



# 2024 Impact Report



2024 YMCA of Pictou County  
**Annual Impact Report**





# Our Volunteer Board

## Our Volunteer Board Members in 2024:

**Peter Murray**  
*Board Chair*

**Marc Essiambre**  
*Vice-Chair*

**Emily MacDougall**  
*Secretary*

**Ashley Richardson**  
*Treasurer*

**Alisha Griffin**  
*Director*

**Bahati Ernestine**  
*Director*

**Hana Nelson**  
*Director*

**Andrew Francis**  
*Director*

**Wayne Desmond**  
*Director*

**Jason Dean**  
*Director*

**Ken MacDonald**  
*Director*

**Nick MacGregor**  
*Director*

**Amanda Chambers**  
*Director*

**Ryan Leil**  
*Director*

**Nancy Cheung**  
*Director*

## Committees

### Capital and Facilities Committee

Mark Essiambre, Chair  
Jason Dean  
Nick MacGregor  
Jim Proudfoot

### Finance & Audit Committee

Ashley Richardson, Chair  
Hana Nelson  
Amanda Chambers  
Jaclyn Wheeler

### Governance and HR Committee

Ken MacDonald, Chair  
Wayne Desmond  
Marc Essiambre

### Philanthropy Committee

Ryan Leil, Chair  
Bahati Ernestine  
Emily MacDougall  
Alisha Griffin  
Nancy Cheung

## Board Philanthropy in Action



YMCA of Pictou County Board members and guests at Y Board on Bikes annual fundraiser in November 2024! The Group raised over \$14,000 in just two hours!



# OUR IMPACT

The YMCA of Pictou County is a charity that ignites the spark in community potential through meaningful work and providing subsidies to programs and services to those in need. In 2024, we have seen a growth in membership assistance and camp subsidies, which is expected to continue in 2025.

Each year the YMCA has a positive impact on Pictou County within and outside of our walls.



**1 in 5**

Members Receive Subsidy



**25%+**

of Camp spots are subsidized each summer



**1 687**

Participants across  
all 2024 Johnny Miles  
Race series



**350 000+**

Dollars given in financial  
assistance in 2024



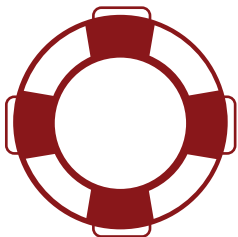
**800**

Children in group swimming  
lessons



**670**

Children were provided childcare  
each month in 2024 across 3  
locations, which is set to expand  
in 2025.



**425**

Grade 3 students across 8  
schools completed swim to  
survive



**89**

Y on the Move community  
events in 2024




**198**

after school childcare  
spots



# Taking the Journey Outside our Walls 2024

The YMCA is more than brick and mortar. To ensure we reach some of the most vulnerable or underserved communities, we are finding ways to take our programs and services outside our walls. From Y on the Move activities to multiple locations in after school, we are trying new programs and increasing the number of service sites across Pictou County.

 Fitness and Aquatics Centre

 Childcare and Afterschool

 Summer Camp Partnerships

 Recreation Projects



**1 State of the art Fitness and Aquatic Centre**



**6 Afterschool Program Locations**



**2 Childcare locations and 3 Summer Camp Locations**



**89 Y on the Move events Across Pictou County**

# Empowered by Community, Inspired by you

## YMCA stories



### Meet Niam

Though new to the Aquatics team, Niam Sharma is already making waves! He started volunteering to give back to the community and learn new skills—and he's doing both while making friends along the way. When asked, Niam's favorite part of volunteering is "Meeting new friends!" His enthusiasm is contagious.

Outside of the YMCA, Niam has participated in many Rubik's Cube tournaments and owns 21 different types of cubes!



### Meet Cathy

Meet Cathy Boers. Not only is Cathy a member, Cathy is also a generous donor and also gives her time as a volunteer in Child Minding. Cathy was inspired to start volunteering at the Y because of her lifelong love for working with children. Over the past year, she's become a warm and familiar face in our community, sharing her time and energy with the little ones in our care. Cathy says the best part of volunteering is "the fellowship I have with the other volunteers and staff." That sense of connection and community truly shines through in everything she does.





## Meet Debbie!

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Debbie has been making waves for decades at the YMCA! A regular in classes, especially aquafit, Debbie cherishes the people and friendships she has made. Debbie is a long-time member of the YMCA of Pictou County! Debbie has been volunteering at the YMCA of Pictou County for over 30 years. Inspired by a former volunteer, Debbie jumped into action and never looked back!

Debbie's passion and experience continue to inspire us all!

A fun fact about Debbie: she loves to line dance!



## Meet Hope

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In 2024, Hope was recognized as the YMCA of Pictou County's first employee of the month!

Hope was celebrated for her generosity in sharing knowledge and offering support to her colleagues. Her ever-present smile and unwavering positivity make her not only an exemplary worker but also an inspiring teacher.

Hope embodies the spirit of teamwork and care, making our workplace brighter and more cohesive. Hope is an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) in our toddler room at our Childcare Centre located inside the Pictou County Wellness Centre.



# YMCA Stories

## Meet Ali!

Ali arrived in Canada from India on a Friday. His family had the weekend to settle into a new home and a "new" routine, as Mom had to start her university program on Monday and Ali started in our infant room.

He had just had his 1<sup>st</sup> birthday, and had only been taken care of by his parents and Grandmother while in India. This was a huge adjustment for the whole family. It was a rough start for Ali as he not only left his Grandmother and other family from India, but he was now coming to a new place to a new home, with new caregivers and so many other changes.

Following their international move, Ali's Mother expressed her worries about the whole move in general, and how she wasn't sure she would be able to comfortably attend classes with Ali on her mind. However, after a few weeks she told us how we not only helped Ali adjust but also eased her mind and she knew it was all going to be ok!

In those few weeks, we saw a big change in Ali, as he started to settle in and get comfortable with us and our class. He started calling his educators "Babba" which his family told us meant he was getting comfy with us.

Now it has been over 9 months since their arrival in Antigonish, and Ali has adapted and is thriving with us.

We are honored to have the opportunity to help such a wonderful family through such a big life event. We have formed a great relationship with him and his family, and we are delighted to share in his growth and development and see his developing personality.

Ali now loves "Canadian" food and comes in daily full of smiles and always ready to play and learn!



## More from Antigonish

"Everyone I have had the pleasure of meeting has been welcoming and so helpful. I truly have incredible mentors. We are so happy to be a part of the Y family!"

~April Gorman  
ECE at the Antigonish Location for 20+ years,







# Childcare

## Childcare

2024 was a great year for Childcare. All locations were at capacity for the whole year, with a long waitlist. High Street and Pictou County Wellness Centre locations have come a long way with our curriculum Play to Learn and have done a great job helping each other out. Lots of learning is taking place!

## Afterschool Care

Another great year. In 2024 we continued 7 after school care locations. Though family needs for child care continues to grow, we continue to face barriers to opening new locations as staff shortages persist.

## Expansion

In 2024 we began operating the childcare centre on the St. F.X. campus. With this, we added an additional 50 children in YMCA of Pictou County's Child Care program. YMCA of Pictou County is nearing expansion of child care in the town of Pictou in 2025, and additional spaces at the Pictou County Wellness Centre.







# Health, Fitness and Recreation

In 2024, the health, fitness, and recreation departments at the YMCA of Pictou County have truly exemplified the YMCA's mission and values. This year, we have made initiatives to go above and beyond in fostering a welcoming environment that promotes healthy living, social responsibility, and development. Their commitment to nurturing the potential of all individuals has made a significant impact, reflecting the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility that the YMCA stands for.

## Health, Fitness and Recreation:

- Has grown by offering additional programming
- Excel and LiveWell saw an increase in enrolment for people suffering from chronic conditions and cancer diagnosis.

## Aquatics & Youth

- 900 spots in Summer Camp offered in 3 different locations.
- 425 grade 3 students participated in swim to survive in 2024. The YMCA of Pictou County was recognized as a leader in swim to survive in 2024 by the Lifesaving Society of Nova Scotia
- 800+ children attended swimming lessons in 2024

## Community

- Y on the Move Hikes had an average of 15 hikers per week throughout 2024!
- Y on the Move Summer events hosted a total of 48 events across Pictou County.

## Johnny Miles Events

- Miss Miles had 460 participants
- Johnny Miles had 744 participants
- Run for the Lobster had 226 participants
- Melmerby Triathlon had 257 participants

We have made strides in achieving our goals in improving our accessibility by removing financial barriers through increasing our community partner referrals. 2024 has seen over \$350,000 being provided in financial subsidy.







# Celebrating our Volunteers

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization, bringing warmth, knowledge, and vibrancy to everything we do.

## Jeanne McDonald Volunteer Awards

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The annual Jeanne McDonald Volunteer Awards honor the exceptional contributions of volunteers who exemplify the core values of the YMCA. This event celebrates the dedication, passion, and impact of individuals who selflessly give their time and energy to support their communities. From demonstrating respect and responsibility to promoting honesty and caring, these volunteers embody the spirit of service that lies at the heart of the YMCA's mission. The awards serve as a testament to the power of volunteerism in creating positive change and fostering a sense of unity and purpose among all who participate.

## Volunteer Spirit Award

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The Volunteer Spirit Award celebrates the heart and dedication of individuals who go above and beyond to make a difference in their communities. This award recognizes vibrant volunteers with unwavering commitment and enthusiasm to their work at the YMCA.

## Volunteer Leadership Award

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The Volunteer Leadership Award honors a remarkable individual who demonstrates outstanding dedication in guiding others.

## Youth Leadership Award

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The Youth Leadership Award honors young volunteers who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, dedication, and impact in their communities. This accolade shines a light on the potential of young leaders to shape a promising future.



## Donations and Partnerships

# Thank you to our 2024 Donors and Sponsors

Adam Sheppard  
Advocate Printing  
Alex MacDonald  
Alisha Griffin  
Alisha Raniowski  
Allan Conway  
Allan Dauphinie  
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Kate Anderson  
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Ken Francis  
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Kevin McKenzie  
Kevin Schnare  
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Wear Well Garment Co.  
Wendy Williams  
Y - Women Service Club



## Thank you to our 2024 Community Partners who support us on our mission:

Aberdeen Health Foundation  
 Aberdeen Rehab  
 Autism Nova Scotia - Pictou Area Chapter  
 Alma Fire Department  
 Abderdeen Rehab  
 AG Baillie Memorial School  
 Antigonish Education Centre  
 Big Brothers Big Sisters  
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 Danny MacGillivray, MLA  
 Futureworx  
 Grant Thornton Credit Counseling  
 Highland Community Residential Services  
 Healthy Pictou County  
 Hon. Sean Fraser  
 Hon. Tim Houston  
 Glasgow Square  
 Government of Nova Scotia  
 John Howard Society  
 Kids First Family Resource Centre  
 Little Harbour Community Centre  
 Lifesaving Society of Nova Scotia  
 MacGillivray Properties Limited  
 Marco MacLeod, MLA  
 Melmerby Beach Provincial Park  
 Municipality of Pictou County  
 Neil Squire Society  
 North End Community Centre  
 North Nova Education Centre  
 New Glasgow Police Department  
 Northumberland Regional High School  
 Nova Scotia Community College  
 Nova Scotia Health Authority  
 Nova Scotia Works  
 Patterson Law

Pictou County & Antigonish Public Library  
 Pictou County Food Bank  
 Pictou County Health Centre  
 Pictou County Partners  
 Pictou County Weeks Crushers  
 Pictou County Wellness Centre  
 Pictou County Women's Centre  
 Pictou Landing First Nations  
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police  
 River John Pickleball Club  
 Roots for Youth  
 Schools Plus  
 Sobeys  
 Saltsprings Elementary School  
 Scotsburn Elementary School  
 Shoppers Drug Mart  
 Special Olympics Pictou County  
 Sobeys  
 St. F.X. University  
 Summer Street Industries  
 Stellarton Police  
 Town of New Glasgow  
 Town of Pictou  
 Town of Stellarton  
 Town of Trenton  
 Town of Westville  
 Trenton Elementary school  
 Viola's Place  
 Walter Duggan Consolidated  
 West Pictou Consolidated  
 Ward 1 Community Recreation  
 Y - Reach  
 Youth Integrated Services



## New Directors

### Eva Boyd

An Antigonish resident, YMCA Childcare parent, community volunteer and a health care professional; Epidemiologist. Eva is the founder of TC Food Justice, a non-profit dedicated to food insecurity. She also served as Vice President of the Howe Sound Rescue Society; the fundraising arm of Royal Canadian Marine Search and Rescue. Eva is a member of the Strait Area Ground Search and Rescue and actively contributes to emergency response efforts in the region. Eva currently works as an Epidemiologist in the area of pharmaceutical epidemiology on rare and chronic diseases.

### Meagan Ryan

An Antigonish resident, YMCA Childcare & After School Care parent, registered Nurse and current Assistant Professor in the Rankin School of Nursing at St. Francis Xavier University. Meagan is committed to advocating for diversity, equity, and inclusion and work with the Indigenous Nursing Student Education committee. Meagan sits on various local and national health care committees where she collaborates with others on joint initiatives.

### Paras Parashar

A New Glasgow resident, active YMCA Member, Childcare parent and Commercial banking professional. Paras is currently working for RBC as Relationship Manager for Commercial Markets. Paras has a lot of experience working with businesses on sales planning, revenue growth and financial solutions both in Canada and Overseas. Paras is trilingual; English, Hindi, Punjabi.

## 2024 Directors

Marc Essiambre  
Ashley Richardson  
Bahati Ernestine  
Emily MacDougall  
Hana Nelson  
Ken MacDonald  
Nick MacGregor  
Peter Murray  
Nancy Chung  
Amanda Chambers  
Alisha Griffin  
Wayne Desmond

## Thank you!

Thank you to the following Directors who are departing from the YMCA of Pictou County Board:

- Jason Dean
- Andrew Francis
- Ryan Leil