



MEDIA RELEASE

YMCAs in Canada Announce Statement of Reconciliation Following Unanimous Approval

June 21, 2018 (Toronto, ON) – The YMCA Federation in Canada is proud to announce its Statement of Reconciliation on National Indigenous Peoples Day. The Statement was unanimously approved by all YMCAs in Canada and strengthens our dedication to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and communities in Canada. It is reflective of the YMCA Federation’s commitment to fostering a sense of belonging for all and its values of inclusiveness, accountability, and collaboration.

“We are an organization of community builders, and this step towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is an important one” says Peter Dinsdale, President and CEO of YMCA Canada. “We will continue to deepen our understanding and relationships with Indigenous Peoples and communities, and where and when desired, work in partnership together in local communities.”

As a Federation, YMCAs in Canada are on a journey of education and understanding with respect to the history and current day realities of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Most recently, our Annual General Meeting included:

- an immersive day of learning and reflection about Indigenous history, rights and culture;
- participation in the Blanket Exercise facilitated by KAIROS Canada;
- increased understanding through presentations from respected Indigenous leaders Senator Dan Christmas and Chief Robert Joseph;
- opportunities to share lessons and showcase programs that ensure Indigenous families feel part of a healthy community.

The day culminated in the unanimous approval and adoption of the YMCAs in Canada Statement of Reconciliation.

Senator Dan Christmas says “reconciliation happens when understanding, empathy and courage wonderfully converge. The YMCAs in Canada have shown tremendous leadership in making the bold move to embrace reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Their doing so is a beacon of hope that others should seek to emulate, working together to build truly healthy and thriving relationships in communities across this country.”

Expressing his support, Chief Robert Joseph of Reconciliation Canada says “the YMCA’s Statement of Reconciliation is inspirational and appropriate. The YMCA – with all its knowledge, experience, expertise and resources – has the potential to help mitigate the destructive and debilitating impacts of colonization, including intergenerational trauma from residential schools. This is a most welcome development that will make a profound impact. Thank you to the YMCA for your courage and vision.”

The YMCAs in Canada Statement of Reconciliation is the latest action taken on our road towards reconciliation, but it is not the last. The Statement makes a collective commitment and by adopting it,

YMCAs in Canada acknowledge and embrace the role we will play in reconciliation efforts with Indigenous Peoples.

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Attachment: YMCAs in Canada Statement of Reconciliation

For more information or to arrange an interview with Peter Dinsdale, please contact:

Angela de Burger

Manager, External Communications and Marketing

YMCA Canada

Email: angela.deburger@ymca.ca

Phone: 905-510-8431

About YMCA Canada

The YMCA is a powerful association of people joined together by a shared passion to foster a sense of belonging for all. In an age of complex social challenges, the YMCA is steadfastly dedicated to building healthy communities by inviting and encouraging Canadians to join in, to give back, and to gain the connections, skills, and confidence they need to thrive.

YMCA Canada is a charity and the national office of the Canadian YMCA Federation providing support to 47 YMCA Member Associations. For more than a century we've been at the heart of communities across the country, serving evolving needs and providing vital community services.

For more information please visit ymca.ca



YMCAs in Canada Statement of Reconciliation

The YMCAs in Canada have a commitment to building healthy communities through the power of belonging. Communities that are safe and vibrant, with a strong economy and a sustainable environment. Communities within a Canada that demonstrates:

- leadership in improving the health of all people;
- respect for diversity and pluralism;
- combatting inequality;
- protecting its most vulnerable; and
- nurturing the potential of young people.

For our country to become the Canada We Want, the YMCA recognizes that we must place a special and intentional focus on Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples.

The YMCA movement in Canada declares its commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. We acknowledge and respect that our programs, services, and community facilities are on the traditional territory of Indigenous Peoples.

YMCAs in Canada are aware of the impact that colonial actions, including residential schools, have had on Indigenous Peoples, and we remain committed to understanding past injustices and will continue to move forward for a better future.

YMCAs in Canada are committed to playing our role in addressing the Calls to Action that have been made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, such as:

19. close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities;

92iii. Provide education for management and staff on the history of Aboriginal Peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

We are committed to developing and sharing program models, tools, and resources that will improve Indigenous Peoples' access to our programs and services.

We will work with Indigenous communities as partners to find opportunities to have an active presence where it is desired.

YMCAs in Canada are committed to moving beyond a Statement of Reconciliation to the development and implementation of an Action Plan which will be reviewed regularly.

*Building healthy
communities*