankful for all the years I’ve been able to work here as I started when I was 15.”*

From their first swim strokes to training others, Brennah and Liam’s YMCA journey is a testament to what can grow from a single lesson—and the support of a community that believes in you.

Honouring Lynn Webb’s Legacy

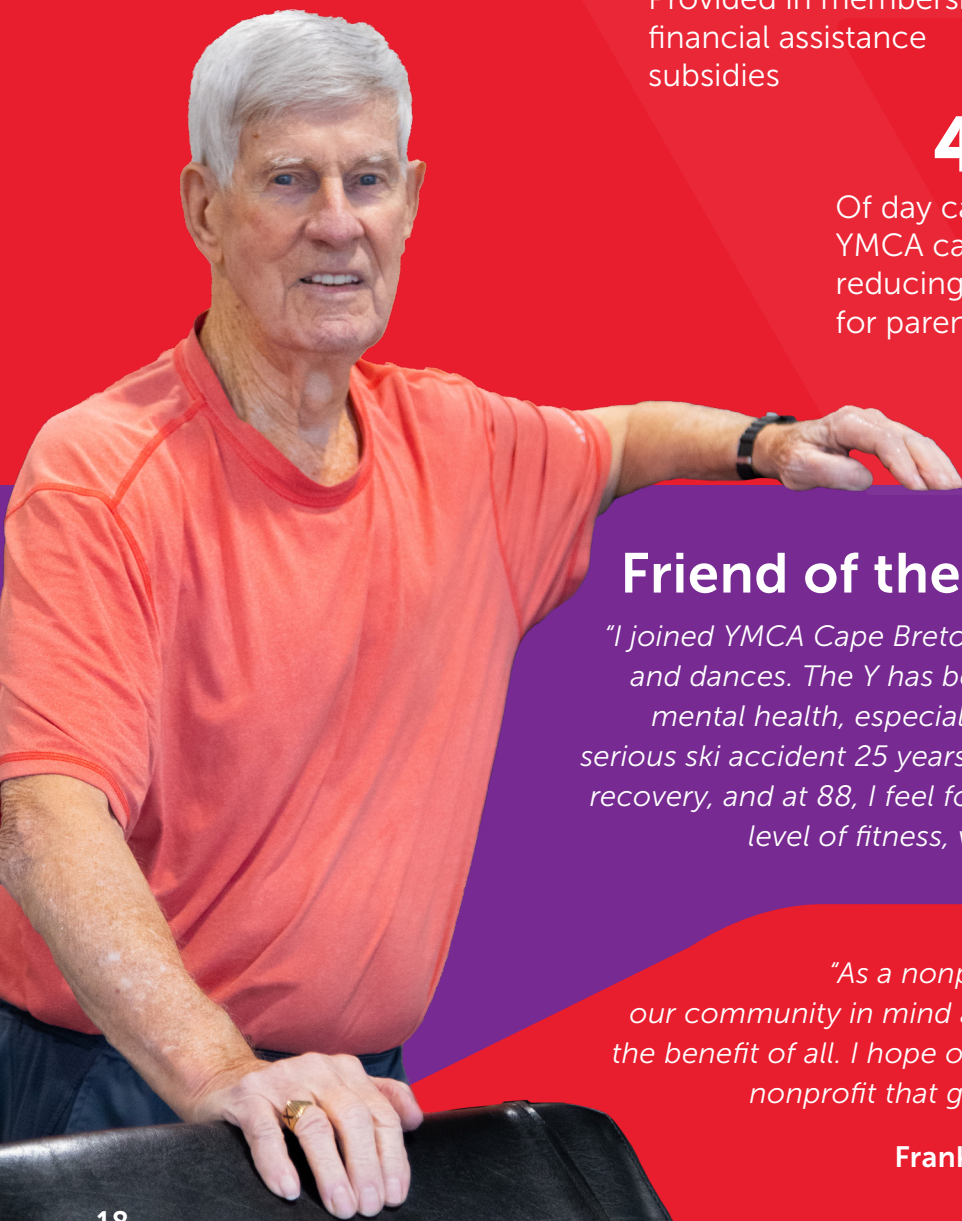
Lynn Webb, a beloved employee of our YMCA, passed away in 2024. She will always be remembered for her kindness, her leadership and her generosity (especially in sharing her incredible baking skills). We continue to honor Lynn’s legacy by participating in the annual Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl for Kids Sake event and raising funds in her memory for a cause that Lynn held so close to her heart. We miss you Lynn!



Thank you to our Donors and Volunteers!

As a charity, the YMCA of Cape Breton ignites the potential of people within our communities by supporting their physical, mental and social health journeys. **This important work is only possible thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, volunteers and donors.**

On behalf of our entire team at the YMCA of Cape Breton and the 35,000 people we serve annually across all program areas, thank you for being the spark that helps everyone Shine On!



\$152,397 **\$193,437**

Provided in membership financial assistance subsidies Donated to the YMCA of Cape Breton in 2024

40%

Of day campers access YMCA camp subsidies, reducing camp costs for parents

Friend of the Y – Frank Sampson

"I joined YMCA Cape Breton as a teen, drawn to the pool, courts, and dances. The Y has been life-sustaining for my physical and mental health, especially during my working years and after a serious ski accident 25 years ago. The Y played a crucial role in my recovery, and at 88, I feel fortunate to maintain an above-average level of fitness, visiting the Y five to six days per week."

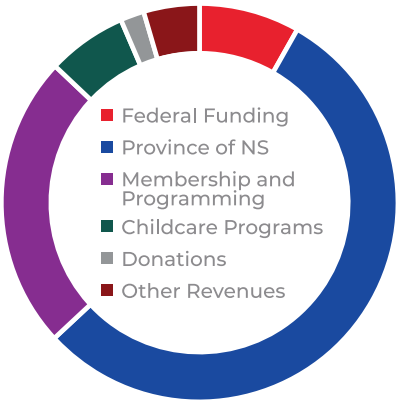
"As a nonprofit, the YMCA's goal is to strengthen our community in mind and body, not for financial gain but for the benefit of all. I hope others will see the value in supporting a nonprofit that gives back so much to the community."

Frank Sampson, Donor & Lifetime Member

2024/2025 Financial Statements YMCA of Cape Breton

Statement of Financial Position		
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31ST, 2025 (AUDITED)	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Current Assets	\$ 4,264,713	\$ 3,899,135
Capital and Other Assets	\$ 10,563,663	\$ 11,033,563
	\$ 14,828,376	\$ 14,932,698
LIABILITIES		
Current Liabilities	\$ 3,183,930	\$ 2,790,577
Long Term Debt	\$ 1,026,346	\$ 1,061,593
Deferred Contributions	\$ 8,401,641	\$ 8,791,107
	\$ 12,611,917	\$ 12,643,277
EQUITY		
Investment in Capital Assets	\$ 1,100,633	\$1,148,210
Unrestricted	\$ 1,115,826	\$1,141,211
	\$ 2,216,459	\$ 2,289,421
	\$ 14,828,376	\$ 14,932,698
Statement of Operations		
YEAR ENDED MARCH 31ST, 2025 (AUDITED)	2025	2024
Total Revenue	\$ 10,763,307	\$ 9,991,566
Total Expenses	\$ 10,738,000	\$ 9,542,874
Excess Of Revenue Over Expenses Before Amortization/Depreciation	\$ 25,307	\$ 448,692
Amortization Of Deferred Contributions Related To Capital Assets	\$ 389,466	\$ 404,280
Amortization Of Capital Assets	-\$ 487,735	-\$ 447,379
Excess Of Revenue Over Expenses	-\$ 72,962	\$ 405,593

Revenue Breakdown



Revenue	2025	2024
Federal Funding	\$526,077	\$820,899
Province of NS	\$6,122,140	\$5,481,880
Membership and Programming	\$2,586,329	\$2,392,371
Childcare Programs	\$914,674	\$648,478
Donations	\$101,296	\$193,437
Other Revenues	\$512,791	\$454,501
Total Revenue	\$10,763,307	\$9,991,566

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to our Finance and Admin staff team who go above and beyond to support the work of all divisions and enable all of us to Shine On!

How you can get involved?

Donate, volunteer, become a member
or join our team!

The YMCA is more than a gym—we're a community dedicated to making a difference! There are many ways to get involved: become a member and enjoy fitness, programs, and a welcoming space; volunteer your time to support local initiatives; explore career opportunities and make an impact every day; or donate to help us provide essential programs for those in need. **No matter how you get involved, you'll be part of something bigger—helping to build a healthier, stronger community.**



YMCAs in Your Community

MEMBERSHIP WELLNESS CENTRES:

Sydney: 399 Charlotte Street
Membertou: 95 Maillard Street

NOVA SCOTIA WORKS SITES:

Glace Bay: 106 Reserve Street
New Waterford: 479 Heelan Street
Port Hawkesbury: 298 Reeves Street
St. Peter's: 10036 Grenville Street
Sydney: 399 Charlotte Street
Sydney: 341 Welton Street

EDGE:

Sydney: 37 Nepean Street

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Sydney: Brookland Elementary,
153 Cottage Road

Sydney: Harbourside Elementary,
15 Church Street

Glace Bay: Glace Bay Elementary,
135 Brookside Street

Inverness: Inverness Education Centre
Academy, 59 Veterans Memorial Court

Port Hawkesbury: Tamarac Education
Centre, 57 Tamarac Drive

EARLY LEARNING CENTRES

Sydney: 399 Charlotte Street

Sydney: 442 Charlotte Street,
Ste 215 (NSCC)

Guysborough: 27 Green Street