

# YMCA JOHN ISLAND CAMP ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



YMCA JOHN ISLAND

April, 2017

*The Official Newsletter of the YMCA John Island Camp Alumni*

## CHILDREN OF ALUMNI FILLING CAMP SESSIONS

There are over 130 overnight camps in Ontario accredited with the Ontario Camps Association. There are 15 YMCA overnight camps in Ontario. With all of these excellent opportunities for children to engage in camping there is an overwhelming desire for parents to send their children to the same camp they attended. John Island alumni are no exception. With John Island 2017 quickly filling up, a large number of the campers registered are children of John Island alumni.

We have asked a few of our alumni who have registered their own children for camp this summer to comment about their own experience and what the draw is to send their children to John Island. We think you will enjoy these articles in this and future editions and perhaps identify with the stories they tell. We should also point out that several of our John Island staff for 2017 are also sons and daughters, nieces and nephews of our alumni. The tradition is continuing from generation to generation!

## NEW CANOEING PROGRAM FOR TEEN CAMPERS

For an experienced camper who is between 13 and 15 years old, the Explorer Canoe program serves as the ideal bridge between regular camping sessions and the Greenway Leadership Program. This two-week co-ed program is an introduction to extended canoe tripping skills and leadership development.

The tripping program explores new routes in our northern environment with its beautiful system of rivers and variety of skills that can be fostered in the waterways of the area. Information is available on the camp website.

## THESE ARE THE PEOPLE WHO BUILT JOHN ISLAND



Sudbury Y's Men's Club in the 1980's as they gathered for a reunion at the camp with their wives

Back in the days when milk was delivered by horse-drawn wagons and radio had no competition from television, a group of men, supported by their wives, came up with the idea to build an overnight camp for children. In the late 1980's. This group of men and their wives visited the camp that they had built and that had been in use for over 30 years.

It is hard to image the dedication of these people who built the camp without the use of power tools (including power saws) and who worked mainly on weekends.

They were pleased that their efforts at building the camp had resulted in many years of successful operation. There are only a very few of the original builders still with us today, but we know all of the original group would be excited to see the camp in good shape and catering to so many youth today in its 63rd year of operation.

Work Weekend  
May 26,27,28

JIC Visitors` Day  
Sat. July 8th

Parent/Camper Info Night  
Wed. April 5th

We need you to let us know if  
you wish to continue to  
receive this newsletter (pg. 8)

## JOHN ISLAND FAMILY CAMP - STARTED IN 1954

It has been a tradition for many families over the years. It is considered to be the family holiday, the introduction to camping for many youngsters, and a week of good plain fun with great food and outdoor activities. As one family camp mother recently said, "When your teenaged daughter looks forward to going to camp for a week with her family, that's a good thing!"

Like everything else, camping for families at John Island has taken several twists and undergone a number of changes since the first family camp in 1954.

After spending several summers of their lives building John Island Camp, the members of the Sudbury YMCA Y's Men's Club were the first to sign up their families for the very first Family Camp. It is no wonder that after years of labouring week after week in one of the best camp settings in the country. The club members wanted to share the beauty with the rest of their families.

Throughout the years Family Camp has grown through many various shifts in direction. Some of the most popular years were those when the staff and families of London Life dominated the participants and continued the family camp tradition for close to a decade. While the families and participants changed over the years, many of the traditions of family camp continued - good wholesome food, many camp activities, and continuing support for the camp.

When Family Camp reached the 1980's the popularity grew and the camp was extended into two separate one-week camps. Even then there was a lottery to determine which of the over 30 families that applied would actually get a cabin.

Family campers have always felt a responsibility to assist the camp as it grew and developed over the years. They took on the responsibility to raise the funds for the new shower house at the turn of the century.



1954 John Island Camp Family Camp Campers

Spaces currently available for both the Spring and Fall Family Camps at John Island Camp

### IT STARTED WITH THESE FAMILIES

The Sparling Family  
The Hansen Family  
The Dick Family  
The Roe Family  
The Smith Family  
The Stark Family  
The Burgess Family  
The Alexander Family

### Staff for Family Camp in 1954

Elwood Mitchell  
Colin Hatcher  
Mrs "Ma" Strain

### And.... Their favourite desert was:

#### "Ma" Strain's Raisin Pie

1 cup of raisins  
1 cup of white sugar  
1 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. nutmeg  
2 tbsp. white flour  
1 cup water

Boil until it thickens, then  
Cool it.

The winner of the Family Camp Table Tennis competition in 1954 was:

Johnny Gray

And.... At the end of each day a campfire which ended with "Taps"

Day is done, gone the sun  
From the lake,  
From the hills,  
From the Sky;  
All is well, safely rest.  
God is nigh.

# JOHN ISLAND HAD ANOTHER GIFT TO GIVE ME. . . By Nadia Lamothe

Last summer, I made the drive to Lily Creek to send my kids off to John Island for the first time. Living in southern Ontario, the drive was a commitment, but sending them to John Island had always been in the cards.

I first attended John Island Camp as a family camper in 1979 when I was 4 years old. I then went on to attend Little Guys and Gals, Youth Camp (what we called 'co-ed 2'), Leadership Programs and eventually, I became a staff member. John Island was such a huge and wonderful part of my life that I always assumed my kids would have their own John Island Camp adventures.



Nadia Lamothe at John Island when she was 4



Nadia's daughter Sydney at camp

When we arrived at Lily Creek last summer, only one word can describe how I felt sending them off: jealous. It's not a pretty word, but it's true. Seeing the staff, the nametags, the camp t-shirts and the yellow buses just brought me back to when it was my turn and I was heading off to the island. Thinking about them starting the day off with a polar bear dip, heading over to the dining hall for morning circle and singing Oh Canada surrounded by friends and the beauty of such a magical place did bring on a bit of envy. But still, I was so happy to be sending them off to "my" camp so that they could have their own adventures.



Malcolm (Centre row, 4th from left)

John Island gave me so many gifts: out trips, the unique experience of washing up at the rub-a-dub, a hundred songs I'll never forget sung at camp fires; and so many lifelong friendships. And last summer, John Island had another gift to give me, which was hearing my kids' stories when I picked them up after their sessions. My son built a fire, slept in a tent and went on a canoe trip. My daughter climbed the ropes courses, played cooperative games and made new friends. They loved John Island and can't wait to go back. And I can't wait to live vicariously through them again this year.

## JIC ALUMNI INSPIRED BY JOHN ISLAND EXPERIENCE

Natasha Wittke founder of Norquay Co. is not only a JIC alumni but one of the first of eight Norquay LIT's to set out on a month long trip along the Missinaibi River in 1994. This inspiring and memorable expedition is what Natasha looked to when launching her line of artisan painted canoe paddles under her appropriately named company Norquay Co. Her series of designs are influenced by early exposure to First Nation art. Natasha grew up in Sudbury, and moved to Toronto where she pursued an education in art and marketing. Her work is globally recognized and has been published in the book "The Outsider", which recognizes makers across the world who have influenced people to get outside through innovative product development. To learn more about Natasha and her work you can visit <http://norquayco.com> or follow her @norquayco on Facebook and instagram.



Paddles designed by Natasha

One of the interesting facts found on their web page is Natasha's solo during her leadership development was on Norquay Island. . . her `Norquay` experience with John Island Camp is rather extensive. We congratulate Natasha on her successes.



Natasha working on a canoe with design by her company



Look at the website for more Norquay Co. products

# “SUMMER CAMP IS FUN”

by Alkanesh Mamo

During the 2016 holiday season, I got an email from a former Sudbury YMCA Executive Director Gary Gray asking me if I could write an article about my experiences at the YMCA John Island Camp and I was thrilled for the opportunity to share my John Island camping experience.

Here is a little background about me. The Sudbury YMCA, who is the sister YMCA of Khartoum, Sudan has sponsored me to come to Canada and on April 12, 1990 I arrived in Sudbury. To make a long story short, I was taken to the house of the Sudbury YMCA Executive Director Secretary; Mrs. Millie and Primo Facca.

I remember the day I arrived at Millie and Primo’s house as if it was yesterday. It was late in the evening and the Sudbury YMCA Executive Director, Mr. Gary Gray, whom I met in Khartoum the previous year, took me to the Facca’s house. From that day on I was dreaming of how I will get a job, find my own place, and go to school. It was about a month or so since I have been living with them and Millie said, “Akali, Gary and I were talking and we think it would be good for you to go to John Island Camp for the summer”. The only thing I heard was “camp” my heart was beating faster than usual, my mind was racing, and going through a lot of stuff that I remember about camp. I thought to myself, wow, after I came all the way here for a better opportunity and better life they want me to go to camp?

No way, I am not going to camp. All the images of the refugee camp that I have been to was rushing through my thought. Then I thought to myself I have to ask questions as to how far is this camp from a known city? How many refugees are in there? What kind of refugee (the race) are in this camp that I am being asked to go to. Millie has sensed my hesitation so she said, “you would like it there, it would be a good experience for you and you would meet a lot of young kids of your age.” I was not convinced that it would be a good experience for me, my previous knowledge of camp is not a good experience at all. So I muscled up some strength and I asked the questions that were floating in my mind casually. Millie I said, what kind of refugees are there and how many?” She said “Oh my daring this is a summer camp where all Canadian kids go for the summer to have fun. Oh poor baby, we would not send you to a refugee camp, here in Canada we don’t have refugee camps.” Primo further explained to me that this is not a camp for refugee. Then, Millie said let us go shopping and get you all the camping gear, like shorts, and swimming suit and any other stuff you would need, and we did.

I believe it was the last week of June 1990 when I went to John Island Camp and I spent the whole summer there and yes I did discover that summer camp is indeed for having fun. I worked as a camp counsellor and I loved every minute of it. Yes, I met a lot of kids and they included me in all of the camp activities as much as I was willing to participate.

The camp has a lot of activities, such as early morning polar bear swim, which I only tried it once and didn’t do it again, because I found out that the early in the morning water is too cold for me. I did do and learned kayaking, canoeing, windsurfing, rock climbing, high rope course and how to play baseball all for the first time. The older campers will pack food and camping gears for overnight or more days out in the wildness to learn camping skills, such as self-reflection, survival, teamwork, and leadership skills. However, my most favourite activities were sing along, the counsellors and the older campers playing a skit, stories telling at the campfire site and at the end of the campfire, the discipline kids are taught to respect nature and the night as they leave the campfire site with silent to their cabin. Also, my other favourite thing to do at camp was after all the campers are gone to bed, I would be sitting outside of the camp dining hall and enjoy the tranquility of the campsite. I remember one time the camp Director Rick Wise and the senior counsellors invited me to their midnight venture. We took canoes into the lake and we stopped half way in. The lake was so calm, the moon reflection on the lake gave the lake a beautiful shiny glass look and we sat in the canoe and listened to the sound of nature. We heard the wolves calling and the loons

welling. I didn’t know which is which but they explained to me. Oh how beautiful it was, I would not have mind it to sit there for hours and would have loved every minute of it. Today, there is no doubt in my mind that it is because of my John Island camping experience that one of my favourite activity is going to camping with my family and friends.

(cont’d on next page)



Akanesh Mamo with Primo and Millie Facca, her husband Muluken and children Mikyas and Olivia Mildred.



Akali at her Master’s graduation at University of Maryland presenting a thank you sash to both Millie and Primo.

## WHY JOHN ISLAND FOR OUR KIDS?

By Kristen Beachli

So, Gary noticed my middle daughter was going to John Island with her cousin again this year and asked me why that was important to us.

I guess I should first explain that I was a camper at John Island from age 6 to age 21 (as a staff member leading the Greenway program), a grand total of 16 years. So, you could say, I loved camp, LOVED it, and I hoped that my kids would love it just as much.

John Island is special in so many ways. The first that comes to mind is that the camp is situated on a spectacular physical site. The feeling of leaving the mainland and travelling by boat to an island in the middle of the North Channel is a powerful experience that sets the stage for a true journey, an epic adventure. The North Channel is beautiful, rugged and unspoiled and the beach on the south shore of John Island goes on forever. So much space to explore as a child feels like true freedom. During spring camp we hosted a

group of Japanese drummers and the look on their faces when they arrived was pure astonishment. They could not get their heads around the vastness of the space, the endless, ocean-like water on the horizon and the simple lack of people. It reminded me at the time, seeing it through their eyes, what a very special place in the world John Island is.

JIC is also special because it is a Y camp and therefore gathers a broad audience of campers. It allows kids to get out of their bubble and mix it up with kids you would otherwise never meet. I have witnessed that very quickly these kids become fast friends. Over and over in my life the skills I learned at camp I have used in my working life, which often involves being thrown into groups of very different people. I have relied on the patience and empathy I learned from years at camp to help understand the group and encourage everyone play to their diverse strengths.

The island and the people set the stage but I also think it's the slower pace of camp life that also allows for the development of emotional intelligence and creativity. It is time unplugged, which is that much more important today. I remember writing in journals as I lay in my bunk or writing letters and thinking about the person I was and the person I wanted to be. You had time to read and write and dream and lots of opportunity to be creative. The memories of skit nights, campfire, crafts, snipe hunts, all camp games and out trips are incredibly vivid twenty-five years later.

It was freedom, responsibility, challenge, so many laughs and so many dear friends.

My Dad passed the gift of John Island Camp on to me in hopes that I would love it as much as he did. It is important to my husband and I that we share that gift with our children.



Krissy Wilkinson, Dalton Beachli, Sara Beachli, Maija Beachli and Ryann Beachli

## SUMMER CAMP IS FUN (Cont'd from previous page)

The two summers I have worked at John Island Camp were a great experiences to me. The first year I was a counsellor, and my job was to teach the young campers about Africa, particularly about Ethiopia and its culture. Lucky me, I had brought with me from Sudan a little knickknack to remind me of who I am and I was able to take it with me to camp to share my Ethiopian culture with the campers. When I go cabin to cabin to speak to the young campers, they were very respectful and eager to learn and intrigued when I told them how we make coffee and that coffee was first discovered in Ethiopia by a shepherd attending flock of sheep's and goats.

The second year, I was the camp director's office assistant and that is where I have learned how to use computer for the first time and programs, such as Word Perfect and Excel Spreadsheet. Using those programs, I was able to keep track of campers coming in and going out of the camp and I learn to communicate on the radio where I learned to say "Over, Copy that and Roger." In a nutshell, my YMCA John Island camping experience has been a great life changing experience in so many ways. I am entirely grateful to all of you: the Sudbury YMCA staff, to all the young campers, counsellors and to a great camp director Rick Wise and his wife Cathy Wise for being in my first two years of my Canadian way of camping experience. My life is enriched because I was fortunate enough to cross path with all of you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a special thank you to Millie and Primo, to whom I own all my success in life. Nothing would have been possible without your unconditional love and support. You are the greatest grandparents ever lived to my kids; Mikyas and Olivia Mildred Gezahegn. In 2012 I took my family and Millie and Primo to see John Island Camp and Mille's Grove that Sudbury YMCA has planted a tree for her 40 years of service. My daughter carries Millie's name so that the Facca's will forever be part of mine and my family's life and legacy.

# GENERATIONS OF GENERATING POWER FOR CAMP

It is 1954. The winds start blowing and rain is coming. The campers are gathered in the Dining Hall for an afternoon of games and fun when slowly the lights start dimming and the power is gone. The generator has stopped functioning and maintenance staff start scrambling to the Gen Shed hoping that the problem is quickly resolvable.

No matter which era you attended John Island Camp, this situation may have repeated itself a few. At times the machine has just run out of fuel and needs to be re-set, but not always has the solution been that simple. Fuel pumps, radiators, bad fuel and a myriad of other causes have also happened over the years but the generator has always continued to be the main source of power for the camp and has served us well.

Those of us from the early decades of camp recall the generator at the back of the maintenance shed just a few steps from the back door of the Dining Hall. The pounding sound of the machine which gave life to refrigerators and lights was accepted as a necessary evil at camp. It was only in the 1980's that a new home for the generator was found. New wiring was installed around camp to accommodate the new generator and the greater distance from the core of the camp.

It was around 2010 that a shift to more solar energy started and currently the lights in all camper cabins, rub-a-dubs, and emergency lighting in the dining hall are powered by solar and two windballs in the camp. Not only has this taken away from the dependence on the generator, but has meant we have lights available 24 hour a day in these facilities. What is in store for the future of diesel generated power at camp? Only the future will tell as our need for the power of the generator to keep freezers, refrigerators, washing machines and water pumps continues.

One of the more memorable experiences with the original Delco generator of the camp was the year our fuel supply company accidentally sent gasoline in a diesel fuel drum. That story is immortalized in a poem which we printed in an earlier edition of the newsletter about 8 years ago but are repeating today.



Generators do not last forever. In this Jody Waddell and electrician Don Harrison move a new generator into the Gen Shed in 2012.

## *The Ballad of the Delinquent Delco*

One day late in August, 12 years from its start,  
John Island Camp had a blow to its heart.  
One day late in August, while the cool breezes blew,  
The life of our Delco was finally through.

The legend of that Delco, although not that old,  
Is a legend we know and one to be told.  
So sit back a while and listen right now  
As we tell you the story as best we know how.

It once stood in the Dew Line, up in the cold  
And gave light and heat to the men, so we're told  
But it was not strong enough there, so was taken away  
And sold to our camp on a cold winter's day.

The Kismet next summer was loaded right down  
As the Delco arrived in that cool Spanish town.  
But the boys at the helm said they had lots of room  
So on went the Delco as they lowered the boom.

After twelve miles of storming the boisterous waves,  
The Kismet reached camp through the water it craves

And there on the stern, looking just as it ought to  
Was the 5,000 watts in the form of our Delco.

They heaved and they tugged and finally a smile  
As they got the Delco on our tractor in John Island style  
Then they all held on tight as from the dock it was driven  
So they's have power and really be livin'.

They worked all that night and the next week-end too  
As the connections were made by the electrical crew  
And finally the moment they'd all waited for,  
The flick of the switch and - there was nothing more.

Something was wrong, the machine would not go,  
The book said it should but the Delco said no.  
And then by sheer luck, as someone gave it a stare,  
The wires to the battery were hanging in mid air.

Now everything was ready, they'd try it once more  
As the man who would start it walked in through the door  
Up went the switch and everyone lurked  
Then on went the starter switch and by golly it worked.

(Cont'd on next page)

# MEET CHRIS FALCIONI, JIC DIRECTOR

My name is Christopher Falcioni and I'd like to introduce myself as the new Camp Director at YMCA John Island Camp. Having started my adventure with John Island back in the year 2000, it is a welcomed treat to be back, and a part of the Sudbury YMCA. Born and raised in Sudbury, I was a late bloomer to join the John Island family, starting camp at the age of 12. With a few years of Windsurf and Sail experience, and some Leadership Training, I was hooked!

After working at Camp Falcona for a couple of summers, I headed east to work for the YMCA of Halifax/Dartmouth, holding various positions before directing their summer camp and outdoor education center for multiple years. Loving my experience on the coast, I thought I'd give the west a try, and found myself the director of Zajac Ranch for Children, a camp for campers with chronic illness and various medical conditions. Camp has been a huge part of my life, and continues to have a special place in my heart. Continuing on in the outdoor education world, I've spent time working with students at Outward Bound Canada, the National Outdoor Leadership School, and Brock University, where I am currently working towards a Master's degree in Recreation and Leisure Studies. I am thrilled to have found my way back into the camping world here in Sudbury, and could not be happier to be returning to the island in the spring.

The staff and volunteers here at the YMCA, and more so in the Camping Office have been extremely welcoming and patient with me as I've transitioned into this new role, putting up with my million questions and getting me up to speed with the development of John Island in recent years. I look forward to contributing what I can, and steering the ship that is John Island down its path of continued success.

If you are ever in or around the Sudbury area, please feel free to come in to the Camping Office and introduce yourself! I look forward to connecting with all of our Alumni at some point as we work toward strengthening our relationship with past campers, volunteers and staff.

Fun Fact: I once had the privilege of playing the Six String Nation Guitar in front of a delegation of Recreation Nova Scotia professionals. Check out this cool piece of Canadian Heritage here: <http://www.sixstringnation.com/>



Chris Falcioni  
Director, YMCA John Island Camp

## The Ballad of the John Island Delco (cont'd)

For ten years without trouble it worked out its heart  
Then one year it stopped and it would not restart.  
The director of the camp - he got quite concerned  
So they flew in some experts of whom he had learned

They looked the machine over and signed in dismay  
As it still wasn't going by the end of the day  
They thought some parts had just worn and they had to go  
While others needed repair - a jolly bad show!

A few days later, they returned to the camp  
In hopes that the Delco they'd be able to revamp  
But after more work, they still had no luck  
And it looked like the camp was going to be stuck.

But then by good fortune, another diesel type man  
Came out to see if he could give us a hand  
He got out the manual, and read. "Check the fuel!"  
But to suggest this wasn't done was terribly cruel

So he filled up a cup and he began to scratch  
Pour it on the ground and threw on a match  
Up went the flames and five days of work  
Some guy put gas in the diesel drum, the jerk!

For two more years the Delco hammered away  
It looked as though it were really there to stay  
But one day in August as the cool breezes blew  
The life of our Delco was rumoured to be through.

It had exhausted itself, really ran itself down  
And as it slowly gave way, the camp grew a frown  
Its parts were plain worn, really nothing could be done  
The Delco at camp might never again run.

So in camp that August, in the summer of '65  
The question in camp was, "will the Delco survive?"  
But nothing could be done till camp was well over  
And the men in the city could look the thing over.

So as camp ended that year, for the first time in years,  
No Delco could be heard by the many little ears.  
And next year at camp, we're not sure what will appear,  
But if its not our own Delco, it may be a tear

The men in the city say it would be too much trouble  
And the machine that we know was nothing but rubble  
And that's how the Delco which was once a camp fixture  
Came into being and then passed out of the picture.

# AN OLD JOHN ISLAND LANDMARK GETS UPGRADED

Some of us remember the cabin closest to the chapel as the original camp hospital. Other remember it as accommodation for the kitchen staff in the 1960's. However, most of us remember the cabin by the beach as accommodation for those in the leadership training programs.

After 63 years of use, the building was in rough shape. It became the next project of the students from Lasalle Secondary School in Sudbury who have been putting in weeks of work on renovating or rebuilding most camper cabins, some composting rub-a-dubs, and other projects for close to 10 years.

Every spring, students from the Lasalle carpentry program in grade 11/12 get practical experience at John Island while the camp benefits from new and renovated facilities. In the spring of 2016, the group got the majority of the inside completed, new floor beams put in and a new steel roof installed. This year the emphasis will be on the outside of the cabin with new siding and a new porch.

The inside now consists of one large front room across the front of the building with picture windows to view the beach of camp and a room across the back of the building for accommodations. The cabin is now a beautifully rebuilt building with good storage space that will be the envy of many over the years to come.

Much appreciation goes to the students from Lasalle and their staff for the excellent work performed while they receive extraordinary work experience. Thanks also goes to those alumni who have been contributing to the John Island Camp Capital Fund as this has provided the funds for the materials and supplies to keep John Island Camp in top shape. Those alumni wishing to help camp continue with this valuable work and keep John Island Camp as a leader in overnight camping can do so by contributing to the YMCA John Island Camp Capital Fund.

Work on the second leadership cabin (referred to as the Woods Greenway Cabin) is expected to begin soon. This cabin was originally brought over from Camp Y'Land in the 1970's when that camp closed.



Pictured from top to bottom,  
 - Putting the new steel roof on the cabin  
 - The inside with new windows and a great view of the beach  
 - The students from Lasalle Secondary who worked on the project in 2016

**TWO**  
COMMUNITIES

**135**  
YEARS STRONG

**ONE**  
MISSION

*Unlimited potential.*



**YMCA of  
Northeastern Ontario**

**The YMCAs in North Bay and Sudbury have formally come together and are now the YMCA of Northeastern Ontario**

**For more information please see the included media release.**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL NEWSLETTER READERS

To be compliant with regulations regarding the sending of e-mails we must reconfirm your desire to receive the semi-annual Alumni Newsletter for John Island Camp by e-mail. If you have not responded to the recent mailchimp e-mail requesting your permission for the Y MCA to send you newsletters and other information updates by e-mail, please do so now. Without your permission through mailchimp, we will not be able to send further e-mails (and newsletters) to you. Information on how to do this is inside this newsletter. Thank you.

Send us an e-mail to: [gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca](mailto:gary.gray@sudbury.ymca.ca)





**North Bay YMCA**

186 Chippewa Street West  
North Bay, Ontario  
P1B 6G2

Phone: 705-497-9622  
Fax: 705-474-5116

[www.ymcanorthbay.com](http://www.ymcanorthbay.com)

**Sudbury YMCA**

140 Durham Street  
Sudbury, Ontario  
P3E 3M7

Phone: 705-674-8315  
Fax: 705-675-8777

[www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca)

*For Immediate Release*  
Thursday, April 20, 2017

**YMCAs joining together to better serve communities  
for generations to come**

**Partnership between two organizations is focused on a stronger  
Northeastern region**

**NORTH BAY and SUDBURY, ON – APRIL 20, 2017** – The YMCA of North Bay and the YMCA of Sudbury have joined together as one organization. After six years of joint management under one CEO, the two YMCAs entered into an alliance agreement last May, and since that time, both boards have approved the amalgamation. The Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee and Service Ontario have approved the amalgamation agreement.

Working together under one mission means that the YMCA has an opportunity to better serve thousands of children and families in both North Bay and Sudbury, but also in surrounding communities.

Kim Kanmacher, President and CEO, said the amalgamation will allow the YMCA to serve even more of the region with two facilities and with partners who are also focused on building a healthy community.

“As one organization, we can gain insight into the needs across the broader region, and better focus on critical issues, such as social isolation, poverty, income inequality and healthy child and adolescent development, by using our shared resources,” said Kim Kanmacher, President & CEO. “Our YMCAs were founded and remain grounded in the urban hubs of North Bay and Sudbury but the need for YMCA programs and services is felt in Northern Ontario communities of all sizes in between. Building on our combined strength, we are better able to lay the groundwork for future growth in the region and for future collaboration with our neighbouring YMCA Member Associations.”



Helen Francis, Chair, Board of Directors, says that both boards have collaborated extremely well and are excited about the associations joining together. “This means shared resources, and collaboration between both locations, in order to better serve members. By acting as one YMCA, it means that the YMCA can create governance and organizational efficiency by ending unnecessary duplication. They can invest and focus on the people, functions and systems that are needed so that the YMCA is better able to be sustainable for generations to come.”

Each YMCA will remain unique, and will continue to offer programs and services tailored to its members. Any donation dollars will continue to stay in each community, and will directly impact those who need support the most.

- 30 -

**For more information or to set up interviews please contact:**

**Kim Kanmacher**

President & CEO, YMCA of Northeastern Ontario

[kim\\_kanmacher@northbay.ymca.ca](mailto:kim_kanmacher@northbay.ymca.ca)

705-497-9622 ext. 234

### **Background Information**

**The YMCA of North Bay and the YMCA of Sudbury** are multi-service charities that provides opportunities for personal growth in spirit, mind and body for all people of all backgrounds, beliefs, and abilities. Their programs and services include health, fitness and aquatics, child care, before and after school programs, summer overnight and day camp, employment services, immigrant services and community programs.

Last year the association served approximately 50,000 individuals across Northeastern Ontario. The YMCA never turns away an interested member because of a lack of financial means; 1 in 3 people at the Y are there because of the Y’s Strong Kids subsidy program.

Learn more about the associations at [www.ymcanorthbay.com](http://www.ymcanorthbay.com) and [www.sudbury.ymca.ca](http://www.sudbury.ymca.ca).