



Shine On

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## **New Centre Of Community Opens In Partnership With the Niagara Region to Positively Impact Children, Youth and Families in St. Catharines**

[St. Catharines, July 25, 2024] –The YMCA of Niagara celebrated the grand opening of its newest centre of community impact located within the Fairview Mall on July 25, welcoming community partners, regional leaders and program participants to this versatile facility which aims to serve and support people at every stage of life to learn, grow and stay connected.

The grand opening event featured tours of the multi-use space and highlights of the program's impact and reach since the doors opened to the public on May 20. Notable attendees included Mayor Matt Siscoe, Regional Chair Jim Bradley, and Satinder Klair Niagara Region Children's Services, who commended the initiative and its anticipated considerable impact on the St. Catharines community. Attendees had the opportunity to explore, including the early learning play areas and adaptable flex spaces and learn about the comprehensive programs currently available to children and youth.

The successful completion of this centre was made possible through a significant collaboration with Niagara Region Children's Services, and funding provided by the Government of Ontario. The centre will feature an EarlyON Child and Family programming, which provides free, high-quality drop-in programs for children from birth to six years of age, as well as their parents and caregivers. "In essence, we thrive best when we grow together. This unique partnership provides families and children with opportunities to connect and receive support through an integrated service approach. The return of an EarlyON center to this community is particularly exciting," said Satinder Klair, Director of Children's Services.

The new Centre of Community reflects the YMCA of Niagara's mission to provide leadership and opportunities for people and their communities to grow in spirit, mind, and body. "Today, we celebrated a vision over a year in the making," remarked Christian Wulff, CEO of YMCA of Niagara. "The Fairview Hub, in collaboration with the Niagara Region, is a unique space that will flex to accommodate community needs on multiple levels and help participants of any age to reach their full potential."

"Our team is eager to deliver a wide range of programs that cater to the needs of all age groups," shared Tracey Cosco, General Manager of Camp, Community and EarlyON. "Whether it's early childhood education, youth development, or future wellness programs for seniors, we are dedicated to enriching the lives of our community members." The location, central to many neighbourhoods and demographics, has already lived up to its namesake, The Hub; Tracey adds, "During our first nine weeks, we

had 1988 children, and 1773 adults attend the new EarlyON. On our busiest day, 131 individuals enjoyed a visit to our centre.” The variety of programs ensures something for everyone, sparking excitement and interest.

“I’ve watched the EarlyON become such an integral part in so many people’s lives. Whether it’s a first-time Mom, Dad, a seasoned Grandparent or a newcomer to our area looking to connect with others.” enthuses M. Paxton, an EarlyON community partner “Your centres have something fun waiting for every child that walks through your doors, and everyone is greeted with a smile and a sense of belonging.

The opening of the Fairview Community hub marks a significant step forward in the YMCA’s efforts to foster community connections and promote lifelong learning and wellness. This YMCA location will continue expanding its programs and services, ensuring every community member can find the support they need, from financial literacy and resume coaching for newcomer youth to unique leadership programming. “This is only the beginning,” says Deanna D’Elia, General Manager of Employment and Immigrant Services, “to unlock the limitless potential of those who pass through our doors, we are called upon to be bold and innovative in our programming to address gaps to meet community need.”

This mission to help participants connect with their boundless potential is exemplified by the countless success stories we’ve witnessed. Whether it’s gaining confidence, achieving personal goals, or building lasting friendships, our program continues to ignite the potential in everyone involved.

We encourage everyone to check back often for new and expanding programming and discover the wide range of available sessions and services. For more information about the centre and how to get involved, please visit the dedicated [Fairview Hub webpage](#).

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the realization of this project, including our staff, community partners, and especially the Niagara Region, for their steady support and constant collaboration. This layered involvement makes this center a true community hub. Together, we look forward to many years of growth, connection, and community impact.

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**About YMCA of Niagara**

The YMCA of Niagara is a charitable organization dedicated to building healthy communities by nurturing the potential of children, youth, and families, promoting healthy living, and fostering social responsibility. With a focus on inclusivity, the YMCA offers a wide range of programs and services to empower individuals and positively impact the Niagara region. To learn more, visit [www.ymcaniagara.org](http://www.ymcaniagara.org).