



YMCA Seeks Locally-Grown Solutions for Health & Fitness Program Delivery in Fort Erie through Community Consultation Process

Monday, March 25, 2019 – Across Canada and here in Ontario, YMCAs are exploring new models for delivering health and fitness programs tailored to the local needs of their community.

As the needs of Fort Erie continue to change, delivering YMCA programs and services in an aging facility is no longer sustainable for the YMCA. In the fall, the YMCA will cease building operations at the EJ Freeland YMCA facility with plans to move programs and services into a new community-based model.

To begin this process, the YMCA is reaching out to their members, staff, volunteers and the community. In May, the YMCA will launch a community consultation process to seek new locally-grown ideas for future health and fitness programs in Fort Erie.

Over the last decade, the YMCA has invested more than \$3 million to cover annual net operating losses associated with running the facility. The building now requires more than \$6 million in capital investments in the next 10 years. \$2.3m of these capital investments is needed in the next three years to maintain operations.

Prior to closing the facility this Fall, all YMCA team members based at the EJ Freeland YMCA will be offered meaningful employment opportunities at alternate YMCA branches or in a YMCA community-based program in Fort Erie.

“We know that many communities, like the Town of Fort Erie, are looking at new and innovative ways to revitalize their communities. We want to be part of these locally-grown solutions,” says Kyle Barber, President and CEO, YMCA of Niagara.

Along with health and fitness programs, the YMCA also offers day camps, and community programming including youth action dances and recreation leagues in Fort Erie. Across the Niagara region, the YMCA offers programming out of various locations including local schools, community settings, outdoor parks and leased spaces.

Programs currently offered out of the EJ Freeland YMCA facility will continue as planned throughout the summer including all YMCA summer day camp programs. Following closure of the building, YMCA members will also have the option to transfer their membership to another YMCA of Niagara location.

“The YMCA is committed to being part of the Fort Erie community now and in the future,” says Dr. Ian Brown, Chair, YMCA Board of Directors. “The locations and spaces we use to deliver YMCA programs may change but the experience our members have is connected to the people who work, volunteer and participate at the YMCA.”



The YMCA community consultation process will begin in May. Community members interested in participating will have the option to complete an online survey or participate in focus group sessions.

Focus groups are currently scheduled at all Fort Erie Public Library locations during the month of May. More dates will be added should there be additional interest.

Based on the feedback from the community consultation process, the Y expects to share more details about the outcomes and plans for future health and fitness program delivery later this summer.

To register for one of the focus group sessions or to participate in the online survey, visit ymcaofniagara.org

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