HEART of the CITY CAMPAIGN



Shine On Winnipeg

Why Downtown, Why Now?

The reality of Downtown Winnipeg demands immediate action to create accessible, inclusive spaces for community to thrive.

Built in 1913, the Downtown Y is the longest-standing YMCA facility in Winnipeg. For generations, it has been a vital community asset, offering safe spaces and programming for downtown residents.

However, Downtown Winnipeg is at a critical crossroads as it faces profound challenges that demand immediate attention. As the city's core, it is home to over 80,445 residents, including:

43%
of children living in low-income families



27%
single parents



24%
seniors



35%
newcomers to Canada



35%
Indigenous peoples



This bold $20+ million initiative will transform the Downtown Y into an accessible, inclusive Community Hub that reflects the spirit of Winnipeg: resilient, diverse, and full of potential.



HEART of the CITY CAMPAIGN

These groups face intersecting challenges such as poverty, social isolation, racial inequities, and limited access to affordable programs and services. Post-pandemic barriers, coupled with concerns about downtown safety and crime, have further strained access to essential community supports.

The Downtown Y is uniquely positioned to meet these needs. For over 111 years, it has been a vital community asset, providing free youth programs, quality child care, mental health resources, fitness facilities, language classes for newcomers, and support for seniors. However, the facility's outdated design limits its ability to fully serve the community.

Winnipeg's downtown community deserves an inclusive space where everyone—regardless of their background—can connect, grow, and thrive.

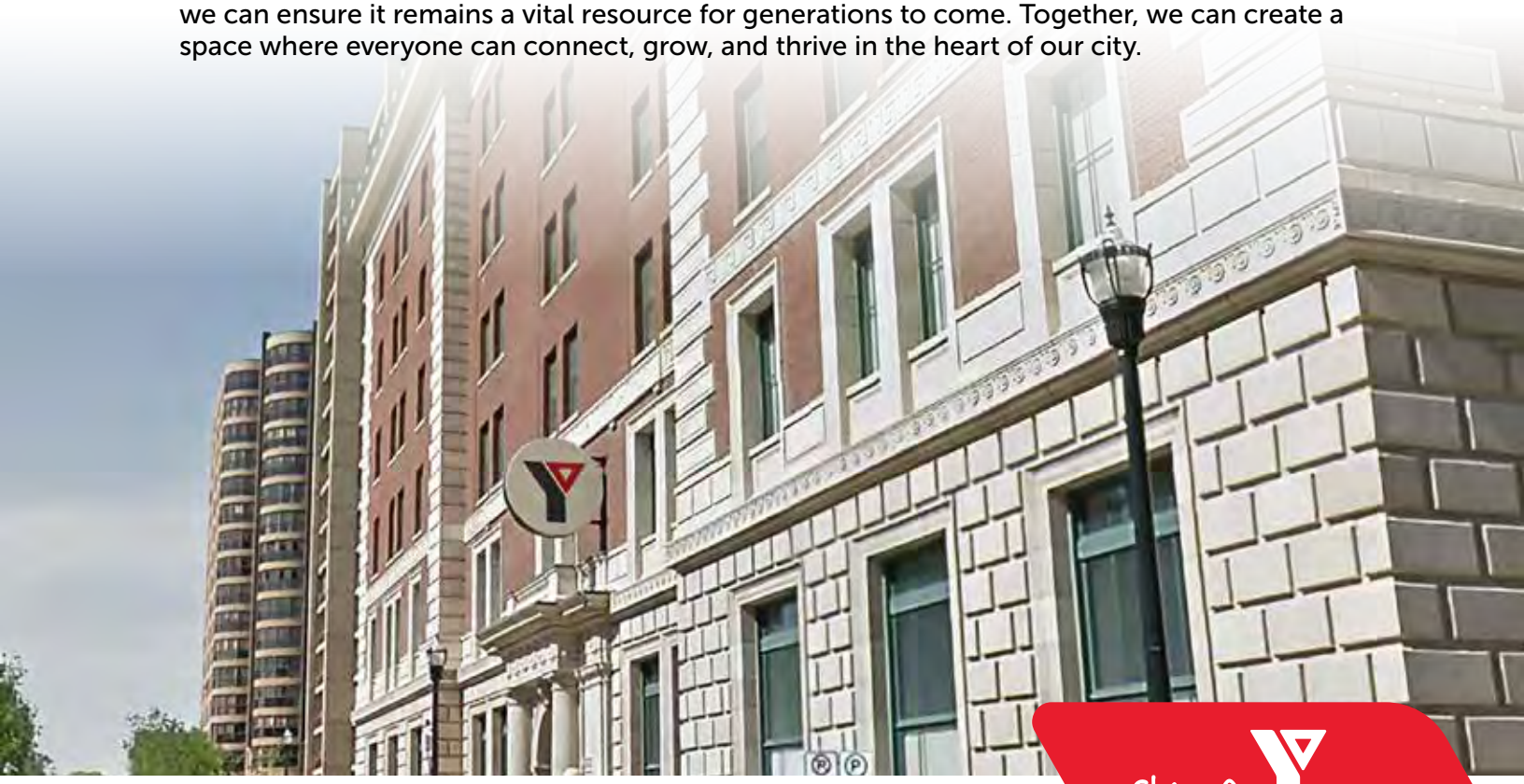
A Call to Action

The challenges Downtown Winnipeg faces are immediate, and the time to act is now. The Heart of the City Campaign is a bold $20+ million initiative to transform the Downtown Y into a state-of-the-art Community Hub. This redevelopment will:

- **Create Accessible Spaces:** Modern, inclusive facilities with universal change rooms and enhanced navigation for people of all abilities.
- **Support Diverse Communities:** Programs tailored to empower youth, assist newcomers, and address systemic inequities.
- **Foster Connection and Growth:** A safe and welcoming space where families and individuals can thrive together.

The Opportunity to Transform Downtown

The Downtown Y has been a cornerstone of our community since 1913. With your support, we can ensure it remains a vital resource for generations to come. Together, we can create a space where everyone can connect, grow, and thrive in the heart of our city.



Shine On Winnipeg

A Message from the Chairs

Downtown Winnipeg has always been a place where stories are written, connections are made, and communities grow.

It's where the city's heartbeat is strongest, and it's where the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg has stood as a pillar of support, opportunity, and hope for over a century.

Now, as we look ahead, we see both a challenge and an extraordinary opportunity. The Downtown Y is more than just a building—it's a gathering place where children laugh, newcomers find a sense of belonging, and people of all backgrounds come together to learn, grow, and thrive. But the world around us has changed, and the Downtown Y must change with it to continue being the anchor our community needs.

The **Heart of the City Campaign** is about revitalizing more than bricks and mortar. It's about revitalizing lives. With plans for expanded child care, mental health services, youth programming, and newcomer supports, this redevelopment will ensure the Y continues to meet the evolving needs of Downtown Winnipeg—providing a safe, inclusive, and vibrant space for all.

This campaign is about hope, resilience, and the belief that when we invest in our community, everyone benefits. It's about creating a downtown we can all be proud of—a place where people come together not just to work or live but to belong.

We're honoured to lead this campaign, and we're inspired by the passion and generosity of those who have already stepped forward to make this vision a reality. Together, we can ensure that the Downtown Y remains at the heart of Winnipeg's story for generations to come.

Join us. Together, we can shape the future of our city.

With heartfelt thanks,

Ace Burpee
Campaign Co-Chair

Kristie Pearson
Campaign Co-Chair

Campaign Cabinet Team

Kristie Pearson & Ace Burpee, Campaign Co-Chairs

Ruth Asper

Mark Chipman

Polly Craik

Bob Cunningham

Gary Doer

Tyler Gompf

Dr. Joss Reimer

Diane Roussin

Jo Wright

Loizza Aquino, Youth Ambassador

Emily Mandamin, Youth Ambassador

Cordella Friesen, President & CEO, YMCA-YWCA Winnipeg



Project at a Glance

Transforming the Downtown Y: A Vision for Positive Community Impact

The Heart of the City Campaign will reimagine the Downtown Y as a dynamic, inclusive hub that meets the evolving needs of Winnipeg's diverse community. This **$20+ million redevelopment** focuses on seven transformational components designed to create a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant downtown for everyone.

1. **Accessibility Upgrades:**
   Enhanced **elevator access** and new **universal changerooms** with accessibility as a core principle to ensure Downtown Y is a leader in inclusion, accessibility, and privacy for everyone.

2. **Child Care Expansion:**
   Increasing Downtown Y's **child care capacity** by 50% to support working families and address Manitoba's growing child care shortage.

3. **Newcomer Services Expansion:**
   Doubling capacity for programs like **English language training**, newcomer integration support, and child care for newcomer families.

4. **Mental Health Supports Expansion:**
   Expanding community mental health programs like **Y Mind** to provide youth and adults with tools to manage stress, build resilience, and improve overall wellness.

5. **Indoor Splash Pad:**
   Adding a **family-friendly aquatics feature** to promote year-round recreation, fitness, and play.

6. **Community Classrooms:**
   Expanding spaces through the creation of **three flexible classrooms** to support workshops, programs, and cultural gatherings, adapting to the evolving needs of the community.



7. **Corporate Relocation:**
   If we believe in downtown, we have to be downtown. Moving the Y's corporate offices downtown to **lead by example** in revitalizing the downtown core.

Why It Matters: The Heart of the City Campaign is more than a redevelopment—it's a transformative effort to create a healthier, more inclusive, and thriving Downtown Winnipeg. By addressing accessibility, expanding vital services, and fostering community connection, these components will not only meet the needs of families, youth, and newcomers but also drive economic growth and revitalization.

1 Accessibility Upgrades

Breaking Barriers Toward Strength and Belonging: Michael's Y Story

For Michael Chartrand, the Downtown Y is more than a place to swim—it's a community that keeps him moving, both physically and emotionally. Living with a connective tissue disorder that causes pain and stiffness, Michael relies on his twice-weekly swims to stay active and connected. "When I first started, I was terrible at swimming. I was so slow I got kicked out of the slow lane. I didn't know what I was doing—I was actually pushing myself backward," he laughs. "But now, I'm the fastest swimmer here."

For eight years, Michael has been a committed member of the Y. The pool has helped him rebuild his strength, and the welcoming atmosphere has given him a sense of belonging. "I'm housebound most of the time, but coming to the Y gives me a reason to get out. The camaraderie here makes all the difference," he says. The Y has become his safe haven, where he can focus on his health and connect with others.

Yet, navigating the building has often been a source of frustration. Broken lifts force Michael to take long detours or wait for assistance. "I waste so much time trying to figure out how to get to the pool when the lift is out. The staff are wonderful and always willing to help, but it shouldn't be this hard," he explains. Even entering the changeroom has its challenges. The accessible gate, designed for wheelchair users, requires staff to press a button. "It's a whole process," he says. "I have to get their attention, and sometimes they're busy or the room is crowded. After a while, I made it a joke—'Can you give me the finger?' Everyone laughs, but it shouldn't have to be this way."

"The Y gives me a reason to get out. The camaraderie here makes all the difference."

— Michael Chartrand, *Downtown Y Member*

Despite these challenges, Michael continues to show up, determined to maintain his health and independence. But he knows others may not have the same resilience. "I feel for people who don't speak up or aren't as outgoing as me. Many probably just stop coming," he says.

The Heart of the City Campaign is set to change that. Planned upgrades include reliable elevators and universal changerooms that prioritize accessibility, privacy, and dignity for everyone. For Michael, these improvements represent hope. "Simple changes like better-designed spaces and reliable elevators will allow so many more people to feel comfortable and included. The Y should be a place where everyone can thrive, without barriers holding them back."

Your support of the Heart of the City Campaign will help make the Downtown Y a place where accessibility isn't an afterthought—it's a foundation for building community.

Why It Matters: By supporting the Heart of the City Campaign, you're helping to create a Y where accessibility and inclusion are foundational. These upgrades will not only remove barriers for individuals with mobility challenges but also support aging adults with varying needs, provide privacy and safety for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, and offer universal changerooms that welcome everyone. Together, we can ensure the Downtown Y is a space where all individuals feel respected, included, and empowered to thrive.

The Impacts:

- Reliable elevators replacing outdated lifts
- Universal changerooms for inclusion, privacy, and safety
- Fully accessible programs and services
- Setting a new standard of inclusion



[Above] Photo of Michael Chartrand and rendering of universal changerooms

2 Child Care Expansion

The Impact of Quality Child Care: Avegail's Y Story

Originally from the Philippines, Avegail De Vera knows how challenging it can be to find the right support for her family. "When my daughter started at the Y's child care program, it was a huge relief," she shares. "She's made friends, developed new skills, and gained so much confidence. Knowing she's in a safe, nurturing environment gives me peace of mind every day."

But not every family in Downtown Winnipeg has access to quality child care. The city faces a critical shortage of licensed spaces, leaving parents struggling to find reliable, affordable options. The demand far outweighs supply, making it harder for families to thrive and for the downtown core to attract and retain young families.

The Heart of the City Campaign is poised to address this growing need by adding 40 new infant and preschool spaces at the Downtown Y. These additional spaces will give more families access to the high-quality care that helps children grow while making Downtown Winnipeg a more family-friendly place to live and work.

For working parents like Avegail, the Y's child care programs are about more than just convenience—they're about opportunity. "The Y has given my daughter so many opportunities to grow," Avegail says. "She loves the activities, the connections she's made, and the new skills she's learning every day. For me, the Y is more than just child care—it's like an extended family."

The Y's child care approach emphasizes a holistic focus on each child's development. Through creative play, structured activities, and a nurturing environment, the program helps children build confidence, social skills, and a lifelong love of learning. "Our programs provide so much more than basic care," explains Richard Lilke, Director of Creative Play at the Downtown Y. "We create a foundation for children to thrive, not just in school, but in life."

Avegail often marvels at how much her daughter has grown since joining the program. "She's blossomed in so many ways," she says. "Knowing she's cared for in a safe, supportive environment allows me to focus on my responsibilities and be there for my family."

With the planned expansion of the Downtown Y's child care services, more families will have access to this life-changing support. By addressing the critical shortage of licensed spaces, the Y is ensuring that more children and parents in Downtown Winnipeg can thrive.



Why It Matters: By expanding access to child care, you'll help ease the stress on a service that is critically in demand, enabling parents to find reliable care and provide for their families. Together, we can invest in the future of our community and ensure every family has the opportunity to thrive.

The Impacts:

- Expand Downtown Y's child care spots by approximately 50%
- Support working families and workforce participation
- Strengthen the downtown community and economy
- Potential to expand capacity with Portage Place redevelopment



"The Y is more than just childcare; it's like an extended family."

— Avegail De Vera, *Downtown Y Child Care Parent*

[Above] Photo of Avegail De Vera and her daughter; [Left] Rendering of child care space

3 Newcomer Services Expansion

Building Confidence and Friendships: Zakariya's Y Story

Moving to a new country is full of challenges—adjusting to a different culture, learning a new language, and finding a sense of belonging. For many newcomer youth in Winnipeg, programs like the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg's Newcomer Youth Wellness Program are a lifeline, offering community, confidence, and connection in their journey to build a new life.

For Zakariya Ali Mohamed, a 19-year-old from Somalia, this program has been transformative. "I joined the program because of my friends and the Y membership card," he explains. "I've been part of it for two years now, and I keep coming back because of the atmosphere. It's a great vibe, and the staff are amazing. I've built a great bond with them, and I enjoy every Friday because of them."

Like many newcomer youth, Zakariya initially struggled with confidence and social connections. "This program has helped me become more confident with public talking and storytelling," he shares. "I've made so many friends because of it, and I know there are more to come. For newcomers who have trouble making friends because of a lack of English, this program really helps. It builds confidence and helps you be more outgoing."

A standout memory for Zakariya is a day spent playing soccer outdoors with his peers. "That day was special," he recalls. "It wasn't just about soccer—it was about feeling part of something, being included, and having fun with everyone."

"This program has helped me become more confident with public speaking and storytelling. I've made a lot of friends because of it—and I know I'll make many more."

— Zakariya Ali Mohomed, *Newcomer Wellness Program Participant*

Xin Liu, Coordinator of the Newcomer Youth Wellness program, emphasizes the broader impact of these initiatives. "This program is about more than skills," Xin explains. "It's about creating a safe space, fostering friendships, and helping youth feel like they belong in their new community."

Zakariya has also seen how the program continues to grow. "There's been a lot of new faces these past few weeks," he says. "I really believe this program should get more funding to make it even more memorable for the newcomers who join. It's made such a difference in my life, and I know it can for others too."

Through the Heart of the City Campaign, Y Winnipeg is committed to expanding its support for newcomers, doubling its capacity to provide programs like this one. For youth like Zakariya, these programs don't just teach skills—they offer a foundation for building confidence, connection, and a brighter future. "This program is a great vibe," Zakariya says. "It's helped me so much, and I know it can help others too."

Why It Matters: Your support of the Heart of the City Campaign directly impacts newcomer youth and families in Winnipeg. Expanding the Newcomer Youth Wellness Program creates a safe space for youth to build confidence, develop life skills, and connect. Together, we can foster resilience, belonging, and brighter futures for Winnipeg's newest residents.

The Impacts:

- Double capacity for English language training and child care
- Expand the Newcomer Youth Wellness Program to support youth adjustment and connection
- Enhance the Newcomer Integration Hub to promote inclusion through sports and recreation
- Remove barriers and foster community engagement for newcomer families



[Above] Photo of Zakariya Ali Mohamed and rendering of classroom and community space

4 Mental Health Services Expansion

Healing and Growth Through Connection: Tyler's Y Story

Tyler O'Brien's journey is one of resilience and transformation. Growing up in Winnipeg, he faced immense challenges—homelessness, violence, and substance use—leaving him overwhelmed by anxiety and depression. "There were nights I'd be out in the cold, tears freezing on my face," Tyler recalls. "I realized early on that it wasn't a life worth living. I wanted something better for myself, but I didn't know how to find it."

When Tyler learned about the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg's Y Mind program, a free mental health initiative for youth aged 13–30, he decided to give it a try. "Honestly, I joined because I saw Sour Patch Kids at the table," he jokes. "But I stayed because it gave me real tools to handle my mental health—and a place to feel connected."

Y Mind provided Tyler with strategies to manage anxiety and depression while introducing him to a supportive peer group. The program offered a safe space where participants could share their stories without judgment, helping Tyler rebuild his confidence and develop a sense of community. "It's not just about learning skills—it's about building a life worth living," he explains.

A Y membership included with the program became another essential part of Tyler's recovery. Regular exercise helped him strengthen his body and mind, giving him the energy and focus he needed to move forward. "Six months later, I'm stronger both physically and mentally," Tyler says. "The Y helped me see that being vulnerable isn't a weakness—it's strength."

Rebecca Trudeau, Manager of Mental Health Programs at the Downtown Y, has seen firsthand how Y Mind changes lives. "This program empowers youth to take control of their mental health," Rebecca explains. "It provides practical tools and a safe, supportive environment where participants can build confidence, reduce anxiety, and improve their overall well-being."

Inspired by his experience, Tyler is now committed to giving back. He channels his journey into acts of kindness, music, and supporting others who are struggling. "If I can do this, so can you," he says. "It's about taking that first step and finding help."

Through the Heart of the City Campaign, Y Winnipeg aims to double the capacity for programs like Y Mind, ensuring that more youth have access to these life-changing resources. Tyler's story is a testament to the transformative power of connection and support.

Why It Matters: Your support of the Heart of the City Campaign will directly address the urgent need for mental health care in Winnipeg. By expanding programs like Y Mind and Learning & Leisure, you will help provide critical support to those facing mental health challenges, breaking down barriers to care and offering a path to healing. Together, we can create a community where everyone has access to the mental health support, they need to live healthy, resilient lives.

The Impacts:

- Expand Y Mind for youth resilience and empowerment
- Enhance Learning & Leisure for adult wellness
- Increase access to mental health supports
- Provide an alternative to long wait times with local solutions

"Being vulnerable isn't a weakness—it's strength. Programs like Y Mind allow us to share our stories and begin healing without judgment."

— Tyler O'Brien, *Y Mind Participant*



[Above] Photo of Tyler O'Brien and rendering of classroom and community spaces

5 Indoor Splash Pad

A Fun, Safe Space for Families to Explore: James's Y Story

For James Atem, the Downtown Y is a bridge between his childhood in Sudan and the future he wants for his kids. "Back home, we didn't have pools," he says. "The water wasn't safe, and we had to worry about crocodiles. I never learned to swim properly."

When James enrolled his family in swimming lessons at the Y, it was a new experience for his children, who had never been in a pool before. "At first, they were scared, especially my youngest," James explains. "But the instructors were so patient. They took their time, and now my kids love being in the water. They keep asking me when we can come back."

The Y has given James's family more than just water skills—it's created lasting memories and strengthened their bond. And soon, thanks to the Heart of the City Campaign, families like James's will have even more to enjoy. "The splash pad will go beyond our aquatic program offerings," says Finlay McLandress, Manager of Aquatic Services at the Downtown Y. "It will be a fun, safe space where families can relax, play, and enjoy water together. That's the role of the Y—to bring families together in a welcoming and inclusive environment."

The Y is about so much more than learning to swim—it's a place where families can connect, laugh, and have fun. "The Y gives us something we can all do together," James says. "It's safe, affordable, and it makes my kids happy. That means everything to me."

"The Y has given my family a lot. These upgrades will mean even more kids can enjoy the water and feel safe—and that's something every family should have."

— James Atem, *Downtown Y Member*

The Heart of the City Campaign will enhance the Downtown Y's aquatics offerings by adding an indoor splash pad, creating an inviting and versatile space for families to connect, play, and build water confidence. For families like James's, this new amenity will offer a chance to relax and explore aquatics in a way that's fun, accessible, and free of barriers.

James sums it up simply: "The Y has given my family a lot. These upgrades will mean even more kids can enjoy the water and feel safe—and that's something every family should have."

Why It Matters: Your support of the Heart of the City Campaign will provide families with the resources they need to enjoy safe, fun, and affordable recreational activities, strengthening community connections and improving quality of life in Downtown Winnipeg.

The Impacts:

- Addition of a family-friendly indoor splash pad to the Downtown Y
- Enhance Y Winnipeg's position as the premier indoor aquatics centre in Downtown Winnipeg
- Offers a versatile space for aquatics exercise, recreation, and play for all ages and abilities
- Perfect for both athletes and families introducing kids to water fun





[Above] Rendering of splash pad and pool and photo of James Atem and family

6 Community Classrooms

Creating Spaces Where Community Grows: Subhan's Y Story

When Subhan Rasa arrived in Canada from Afghanistan, the challenges of starting over felt overwhelming. "I didn't know how to find a job or where to begin," he shares. "I struggled with English, I didn't have work experience, and I felt so alone." Adjusting to a new culture while trying to support his family left Subhan feeling uncertain about his future.

Everything began to change when Subhan joined the Youth Employment Support (YES) program at the Downtown Y. Through workshops on resume writing, interview preparation, and understanding Canadian workplace culture, Subhan gained more than just practical skills—he found a sense of belonging. "Meeting others who had similar experiences made me feel less alone," Subhan says. "The Y gave me the confidence to believe in myself."

That newfound confidence paid off when Subhan landed his first job. "Getting that call with a job offer was unforgettable," he recalls. "It wasn't just about the money—it was about proving to myself and my family that I could succeed here."

Subhan's story doesn't stop there. Today, he coaches soccer, giving back to the community that supported him and helping other young newcomers feel welcome. "The Y isn't just about programs. It's about creating a community where everyone can thrive," he says.

As part of the Heart of the City Campaign, the Y is expanding its commitment to creating spaces for growth and connection with three new community classrooms at the Downtown Y. These multi-purpose spaces will support programs like YES and the Newcomer Youth Wellness Program, along with workshops, cultural events, and meetings.

"By creating these community classrooms, we're providing a space for people to gather, learn, and build the skills they need to succeed," says Marko Gjuric, General Manager of Community and Corporate Programs. "These classrooms will continue the Y's legacy of bringing people together."

"Meeting others who had similar experiences made me feel less alone. The Y gave me the confidence to believe in myself."

— Subhan Rasa, *Youth Employment Support Participant*

For Subhan, the Y was more than a stepping stone—it was a place to start over and build a future. "I'm so grateful for what the Y has done for me," he says. "It gave me the tools to succeed and a community I can always count on."

These classrooms will continue the Y's legacy of community-building, offering a place for people to connect, learn, and grow for generations to come.

Why It Matters: By supporting the Heart of the City Campaign, you are helping create a space where people of all ages can build skills, foster connections, and contribute to the thriving fabric of Downtown Winnipeg. Together, we can continue to build a community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

The Impacts:

- Construct three community classrooms in Downtown Winnipeg
- Designed as flexible, multi-purpose spaces for a variety of functions
- Provide welcoming gathering spaces for local groups and organizations
- Enhances downtown's sense of community and fosters connections in the heart of the city



[Above] Photo of Subhan Rasa at the Downtown Y

7 Corporate Relocation

Uniting the Y Winnipeg Team within the Heart of Downtown

The YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg's decision to relocate its corporate offices to the revitalized Downtown Y marks a transformative commitment to Downtown Winnipeg and the people who call it home. For Joana Bersamina, Vice President of People and Culture, the move is about much more than geography—it's about amplifying impact and fostering connection.

"This heartfelt move strengthens the bond between the Y's leadership and the downtown community by placing us at the centre of where our impact truly matters," Joana shares. "By being present and accessible, we can nurture deeper relationships, listen and learn the community's needs, and work hand in hand with businesses, partners, and community members."

Having lived and worked in Downtown Winnipeg for years, Joana is excited to return to the area. "Watching this space evolve into a vibrant hub of collaboration—where our teams join forces with program participants, partners, and community members—fills me with excitement for the countless opportunities to celebrate, create, and grow together."

The move aligns with the Y's commitment to foster inclusivity, collaboration, and innovation. With its leadership team based in the heart of downtown, the organization is better positioned to address critical community needs through expanded programming. "This relocation reflects our belief that belonging is the heart of equity," Joana explains. "It's about creating a space where everyone feels seen, valued, and empowered, while uniting people and ideas to achieve transformative change."



"By being present and accessible, we can nurture deeper relationships and work hand in hand with the community."

— Joana Bersamina, *Vice President of People and Culture*

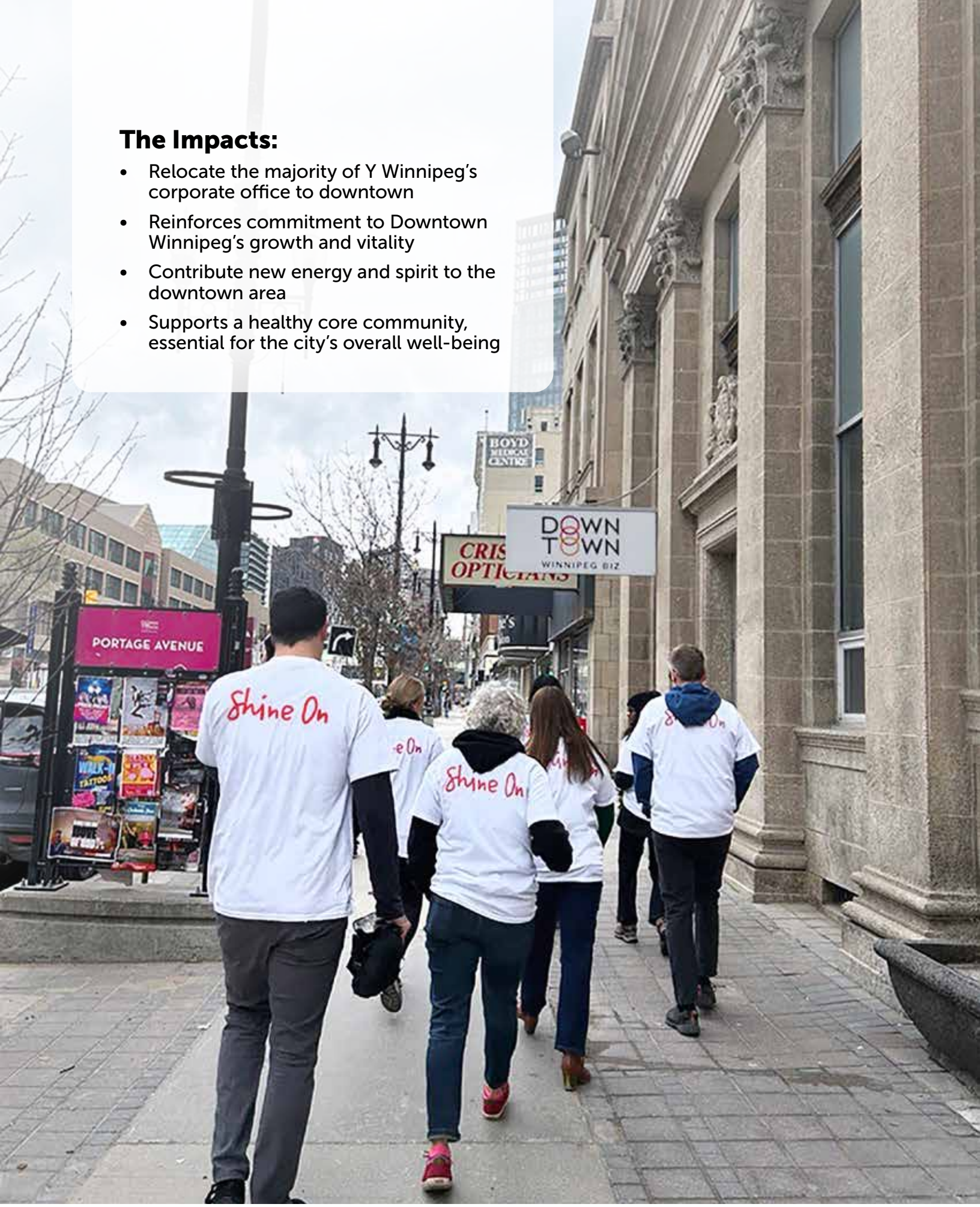
Cordella Friesen, President and CEO of the YMCA-YWCA of Winnipeg, emphasizes how this decision underscores the Y's dedication to downtown revitalization. "We're not just relocating offices; we're making an investment in the future of Downtown Winnipeg," she says. "This move reaffirms our role as a catalyst for growth and community renewal. By being here, we're demonstrating our commitment to creating a vibrant, thriving downtown that benefits everyone."

The Y's relocation is more than a symbolic gesture—it's a strategic step toward building stronger connections and addressing the needs of the downtown community. From supporting newcomer families to providing resources for youth and fostering wellness for all, the Y's leadership team will be at the heart of the action, driving change and building a legacy of opportunity for future generations.

Why It Matters: By supporting the Heart of the City Campaign, you are helping to build a vibrant, connected community where our leadership is embedded within the very heart of Downtown Winnipeg. Your contribution strengthens our collective future and ensures that the Y remains a space for growth, collaboration, and impact for years to come.

The Impacts:

- Relocate the majority of Y Winnipeg's corporate office to downtown
- Reinforces commitment to Downtown Winnipeg's growth and vitality
- Contribute new energy and spirit to the downtown area
- Supports a healthy core community, essential for the city's overall well-being



[Above] Downtown Y staff participating in a community cleanup

Campaign Youth Ambassadors

Leaders of Tomorrow Helping Y Winnipeg Succeed Today

For many young people, the Y is more than just a building—it's a cornerstone of opportunity. It's where they discover their voice, build confidence, and find a community that believes in them. For Heart of the City Campaign Youth Ambassadors Loizza Aquino and Emily Mandamin, the Y has played a pivotal role in their journeys, helping them grow into the inspiring leaders they are today.



A Global Advocate with Local Roots: Loizza's Y Story

Loizza Aquino's connection to the Y began in Toronto, where she received the YMCA Peace Medal in 2018 for her work as a mental health advocate and founder of Peace of Mind Canada, a youth-led non-profit. That recognition opened doors to global opportunities, from speaking at YMCA175 in London to participating in leadership programs around the world. Now, as a Youth Ambassador for the Heart of the City Campaign, Loizza's connection to the Y has come full circle.

"Being a youth ambassador for a campaign in Winnipeg feels like a full-circle moment," Loizza shares. "The Y has always empowered young people to create positive change, and it's exciting to be part of a campaign that will make a meaningful difference in the city." For Loizza, the Heart of the City Campaign is vital for Downtown Winnipeg, a place she sees as brimming with potential. "Downtown Winnipeg needs a place that brings people together," she explains. "This campaign is a big step in showing people how vibrant and welcoming Winnipeg is."



Finding Belonging on the Court: Emily's Y Story

For Emily Mandamin, a proud member of Iskatewizaagegan 39 Independent First Nation, the Y became a sanctuary during her teenage years. After moving to Winnipeg in search of better education and basketball opportunities, Emily found herself spending countless hours at the Y. "The Y was my safe haven as a young teen," she reflects. "We built a sense of community within that basketball gym, giving me a sense of identity and a place to call my own."

The Y not only nurtured Emily's love for basketball but also gave her the confidence to grow as a leader. A standout athlete, Emily became the first person from her home community to earn a college basketball scholarship in the United States. Now competing as a university athlete at the University of Manitoba, Emily ranks among the top shooters in Canada West, inspiring others with her dedication both on and off the court.

[Above] Loizza Aquino receiving YMCA Peace Medal and Emily Mandamin, University of Manitoba Bisons athlete

The Y not only nurtured Emily's love for basketball but also gave her the confidence to grow as a leader. As a university athlete and community advocate, she mentors young players and works to bring opportunities back to Indigenous communities.

"The Downtown Y is crucial for the safety and livelihood of our youth," Emily says. "It's a key staple in the success of young people seeking belonging and healthy opportunities."

The Impacts:

- The Heart of the City Campaign benefits from the unique insight of Youth Ambassadors
- The Downtown Y serves thousands of youth annually, offering mentorship, programs, and growth opportunities.
- Youth programs focus on mental health, leadership development, and physical wellness.
- Access to Y programs helps youth discover their potential and positively impacts their families and communities.

A Shared Vision for the Downtown Y

For both Loizza and Emily, the Heart of the City Campaign represents more than just physical upgrades—it's a commitment to the youth of Winnipeg. "By supporting this campaign, you're not only supporting the future generations; you're supporting our future leaders," Emily explains. "The programs the Y is creating focus on assisting individuals in whatever passion they have. That truly demonstrates the selflessness the Y has had for years." Loizza agrees: "The Y has always been about empowering young people. This campaign ensures that every youth in Winnipeg has the opportunity to grow, connect, and thrive."

By supporting the Heart of the City Campaign, you help create a space where leaders like Loizza and Emily—and countless others—can find the mentorship, resources, and community they need to succeed.



[Above] Loizza speaking at YMCA175; Emily speaking at Mino Bimaadiziwin Conference

Why It Matters: Your support transforms lives. By investing in the Heart of the City Campaign, you create opportunities for youth to grow, lead, and thrive. Together, we can build a stronger community for future generations.

By the Numbers

The Economic Impact of the Heart of the City Campaign

$1 Invested in the Project = **$3–$5 Economic & Social Benefit**

This projected return underscores the long-term value of the Downtown Y redevelopment for our community.[1]



Local Economic Impact

150+
Full-time Jobs
in construction, architecture, engineering, and contracting roles are estimated to be generated during the construction phase[2]

20+
Permanent Jobs
will be created in child care, community programs, health and wellness, and administration following the project's completion[3]

$500,000
in Annual Spending
is expected in downtown businesses, such as cafes, restaurants, and retail stores, due to increased visitors and employees from the Y[4]

$150,000
Annual Tax
from property, sales, and income taxes will benefit local government and public services[5]

Supporting Downtown Revitalization

↑ 300+
Daily Visitors
will be attracted to the renovated Downtown Y, increasing foot traffic and perceptions of safety in the downtown core[6]

↑ 50%
Child Care Capacity
will make downtown more viable for working families, improving workforce participation and increasing productivity by 6–7%[7]

↑ 100+
Newcomer Services Capacity
Doubling program capacity will enhance diversity and vibrancy downtown

↑ 50+
Corporate Jobs
will relocate to downtown, further boosting demand for local services and amenities

1. *"The Economic Impact of Nonprofit Organizations," Johns Hopkins University (jhu.edu).*
2. *"The Economic Impact of Construction in Canada," Canadian Construction Association (cca-acc.com).*
3. *"YMCA Canada Facility Development Report, 2019" (ymca.ca).*
4. *"Community Centers and Economic Impact," National Recreation and Park Association (nrpa.org).*
5. *"The Economic Impact of Urban Development Projects," Government of Canada (canada.ca).*
6. *"Urban Fitness Centers and Community Development," Canadian Fitness Alliance (canadianfitnessalliance.ca).*
7. *"The Economic Benefits of Child Care," Canadian Child Care Federation (cccf-fcsge.ca).*
8. *"Economic Benefits of Early Childhood Education," Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (policyalternatives.ca).*
9. *"Investing in Youth Programs," Public Safety Canada (publicsafety.gc.ca).*
10. *"Economic Impact of Physical Activity," Canadian Public Health Association (cpha.ca).*
11. *"Supporting Seniors in Their Homes," Canadian Institute for Health Information (cihi.ca).*
12. *Efficiency Manitoba (efficiencymb.ca).*
13. *Canada Green Building Council (cagbc.org).*
14. *Natural Resources Canada (oee.nrcan.gc.ca).*
15. *Canadian Construction Association (cca-acc.com).*
16. *Efficiency Manitoba (efficiencymb.ca).*
17. *Canada Green Building Council (cagbc.org).*

Community Health & Wellbeing

$2[50] Return
For Every $1 spent
on child care primarily through increased workforce productivity and reduced absenteeism[8]

$200,000
Savings
from reduced crime risk due to youth engagement programs[9]

$300,000
Savings
annually from reducing chronic disease through active and healthy lifestyles[10]

$250,000
Savings
from aging in place programs that reduce reliance on personal care homes[11]

Sustainability Pledge

↓ 20-30%
Energy Consumption
The renovation will achieve a significant reduction in energy use, in line with LEED-certified practices[12]

↓ 15-20%
Greenhouse Gas Emissions
By incorporating energy-efficient designs, the facility will contribute to a cleaner environment[13]

↓ 10-15%
Embodied Carbon
By selecting sustainable materials and designs, the construction process will decrease embodied carbon emissions[15]

LEED
Certified
The project aims for globally recognized benchmarks in energy efficiency, water conservation, and material sustainability[17]

$0.30-$0.50
Annual Savings per Square Foot
Energy-efficient upgrades will result in substantial utility savings per square foot[14]

$0.60-$3.50
in Incentives per Square Foot
Efficiency Manitoba's programs provide financial incentives for energy savings above code standards[16]

Help Transform Health and Community in Downtown Winnipeg!

Join the Heart of the City Campaign and be a part of transforming our city for generations to come. Your support will make a lasting impact on our community, economy, and future.

Make your gift today!

The Heart of the City Campaign will:

- Improve the local economy by increasing downtown spending, tax revenues & workforce participation
- Build a safer, more vibrant downtown by increasing foot traffic & community engagement
- Provide accessible, inclusive programs for families, youth, newcomers & seniors

Disclaimer: The figures presented in this fact sheet are approximate estimates derived from the cited sources. Actual outcomes may vary.

Invest in Winnipeg's Future

Be Part of the Heart of the City Campaign

The Heart of the City Campaign is your opportunity to invest in a stronger, healthier Downtown Winnipeg. With your support, we can revitalize the Downtown Y into a hub for connection, wellness, and community growth.

Why Your Support Matters

- **Promoting Health and Well-Being:** Support programs that empower physical and mental wellness, accessible child care, and opportunities for youth.
- **Driving Economic Growth:** Your investment fuels job creation, stimulates local business, and strengthens Winnipeg's economy.
- **Building Community Connections:** Create a vibrant, inclusive space for people of all ages and backgrounds to come together.

Ways to Partner

Your contribution makes a tangible impact, and we offer meaningful ways to recognize your generosity, including naming opportunities and exclusive acknowledgments.

Make a Lasting Difference

Every dollar you give shapes the future of our city. Join us today to transform Downtown Winnipeg into a thriving community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Support the Heart of the City Campaign Today

Donate now at ywinnipeg.ca/heartofthecitycampaign.

For more information on donation opportunities, contact Kevin Hunter, Vice President of Philanthropy, Marketing & Government Relations, at 204.298.0954 or kevin.hunter@ymanitoba.ca.

HEART of the CITY CAMPAIGN

Charitable Registration: #119263093RR0001