

## YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce: Local Impact in Owen Sound

November 4, 2025

Every charity and non-profit exists to help solve a problem, and the Y is no different – with the exception that our organization helps address many problems, from access to health, fitness and aquatics programs, to housing and child care shortages to isolation, racism, mental health issues, and more.

The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce has been igniting potential since 1877. We believe everyone deserves the chance to shine which is why we offer a wide range of programs and services that empower people of all ages and life stages to overcome barriers and reach their full potential. Every day, we work to spark brighter futures—because when people shine, communities shine brighter.

### Programs Offered by YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce

<p><b>Health, Fitness &amp; Aquatics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Fitness</li> <li>• Youth and Recreation</li> <li>• Aquatics and Swim Lessons</li> <li>• Peace Medal</li> <li>• Partner Days</li> <li>• Strong Communities Fund <i>(Financial Assistance Program)</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Employment Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Seeker Supports</li> <li>• Employer Supports</li> <li>• Education and Training</li> <li>• In Motion and Momentum +</li> <li>• In Motion and Momentum + Youth</li> </ul>
<p><b>Child Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Licensed Child Care</li> <li>• Licensed School Age Programs</li> <li>• Licensed School Break Programs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural Housing and Homelessness Outreach</li> <li>• Community Justice</li> <li>• Youth In Transition Worker Program</li> <li>• Youth In Transition Housing Support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Camps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreational Day Camp</li> <li>• Rotary/YMCA Camp Presqu'île</li> </ul>	<p><b>Settlement &amp; Language Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newcomer Supports</li> <li>• Language Classes and Conversation Circles</li> <li>• Settlement Workers in Schools</li> <li>• Community Connections and Workshops</li> </ul>

Note: YMCA programs and services are offered across Grey and Bruce counties. Availability varies by community, with many programs accessible in-person, through outreach, or virtually.

See Appendix A for a description of each program.

### YMCA Centres of Community that Serve Owen Sound Residents:

Program	Location
Health, Fitness & Aquatics	700 10 <sup>th</sup> Street East
Licensed Child Care	1550 8 <sup>th</sup> Street East
Licensed School Age/School Break Program	Alexandra Community School East Ridge Community School Hillcrest Public School Keppel-Sarawak Elementary School
Camps Recreational Day Camp Rotary/YMCA Camp Presqu'île	700 10 <sup>th</sup> Street East 339639 Presqu'île Road
Employment Services	290 9 <sup>th</sup> Street East
Community Initiatives Community Justice Youth in Transition Worker Program Youth in Transition Housing Support	290 9 <sup>th</sup> Street East
Settlement & Language Services	290 9 <sup>th</sup> Street East

### Impact by the Numbers

From April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce served more than 10,000 individuals across Grey and Bruce through child care, employment, housing, settlement, health, fitness, and aquatics programs.

Program	Community Members Served
Health, Fitness and Aquatics	Total Members: 5,038
Licensed Child Care	Total Children: 367
Licensed School Age Program	Total Children: 671
Recreational Day Camp	Total Children: 1090
Rotary/YMCA Camp Presqu'île	Total Campers: 268
Employment Services	Total Job Seekers: 1318
Community Justice	Total Individuals: 194
Youth in Transition Worker Program	Total Youth: 60
Settlement Services	Total Newcomers: 1140

### Economic & Community Benefits of the YMCA in Grey and Bruce Counties

A recent YMCA Canada survey found that 60% of Canadians feel little or no sense of community, rising to 68% of young adults and 76% of unemployed individuals.

Disconnection can affect education, employment, physical activity, and civic engagement—impacting both social and economic health.

The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce addresses these challenges by:

- Employing over 300 staff, strengthening local capacity and delivering high-quality programs.
- Supporting working parents through licensed child care and school-age programs, helping maintain workforce participation.
- Offering employment services that prepare job seekers and connect employers with skilled residents.
- Providing health, fitness, and aquatics programs that promote wellness, social interaction, and safe community space outside of home or work.
- Removing financial barriers through the Strong Communities Fund, ensuring everyone can participate and belong.
- Extending regional reach to even smaller or rural communities, fostering connection and skill-building.

By delivering these services locally, the YMCA helps residents build relationships, strengthen skills, and contribute to a healthier, more connected, and economically resilient community. For municipalities, this translates to a stronger workforce, increased civic engagement, and enhanced quality of life.

To read the full survey, visit: <https://ymca.ca/en/news-stories/press-release/six-in-ten-canadians-surveyed-have-little-or-no-sense-of-community-new-ymca-research-reveals>

### **Community Partnerships: Strengthening Local Impact**

The YMCA works closely with schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations to deliver programs that improve well-being, safety, and belonging across Grey and Bruce. Examples include:

**Schools:** Over 900 students participated in the Swim to Survive and Swim to Survive Plus programs in 2024–2025, learning essential water safety and lifesaving skills.

**Cardiac Rehab:** In partnership with Brightshores Health System, our Cardiac Rehab program provides tailored support from a Personal Trainer, a Registered Nurse, and a Medical Advisor to help individuals recover safely from cardiac events.

**Rock Steady Boxing:** In partnership with the Parkinson Society, this program empowers participants with Parkinson’s disease to “fight back” through rigorous, goal-oriented boxing exercises.

**Rotary Club of Owen Sound:** In partnership with the Rotary Club of Owen Sound, Rotary YMCA Camp Presqu’île gives children from Owen Sound and beyond the

chance to build confidence, independence, and lasting friendships through meaningful overnight camp experiences.

These partnerships allow the YMCA to expand reach, enhance expertise, and ensure programs are effective and safe, making a measurable difference in the health and well-being of local residents.

### Financial Assistance Provided to Residents of Grey Bruce

Too many people in our community don't feel healthy, connected, valued or well. Our family, friends and neighbours are facing mental and physical health challenges. Financial pressures. Personal stressors. Or an overwhelming feeling they don't belong.

These barriers are preventing them from reaching their potential. And if we can't remove the barriers in our way, we can't truly shine.

At the YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce, we're focused on removing barriers and sparking moments of wellness, confidence, connection and belonging. Because we believe that potential shouldn't be limited.

Our **Strong Communities Fund** ensures that everyone, regardless of age, background, or financial circumstance, can access YMCA programs and services. By reducing financial barriers, the fund helps more people shine, building a stronger, healthier community for all.

Municipality	Households Who Received Financial Assistance
Grey County	533
Bruce County	83
Grey Bruce Total	616

### Donations Received vs Community Need

Total Raised through Donations & Grants	Total Assistance Distributed	Funding Gap Covered by YMCA
\$76,449	\$187,770	\$111,321

Thanks to community generosity, **1,210** individuals were able to access YMCA Health, Fitness and Aquatics programs last year through financial assistance.

However, donations covered less than half of the financial assistance distributed. The YMCA bridged the remaining \$111,321 gap to ensure no one was turned away.

Every contribution to the Strong Communities Fund helps local families access programs that build brighter futures. With greater community support, we can continue to meet the growing need across Grey and Bruce counties.

## **Partner Day and Special Events for Owen Sound Residents**

Through our partnership with the City of Owen Sound, the YMCA offers four Partner Days each year, giving Owen Sound residents free access to Health, Fitness and Aquatics programs. This initiative ensures that every Owen Sound resident has the opportunity to engage in physical activity, explore YMCA programs, and experience the benefits of wellness, connection, and community belonging.

In addition, we proudly partner with the City to host free community activities on Family Day and New Year's Eve, bringing families and neighbours together.

This partnership is a meaningful way to demonstrate the City of Owen Sound's commitment to resident well-being while connecting the community to resources that support healthy, active living.

## **Together, we ignite potential**

The YMCA of Owen Sound Grey Bruce continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of residents across Grey and Bruce. Through programs in Health, Fitness & Aquatics, Child Care, Camps, Employment Services, Community Initiatives, and Settlement and Language Services, thousands of individuals gain skills, confidence, and opportunities to thrive.

Through ongoing collaboration with municipalities like the city of Owen Sound, the YMCA strengthens connections, promotes wellness, and contributes to a healthier, more resilient community. Together, we can continue to build brighter futures for everyone in Grey and Bruce.

Thank you for your continued partnership in building stronger, healthier communities.



Sarah Cowley,  
Chief Executive Officer



Bob Kanduth,  
Board Chair

## Appendix A: YMCA Program Descriptions

**Health and Fitness:** Programs designed to support wellness at every stage of life. Members and public can access cardio and strength training equipment, group fitness classes, and personalized support to improve overall health and well-being.

**Sports and Recreation:** A variety of programs that encourage skill development, teamwork, and fun. From youth sports to adult recreational activities, these programs promote active living and community connection.

**Aquatics:** Swim lessons, aquatic fitness classes, certifications, and recreational swim opportunities are offered for all ages and abilities.

**Licensed Child Care:** Guided by YMCA's Play to Learn curriculum, licensed child care provides a safe, inclusive environment where children thrive.

**Licensed School Age Program:** Guided by the YMCA's *A Place to Connect* curriculum, children engage in play, learning, and social development in a safe, supportive setting before and after school.

**Day Camp:** Children develop skills, confidence, and connections while engaging in fun and active experiences (March Break, Winter Break and Summer Break)

**Overnight Camp:** In partnership with Rotary Club of Owen Sound, at Camp Presqu'île campers build confidence, independence, and lasting friendships while taking part in outdoor adventure and skill-building activities.

**Employment Services:** Supports for job seekers and employers to build a stronger local workforce. Services include career planning, job search assistance, resume support, interview preparation, employer hiring incentives, and access to training programs like In Motion and Momentum and Better Jobs Ontario.

**Rural Housing and Homelessness Outreach:** Services for individuals and families experiencing housing instability in Bruce County. Supports include emergency shelter, tenancy guidance, connections to community resources, and advocacy to help individuals find and maintain safe, stable housing.

**Community Justice:** Programs that provide alternatives to the formal justice system. Participants are supported through restorative approaches that promote accountability, skill-building, and stronger community connections.

**Youth in Transition Worker Program:** Support for youth ages 16–24 who have been involved with child welfare and are moving toward independent living. Workers provide mentorship, life skills development, and connections to housing, education, employment, and community supports.

**Youth in Transition Worker Housing Support:** Specialized housing-focused supports for youth ages 16–17. Workers assist with finding and maintaining housing, building life skills, and connecting to essential community and social services.

**Settlement and Language Services:** Programs that help newcomers to Canada settle successfully in Grey-Bruce. Services include English language classes, employment readiness, community orientation, and connections to local supports.