Strong Start
Great Future

Our Commitment to Children, Teens and Young Adults

YMCA of Greater Toronto
Strategic Plan 2010-2020
A strong start to a great future

Investing in the health of our kids

Giving them a chance to grow, to learn, to reach their potential, to realize their dreams. Giving our kids a positive start can make all the difference in their lives. By providing young people with a supportive environment in which they can flourish, we create the foundation for a healthy, vibrant future — for every individual in our community and for our society as a whole. This is the commitment of the YMCA.

The YMCA of Greater Toronto has a long history of working with young people in our community, helping them to gain the skills, confidence and support they need to achieve their full potential. Today, we are building on this experience with a renewed vision focused on the healthy development of children, teens and young adults.

Our Commitment: YMCA Ten-Year Plan

From 2010 to 2020, the YMCA will:

- Invest in the health of children, teens and young adults from birth to age 29.
- Place special emphasis on supporting young people during life-stage transitions.
- Pursue advocacy and thought-leadership on the health of children, teens and young adults.
- Continue to emphasize collaboration for maximum impact.
- Position the Association in support of our vision to make our communities home to the healthiest children, teens and young adults.
Ensuring every step is on solid ground

Supporting young people through life transitions

From childhood to adolescence, from school life to the work world, from an old home to a new country, every life-stage transition is full of opportunities and challenges. These are moments when young people can take major steps toward fulfilling their potential. They are also times when it’s possible to lose your direction or become overwhelmed. The YMCA is here to support our young people — and everyone in our community — as they make these significant transitions in their lives.

The YMCA aims to promote the health of children, teens and young adults by supporting their important life-stage transitions with developmentally appropriate programs at every stage.

This includes:

- Providing access to early learning and child development.
- Helping school-aged children and their families learn to make healthy choices and lead active lives.
- Supporting teens as they take deliberate steps toward achieving their hopes and dreams.
- Enhancing the lives of young adults through access to personal growth opportunities, education and active, healthy living.
Investing in children, teens and young adults across their life stages

Preschool Children (infants to 6 years)

Early intervention in children’s development has been proven to enhance their health over the long term. By providing access to early learning and child development programs, we will ensure that our youngest children have the very best start.

School-Aged Children (7–12 years)

It is critical for our children to acquire the skills and confidence to make their own healthy choices. Our goal is to provide school-aged children — and their families — with programs and services that help them learn to lead healthier, more active lives during their transition to their teenage years.
Investing in children, teens and young adults across their life stages

Teens (13–18 years)
As our teens gain increasing autonomy and take steps toward realizing their hopes and dreams, we’re there to help them thrive. By working with our youth to create relevant programs and services that build their sense of identity, we help them gain confidence and ensure their well-being as they reach their potential.

Young Adults (19–29 years)
We seek to enhance the lives and well-being of young adults by providing them with access to opportunities for personal growth, education, employment and healthy living — ensuring that they develop into active, engaged citizens contributing fully to our community.

Serving adults is an important part of the YMCA’s mission. Adults of all ages have a vital role to play in our community. Some serve as mentors and teachers to young people; others are active participants in our community. Our YMCA is proud to welcome people at every stage of life.
Growing stronger together

Helping young people grow up healthy makes a whole community stronger. Not only by paving the way to a vibrant future, but by enabling young people to contribute richly to the community today. It is why the YMCA welcomes people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, serving youth alongside adults, bringing together people of all abilities and experiences — and building positive connections between generations that can help our kids grow in competence and confidence through every stage of life.

In our commitment to creating healthy communities that include and involve all, the YMCA embraces the core principles of:

**Access** – Making programs, services and opportunities available to everyone.

**Choice** – Offering a full range of programs and services to meet the diverse needs of all the regions and communities we serve.

**Social Inclusion** – Ensuring that people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and identities feel a sense of belonging, are able to participate fully, share in decision-making through having their voices heard and find opportunities to grow.

**Prevention** – Helping people gain greater control over their health by supporting their mental, physical and social well-being.
A healthy community, for everyone

The YMCA believes that when everyone -young and old- come together, everyone benefits. YMCA programs and facilities are at their most vibrant when they connect the energy and insights of our young people with the experience and mentorship of our oldest.

Our new strategic plan is a commitment to improving the health of children, teens and young adults in our community. As we embark on this exciting plan, we remain as committed as ever to providing the programs and services adults and seniors currently enjoy at the YMCA. Indeed, we believe that an important part of growing up healthy is learning to share spaces, activities and friendships with adults and seniors. The best YMCA for young people is one in which older members of our community continue to learn, teach, find support, be active and have fun.

About the YMCA

For over 160 years, the YMCA has worked to improve the health of our community and strengthen the social fabric of our neighbourhoods. We owe our continued growth and vitality to the energy, enthusiasm and generosity of our members and partners.

As we embark on our new strategic plan — with the goal of making the Greater Toronto Area home to the healthiest children, teens and young adults — there are many ways for you to become involved. To join, volunteer, donate visit www.ymcagta.org or drop by your local YMCA.
Our Mission
The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth, community involvement and leadership.

Our Vision
Our communities will be home to the healthiest children, teens and young adults.

Our Values
The YMCA of Greater Toronto is guided by values that inform the way we act and the decisions we make:

• Caring
• Health
• Honesty

• Inclusiveness
• Respect
• Responsibility