



Shine On

Shining Together *For Good*

YMCA OF THREE RIVERS

2025-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN



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A young boy is smiling while sitting in a yellow kayak on a river. He is holding a yellow paddle. In the background, other kayakers are visible on the water, and a forested shoreline is in the distance. The scene is bright and sunny.

Territorial Acknowledgement

The YMCA of Three Rivers recognizes and acknowledges that we deliver our programs and services on the traditional territories and treaty lands of the Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, Mississauga of the Credit, Wendat, and Chonnonton. We acknowledge also that the history of Indigenous nations in these regions is not static, and cannot be briefly summarized. This land is part of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum, the Haldimand Treaty of Oct. 25, 1784, Treaty 3 of 1792, and Treaty 29/Huron Tract Purchase of 1827. Today, our catchment area is home to First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous Peoples from across Turtle Island.

As treaty people, we commit to building relationships characterized by respect and equality. In particular, we encourage non-Indigenous staff, volunteers, members, and clients to reflect on their personal obligations and locations as recent arrivals to the territories sustained by the three rivers for which we are named.



About This Plan

THE YMCA IS MORE THAN 150 YEARS STRONG IN GUELPH-WELLINGTON, STRATFORD-PERTH, AND WATERLOO REGION.

At the same time, the YMCA of Three Rivers as an organization will be celebrating our 5-year anniversary in October 2025, following our unification. We are the unification of the YMCAs of Cambridge & Kitchener Waterloo, Guelph, Stratford and St. Mary's, joined together with intention – to even better serve our growing regions.

This strategic plan is our first post-covid strategy as a unified YMCA, designed to meet a moment where collective caring for well-being is paramount to the health and potential of individuals and communities.

The development of this plan was a collaborative effort between our YMCA's Board of Directors, senior and organizational leadership teams, and

input from individuals and organizations across the communities that we serve, including our valued employees and volunteers. It represents the YMCA's commitment to listen actively and continuously, and to ask important and challenging questions to ourselves and the community, in order to be the transformative charity our employees and community are asking us to be.

Most importantly, we are committed to being an equity-advancing organization through our commitments to Justice, Access, Inclusion, Diversity and Equity, or JAIDE, which underpins and guides our every action and decision-making.

Our intention is that this plan is a signal to all of our communities and careholders across the region of our commitment to building healthier, more authentically connected and vibrant communities where all of us can shine.

Our Organizational Commitments

VISION, MISSION, VALUES

In our implementation of this plan and everything we do as an association, we will continue to be guided by our vision, mission, and values, which were created with intention and consultation together with a diverse group of employees and our Board.

OUR VISION

We aspire to build connected and resilient communities. We are working to be a leader in challenging systemic bias and barriers by creating and providing equitable access to individuals and communities to support their emotional, mental and physical health, and overall well-being.

OUR MISSION

Our purpose as a charity is to make our diverse communities healthier and more vibrant. With dignity and respect, our programs and services inspire individuals to reach their full potential.

OUR VALUES

Equity

Inclusiveness

Advocacy

Health & Wellness

Accountability

Empathy

Respect



**JUSTICE.
ACCESS.
INCLUSION.
DIVERSITY.
EQUITY.**

Our YMCA Way of Being: JAIDE

At YMCA of Three Rivers, JAIDE is not a goal or a strategy. It is a way of being and becoming in every *action* we take, *every interaction* we have, and *every decision* we make. JAIDE at our Y is a core commitment our organization roots itself into for our employees, volunteers, and participants, and the greater communities in which we are located.

JAIDE is the core commitment & heart of our strategic plan.

This plan, and all of our work, will be rooted in our core values that we believe must underpin each action we take — **Equity** and **Accountability**.



EQUITY

Unlike the notion of equality, equity is not about treating everyone the same. Equity acknowledges that individuals require different levels of support to achieve equal outcomes. This requires recognizing and addressing barriers to provide individuals with supports and resources they need to thrive in our YMCA.



ACCOUNTABILITY

This value is the link between our words and our actions, as we recognize being in relationship with each other. It involves every individual taking responsibility for their actions and not assuming that it's someone else's job. Accountability is not about being perfect. In fact, it's about embracing mistakes in a way that's healthy and forward-looking with ownership and integrity. Accountability makes the truth transparent and pushes us to live up to our commitments as a YMCA.

We invite our careholders and communities to read our entire JAIDE Road Map framework on our website at www.ymcathreerivers.ca/jaide, and to hold us accountable to our commitments in this plan.



Boosting Well-Being, Together

WHY IT'S OUR FOCUS

Across the country and in our region, individuals and families are facing some significant challenges. We're feeling less well physically and mentally. We're waiting longer to access critical services. We're experiencing more isolation and disconnection, despite unprecedented digital connectivity (or because of it).

In short, we need to improve our well-being, individually and collectively.

While well-being means vastly different things to different people, ultimately it is about feeling connected, included, and accepted, and inspired to become better versions of ourselves.

At YMCA of Three Rivers, we seek to redefine well-being together with the communities we serve and to help ensure that everyone in our region has the opportunity to connect, thrive and shine.

We will not accept that loneliness, intolerance and inequity, poor mental health, or chronic diseases are facts of life. And where they are, we will aim to make change. As the heartbeat of the communities we serve, we will break down systemic barriers to potential and belonging and ensure our region is a place where everyone can create their own Y story.

We intend to lead with solutions that impact well-being, so we can foster thriving individuals and create positive ripple effects across the communities we serve.

Because when we have the opportunity and are inspired to improve our well-being, every single one of us has the potential to shine. And when we do, we ignite the shared potential in our communities.

How We'll Shine Together and Ignite Well-Being:

PRIORITIES, GOALS & STRATEGIES

We'll ignite our potential as a team, for individuals and the communities we serve, through four key priorities:



We will bring our commitments to life through the goals and strategies in each priority area, and measure and evolve our objectives over the life of our plan. We will apply a JAIDE lens and consider power, position and privilege in the actions we take, and continue our commitment to accountability, equity, and continuous (un)learning and listening to our careholders.



Priority 1: PEOPLE

GOAL: We will nurture our people by growing talent, investing in people and building relationships inside the YMCA and within communities.

STRATEGIES:



1. **Be a great place** to work for all employees and volunteers to live in purpose, passion and potential to shine



2. **Build** a culture of connection, celebration, appreciation, and recognition for employees, volunteers, and participants



3. **Listen,** (un)learn and act on well-being and JAIDE insights to strengthen our community impact



Priority 2: PARTNERSHIPS

GOAL: We will create intentional connections that focus on our strengths, and prioritize well-being.

STRATEGIES:



1. **Evaluate** current partnerships according to resources and employee capacity



2. **Explore** new partnerships to fill service gaps, address systemic issues and support social determinants of health



3. **Build** a culture of giving and grow our community of generous donors



4. **Grow** our funder relationships to strengthen sustainability



Priority 3: PATHWAYS

GOAL: We will enhance service delivery to broaden access and deepen our impact.

STRATEGIES:



1. **Advocate** for the right resources and approaches to better meet demand for access to critical programs and services



2. **Increase** presence, connection and access for underserved, under-engaged and equity-deserving populations



3. **Strengthen** brand presence and understanding to increase Y mindshare and donations in communities



Priority 4: PLACES

GOAL: We will create inclusive, diverse, accountable and sustainable spaces and uplift experiences that increase belonging and connection.

STRATEGIES:



1. **Strengthen** JAIDE practices to elevate inclusive and connected spaces



2. **Focus** on service fundamentals to improve employee and participant experiences



3. **Evaluate** and improve environmental impact and overall sustainability of our facilities, programs and services



4. **Explore** new spaces for program and service delivery beyond our locations

Our Enablers

THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR DECISION-MAKING

Our ability to successfully implement our strategic plan is dependent on a number of core foundations. The following are our guideposts and will be applied in all of the decisions made in the implementation of our strategic plan:

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE | We will foster a healthy culture rooted in JAIDE, well-being, engagement and connection for all employees and volunteers.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY | We will consider and evaluate available resources in all current and new initiatives, with our organization's long-term sustainability at the forefront.

CONTINUOUS LISTENING, (UN)LEARNING, & CONSULTATION | We will continue to listen, (un)learn, engage and act to broaden our thinking, shape our perspectives, and embrace new constructs through diverse expressions of consultation, moving at the speed of trust and relationships.

INNOVATION LENS | We will apply a lens of potential and possibility, exploring opportunities to innovate in collaboration with employees, volunteers, participants, partners, and the communities we serve.

EVALUATION & DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING | We will use data and insights to reflect, guide, shape and evaluate our progress and plan for the future.

BRAND & REPUTATION | We will foster a positive and well-understood identity to serve and engage with more people in our communities.

