



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

Merger between two YMCAs in Niagara

Fort Erie, May 29, 2008 - Two local charities in Niagara have come together in an historic merger. The Fort Erie YMCA and the YMCA of Niagara have both voted to join together as one YMCA serving Niagara. This decision was ratified at the May 29th Special Meeting of Fort Erie voting members.

“This step positions the YMCA to continue another 100+ years of caring, responsive and relevant services to the greater Niagara community. I am proud and thankful to the Fort Erie Board volunteers and the YMCA of Niagara Board volunteers for their thoughtful leadership and vision which resulted in unanimous Board votes supporting this move. I’m also thankful for thoughtful questions and strong support shown by the voting members of this important community charity,” says Doug Howe, Board Chair, Fort Erie YMCA.

Beginning last spring, the Fort Erie YMCA Board of Directors began a process to plan and prepare for the future to ensure that the delivery of quality services and programs continues in the Fort Erie community. As a result, in January 2008, the Board agreed to explore a merger with the YMCA of Niagara.

A formal collaboration between the two YMCAs already existed for the purposes providing financial management and information technology services. The Board then explored how further collaboration and partnership might look like with the YMCA of Niagara, so that together they could build the capacity to offer the Fort Erie community even more recreation, fitness, leadership programs, youth initiatives, career development and child care opportunities.

“This merger will allow all the YMCAs across Niagara to thrive,” said Greg Shupe Volunteer Board Chair of the YMCA of Niagara.

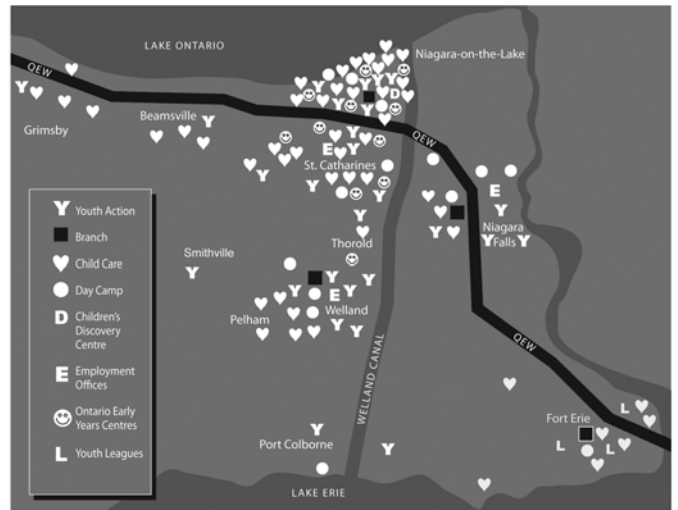
Integrating two YMCA associations is a way to serve more children and families in schools and neighbourhoods, help families come together, enable individuals to become healthier and help people overcome barriers to employment.

The Board’s decision aligns with a strong trend throughout Ontario, whereby YMCAs from neighbouring areas are looking to collaborate with each other to make better use of resources and enhance service to their communities.

How will an integrated YMCA in Niagara serve the Fort Erie community better?

An integrated YMCA will:

- Invest in new fitness equipment and children's program equipment.
- Enhance the EJ Freeland facility including improvements to air handling, update finishes, repaint change rooms and update shower areas.
- Lower fees in adult and family membership categories to be more affordable to all.
- Enhance the focus on communicating and collaborating within the community.
- Broaden program and services to include:
 - Youth Action in local schools for youth/teens ages 10-15.
 - Employment Service programs for the unemployed.
 - Newcomer school based support programs.
 - Introduce new children's programs focused on health, fitness and nutrition.



Over 100 YMCA locations in Niagara

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