



Values in Action

Building healthy communities

Enhancing camp life

If your idea of diplomatic resolution is a fierce game of rock, paper, scissors then chances are you've been to camp. Whether through summer camp or an elementary school trip, the impact of your time at camp lasts a lifetime.

Camp allows kids to try out new activities and experience new adventures in a safe, nurturing, outdoor environment. It gives them an opportunity to do stuff kid's love to do. The YMCA-YWCA of the Okanagan and the Silver Lake Forest Education Society (SLFES) has partnered to ensure the tradition of camp continues at Silver Lake.

What began in the 1970's as a forest education centre has grown to be that and more to thousands of campers. Young, carefree times spent in the great outdoors form some of life's most precious and enduring memories. Forest education programming at the Camp has allowed children for two generations to learn about nature, increase confidence, develop friendships, and build leadership skills.

Silver Lake Camp grew out of passion and dedication by a group of volunteers from the forest industry. The late Chic Gray



was a driving force behind the camp until his passing in 2010. Now, Chic's son Larry Gray, nephew Richard Doncom and his sister Laura Doncom are continuing his legacy by volunteering their time to raise funds to support improvements and equipment required at Camp. "My Dad would be encouraged to know that Silver Lake Camp will

be able to reach more campers than ever," says Larry Gray.

This month marks the launch of the Silver Lake Campaign; funds raised through this newly established annual campaign will ensure the facilities at Camp match the quality of programs offered. "The opportunity to introduce so many more children and youth to the wonder and joy of camp is at our finger tips, but we must have the facilities and infrastructure in place to do so," says Richard Doncom, Silver Lake Campaign Chair.

Priorities for 2012:

- Cabin and building repairs
- Upgrades to the archery and obstacle course
- Replace canoes and purchase kayaks
- Program equipment like fishing gear,

walkie-talkies, tents, costumes and art supplies

- Improvements to camp resources

In addition to these priorities, both the Y and the SLFES are committed to providing financial sponsorship for those who cannot afford the full cost to attend. Many donors have already made gifts to ensure that a summer camp experience is available to everyone. The focus now is to make sure that the thousands of campers who visit Silver Lake each year have the best quality experience possible.

Please help make certain that the tradition of camping continues— both today and into the future. You're invited to get involved or to make a gift; donate in person, call Shari Slattery, Fund Development Coordinator 250-764-9621 #303 or mail YMCA-YWCA of Okanagan 375 Hartman Road, Kelowna, BC V1X 2M9.

Silver Lake Campaign Cabinet

Richard Doncom, Chair

Ron Stewardson

Larry Gray

Doug Kerr

Laura Doncom

YMCA Ethiopia Update



Last spring members of the Rotary Interact Club at Okanagan Mission Secondary raised \$2,000 to purchase books for the YMCA Ethiopia children's school.

The school provides educational opportunities to street children and orphans. Pictured here are the school children in front of some of the new books.

The YMCA-YWCA of the Okanagan together with the other BC YMCA's supports the Ethiopia HIV/Peer to Peer Education Program in addition to resources for the school.

Water Safety is a Necessity, Not a Privilege for Okanagan Kids

Playing in and around water, swimming and boating are all fun things to do on a warm summer's day. However, all of these activities can lead to a tragic outcome for children who lack basic swim and water safety skills. According to the Canadian Red Cross, 400 Canadians die each year of drowning.

Basic swimming ability is a life skill that all children need to learn, one that can eliminate drowning. Most people are aware of the need for this life skill, but for many cost and transportation are barriers keeping them from registering their children in swim lessons.

Thanks to proceeds from the Interior Savings Across the Lake Swim, generously donated by the Across the Lake Swim Society, things are about to change for kids in the Okanagan. A total of \$25,000 has been committed over the next three years to support and encourage open water swimming and safety education for children in our community. The YMCA Learn to Swim program will be offered, free of charge to Grade 3 students who have limited financial resources, at the H2O Adventure + Fitness Centre.

"The YMCA Learn to Swim program goes beyond helping to teach children water safety and swimming skills. We also emphasize developing a sense of self, learning to respect and care about others and feeling good about one's



accomplishments," says Randall Wight, H2O Aquatic Director, "its part of the spirit, mind, body approach we've used for over 150 years."

In partnership with SD23, eight schools have been selected for 2012 with an additional 10 more schools in 2013 and 2014. Grade 3 students receive three weeks of lessons with 45 minutes of lesson time and another 45 minutes of free time in the water park. At the end of the three years of funding over 1700 kids from Peachland to Lake Country will have learned basic swim and life saving skills which will ensure they are safer in backyard pools, rivers and lakes.

"We are excited about this new partnership with the Y and feel good knowing this program empowers hundreds of disadvantaged young swimmers to develop open water swimming skills," says Peter Rudd, President of the Across the Lake Swim Society and this year's Race Director. "This is an important step in our mandate to not only support and encourage open water swimming in our community, but to increase the accessibility of swimming programs to individuals who may not normally have the opportunity."

During tough times... Strong Kids

Some say it's the economy, some say it's the expanded facilities and programs and others say it's greater awareness of the Y as a charity. Whatever the reason, the fact remains the same, financial sponsorships at the Y have increased almost three times over last year. Today an average 762 children and youth per month are participating at the Y thanks to donors and volunteers of the YMCA-YWCA Strong Kids Campaign.

Our two Kelowna based membership centres – Kelowna Family Y and H2O Adventure + Fitness – as well as our multiple Y Child Care programs provide financially sponsored kids all of the benefits of regular paying participants, including fun ways to get active, opportunities to learn leadership skills and even daily healthy snacks to fill their

tummies. And with summer right around the corner the number of sponsorships will soon increase as hundreds of kids seek limitless adventure at Silver Lake Camp and various YMCA-YWCA day camp programs throughout the community.

Leading the community-wide fundraising effort for his fourth year is Todd Simpson, Volunteer Chair of the Strong Kids Campaign. "The power of the Strong Kids Campaign is that it is truly community wide— it is about volunteers, individuals and businesses who believe in providing equal access to recreation, leadership, childcare and camping who may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate," says Simpson.

The Campaign runs year round with many ways to get involved.

Coming up...

Businesses and individuals are invited to participate in the 7th Annual Y Spin for Strong Kids event on Saturday, September 15th at H2O Adventure + Fitness Centre. Registration and sponsorship information can be found online at ymca-ywca.com/spinforstrongkids or by calling Allie Ramchuk 250-764-9621 ext 306.

Learn more...

ymca-ywca.com/support/strongkids

**YMCA-YWCA
STRONG
KIDS
CAMPAIGN**

Our story...

"When my previous childcare provider forgot my five year old at school, I knew it was time to find something different for him. Shortly after we joined the YMCA-YWCA Child Care program at Belgo Elementary; our lives have been better ever since.

I remember walking into the centre and meeting the program supervisor, June. She smiled at me and listened to my story and proceeded to tell me that there was a spot available for my son and that she would be delighted to have him in the program. I immediately felt at ease with June and knew that this would be a safe and fun place for my son.

Cohen, being a very cautious child, was not so sure about his new environment. Every day until Cohen felt comfortable the Y staff went down to his classroom to pick him up; as a parent this made me feel at ease. A year later we are still welcomed with the same smiles and warm demeanor.

Recently I was given a wage increase by my employer which put me slightly over the

government subsidy limit. I had relied on my subsidy to help me with my monthly childcare expenses; as it is just Cohen and myself. Cohen's dad is an integral part in his life, however does not help financially therefore my salary must sustain the two of us.

For the months of September and October, I tried very hard to figure out where the



money was going to come from, where I could save and take from. In November I contacted Sue Boser, Manager of Y Child Care Programs, to see what my options were, as I knew I could no longer afford to have him in -care. She graciously told me about the Y Strong Kids Campaign and the financial sponsorship that could be the very thing to help me. I was delighted to hear that there was something out there for us, as I did not want to take him out of the program. Sue and I had a short meeting, in which she did not make me feel bad or uncomfortable about my situation, rather a little relieved. At this meeting she informed me that I was only going to have to pay 25% of my childcare fee's. I got in my car after picking up Cohen from his weekly swim with the Belgo gang and started to cry. These were tears of joy, because I have never been treated with such kindness.

Thank-you so much to everyone who made this possible, please know that when it is my turn, I will be giving back to the YMCA-YWCA for their generosity."

People strengthening community



TELUS & Kids Care together support Y Child Care "Healthy Food Program"



Across the Lake Swim Society commits \$25,000 over three years to ensure more kids are safe in our pools and lakes.



Stutters celebrates 30 years by giving 30 kids a camp experience at Silver Lake Camp.



Kelowna Fire Department makes summer camp a reality for six Okanagan kids.



Starbucks volunteers their 'global month of service' to Silver Lake Camp 'spring clean'. They have committed 142 hours.



Interior Savings – Rutland Branch donate to ensure more kids can have access to Y membership.

Over 100 Y kids raised funds to help families in need access affordable child care at the 2nd annual Walk for Strong Kids.



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