



September 18, 2020

An Announcement from Dr. Ian Brown, Chair of the Board of Directors of YMCA of Niagara

On Behalf of the Board of Directors of the YMCA of Niagara I am pleased to bring you this update and announce the appointment of the Interim Leaders for our Y while we undertake a search process for our new CEO. Effective October 1st Steve Boone will assume the role of Interim CEO of YMCA Niagara and Suzanne Johnston will take on the role of Strategic Advisor. Both will serve to meet the needs of our members, staff, volunteers, and our communities while we undertake the search process. (biographies attached)

Since closing Health & Fitness Branch operations in mid-March this year, the Board has been actively working on several initiatives to secure long-term stability of our many community-based programs and a return to re-opening our facilities. Options included but were not limited to a potential shared services leadership agreement with other YMCAs outside our region (YMCA of Oakville and Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford). The YMCA of Niagara concluded this approach unfeasible at this time. The Board would like to thank the YMCA of Oakville's Board of Directors, CEO Kyle Barber and Vice President, Health, Fitness & Aquatics Cathyann White for their shared service and leadership with Niagara and Oakville YMCAs but recognize that managing through the COVID-19 pandemic requires full time leadership for both YMCAs.

We also announced on September 8th the re-opening intent for the Health, Fitness & Aquatics Centres in Port Colborne, Niagara West, and Walker Family YMCA in St. Catharines as soon as possible with more to follow. We have much work ahead as we re-establish our membership centres and continue serving our communities through our Child Care, Employment, Immigration Services and Community Initiatives programs in keeping with the established health and safety protocols issued by Public Health officials. Steve is "very pleased to be engaged by the Board to work with his YMCA Niagara colleagues to re-establish its vital presence in the region. The YMCA has had a long and outstanding history of providing leadership and opportunities for people and their community to grow in spirit, mind, and body. I'm very excited to get working with the team."

In preparation for the upcoming leadership transition, the YMCA of Niagara Board will establish a CEO selection committee to begin the search process, with support from YMCA Canada. In his role as Board Chair Dr. Ian Brown is looking forward to exciting times ahead and is pleased that Steve and Suzanne embrace our vision for the YMCA of Niagara of creating a healthier, more inclusive, more connected community.

Calling the opportunity a privilege and an honour, Suzanne says "my initial focus will be re-igniting relationships across Niagara and growing local community confidence in the YMCA". On behalf of the Board, Chair Ian Brown notes, "that COVID-19 has affected everyone in Niagara, including our YMCA. We recognize that the YMCA of Niagara needs to step up to this challenge and continue to be there to support the needs of children, families and our Niagara Community. I'd like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all of the dedicated staff and volunteers and especially Acting CEO Joe McLaughlin for their continued commitment to the Mission and Vision of our YMCA"



Steve Boone Bio

Steve Boone's extensive career with the YMCA has spanned a wide range of roles, Associations and accomplishments – both in Canada and internationally. He has brought leadership, expertise and passion to accomplishments that include, guiding a number of YMCA Associations through significant organizational change, leading a major Asset Development Strategy and providing strategic guidance and support to Senior Leadership and Boards of Directors throughout Ontario and with partner YMCAs in Ghana, Liberia and Senegal.

Nationally and internationally, Steve's vast knowledge of Organizational Development and Operations combined with his passion for the YMCA Mission, led to his advice and support being regularly sought after by Associations throughout the YMCA Network. As the Chief Operating Officer of the YMCA of Greater Toronto, Steve skillfully balanced the Association's commitment to providing Mission based programs and services, while being fiscally responsible and relevant to the communities it serves.

Following his retirement, Steve started his own Management Consulting firm (KLT Consulting Ltd.) specializing in assisting organizations within the Charitable/Not-for-profit sector. He has also served as a Board of Governor with Sheridan College. Over a 6-year span, he served as Board Chair, Chaired the Student and Academic Affairs committee, Finance/Audit and Property committee, Governance committee and Chaired the Board Search committee for the hiring of Sheridan's new President and Vice Chancellor. He continues to volunteer with Sheridan's Edge Hub; a place where entrepreneurship and innovation thrive. He is currently mentoring new start-up Social entrepreneurship companies as they develop and manage toward sustainability.

Dr. Suzanne Johnston bio

Suzanne Johnston is an accomplished and visionary health executive who recently left her role as President, Niagara Health. Suzanne continues to be committed to the Niagara community through a variety of interests. She brings a distinctly people focused approach to creating caring cultures and improving community engagement by inviting the voices of those we serve into decision making at every level. Suzanne calls for an unwavering commitment on the part of every leader to lead with presence, kindness, and the belief in people's desire to do the right thing.

Dr. Johnston received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in nursing from the University of New Brunswick and her PhD in Nursing from the University of Arizona in Tucson. She completed executive education at the Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania.

Suzanne's interests include Large-Scale System Transformation, Community Engagement, and developing organizational cultures of kindness. Suzanne serves on the Board of Governors of Niagara College, the Board of Ridley College and is an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, at Brock University. Suzanne cares about making the world a better place.

Media Inquiries - contact:

Dr. Ian Brown, Board Chairperson, YMCA of Niagara - please contact Dr. Brown via Nancy Brown, YMCA Executive Assistant at nancy.brown@niagara.ymca.ca m) 289-929-6500. *Note to media:* Suzanne Johnston and Steve Boone will not be available for media interviews until the week of October 5th