

# **Making the Connections**

## **YMCA of Greater Toronto Strategic Plan 2005 – 2010**



YMCA

We build strong kids,  
strong families, strong communities.

*Vision without action  
is merely a dream.  
Action without vision  
just passes the time.  
Vision with action  
can change the world.*

## **YMCA of Greater Toronto Milestones**

### **1975 – 1980**

North York YMCA

### **1980 - 1985**

Renovated West End  
YMCA  
Metro-Central YMCA  
YMCA House

### **1990 - 1995**

Scarborough YMCA  
Mississauga YMCA

### **1995 - 2000**

YMCA Camp PineCrest –  
Kekindewin Dining Hall  
Charles Street YMCA  
YMCA Family  
Development Centre  
Brampton YMCA  
Durham YMCA

### **2000 - 2005**

YMCA Newcomer  
Centres  
YMCA Academy  
YMCA Cedar Glen  
Markham YMCA  
YMCA Youth Foyer

## **Introduction**

Every five years for three decades, YMCA leaders have come together to interpret the Association's mission and values for their time and place, and to develop a strategic plan based on shared passion and commitment. This continuous cycle of review, reflection and action has enabled the YMCA to accomplish more than could have been imagined by its founders and to pass on a vital, relevant and dynamic organization to the next generation. It is now our turn to discover what will become our legacy.

The purpose of this plan is to give direction to volunteers and staff in their work on behalf of the Association. It is the compass that the Board of Directors and senior staff use to monitor and manage operational performance. It is also one way to communicate the Association's priorities, agenda and case for philanthropic support to current and prospective collaborators, donors and partners.

The plan was developed over an eight-month period and involved close to 700 people across the entire Greater Toronto Area (GTA) through consultations. Led by a task force of the Board of Directors with the support of a project team of staff from across the Association, the strategic planning process was designed to be transparent and inclusive. An external advisory committee of community leaders served as a source of counsel and as a sounding board.

Through the process, the GTA was described repeatedly as a region struggling with unprecedented growth, complex social and economic issues, and political pressures. We were challenged to:

- commit ourselves to collaborate with others in finding ways to diffuse these tensions and to build creatively on the GTA's strengths
- act with urgency to engage youth with positive alternatives for the use of their time, considerable energy, and capacity to lead
- mirror the region's diversity, and reach out to include and involve all

**The YMCA of Greater Toronto** engages over *400,000* people annually through health, fitness and recreation, child and family, and employment and community programs at more than *200* sites across the Greater Toronto Area.

**YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs**

Brampton  
Durham  
Markham  
Metro-Central  
Mississauga  
North York  
Scarborough  
West End

**YMCA Child and Family Development Programs**

Child Care  
Resident Camping  
Day Camping  
Family Support

**YMCA Employment & Community Programs**

Employment Programs  
Newcomer Programs  
Youth Outreach, Intervention  
& Education Programs  
International Programs

- speak out and take a stand to improve public policy related to our areas of expertise
- build new financial models and re-invest to realize the full potential of our people, programs and facilities

The task force, project team, and senior staff worked with the information generated through the process over several months. The document in your hands was adopted by the Association's Board of Directors in June 2005. Now, it is a tool for decision-making and accountability – flexible enough to accommodate inevitable environmental changes or unforeseen opportunities as well as firm enough to drive measurable results.

The vision at the centre of this strategic plan is an inclusive society in which everyone, regardless of their background, experiences or circumstances, is able to participate fully; and communities are characterized by strong, supportive connections between individuals and among groups.

We can see a day when more people – especially youth – are:

- connecting with each other and with the YMCA
- giving of themselves in ways that enrich their lives and our common life
- growing in their sense of purpose, well-being and belonging

We can see a day when the GTA is an even better place to:

- live an active and meaningful life
- raise healthy, resilient children and youth
- settle and begin a new life in Canada
- make difficult transitions related to school or work

And we can see a day when the YMCA is:

- the place where everyone wants to be
- the way more people participate in community life

- the network that binds many neighbourhoods into one city, one country and one world

What can you see? Read on and let the conversation continue.

*These **challenges** describe the trends and issues that were identified through consultations and the environmental scan.*

**Consultations –**

*6 regional meetings with community leaders*

*Brampton*

*Durham Region*

*Halton Region*

*Mississauga*

*Toronto*

*York Region*

*4 regional meetings with staff, volunteers and alumni*

*13 meetings with external experts*

*6 meetings with internal staff experts*

*250 respondents to an online survey and print questionnaire*

*= 700 participants*

**Environmental Scan –**

*57 reports drawn from five regions (e.g. Mississauga, Brampton, Durham Region and Peel Region Strategic Plans, York Region Toward the Vision Report), the United Way, the Toronto City Summit Alliance, the Toronto Foundation, Municipality of Toronto - Urban Development Services, and other community agencies; YMCA Canada, YMCA of the USA, and the World Alliance of YMCAs*

## Challenges 2005

The Greater Toronto Area is an exciting place to be. We love its diversity, entrepreneurial spirit and eclectic neighbourhoods. We are proud to live in a growing region known throughout the world as a centre of opportunity. The quality of life enjoyed by most of its residents is recognized as a great privilege and an even greater responsibility.

The challenges facing the GTA today are putting our collective ingenuity and resolve to the test. During extensive regional consultations and meetings with community leaders, we learned that what we value about the region may be at risk unless this generation renews and expands the civic infrastructure it inherited. The social fabric, they said, needs attention too. Celebrating diversity is not enough. A significant investment is needed to strengthen the bonds between people and to reach out to those who have been excluded from the mainstream of community life.

We received reports of mounting stress on the region's health, education and social services systems, and heard calls for capable partners. Serious concerns were shared about the health status of residents, including the prevalence of obesity, stress, apathy and inactivity.

Over and over again, stories were told about young people – their untapped creativity, their need for respected role models, and their hunger for challenging experiences. Drawing on considerable evidence from across disciplines, many of these leaders painted troubling scenarios of a region hostile toward youth and deeply divided by income.

Voices of caution also came from within the Association. Social and economic forecasts led to conversations about the YMCA's financial model, facility development strategy, and capacity for innovation. The immediate and long-range implications of growth were considered. We recalled the foresight and boldness of those YMCA leaders who gave the community its first pools, libraries and adult career counseling centre, and who modeled a remarkable way of connecting people from all walks of life. And then we reflected on the children and youth in our midst – what we owe them, what we hope the future holds for them.

These voices from within and outside the Association, from the past and the future, called us to action. They said *if*:

- we build on our strengths
- we connect with each member on a deeper level
- we renew our facilities and extend our reach into growing communities with new facility models and program tools
- we choose to be more collaborative
- we work harder to include all and reflect the region's diversity
- we use technology well to empower volunteers and staff, and to advance sound management practices
- we support the personal growth and development of volunteers and staff
- we are more visible and vocal in public policy discussions

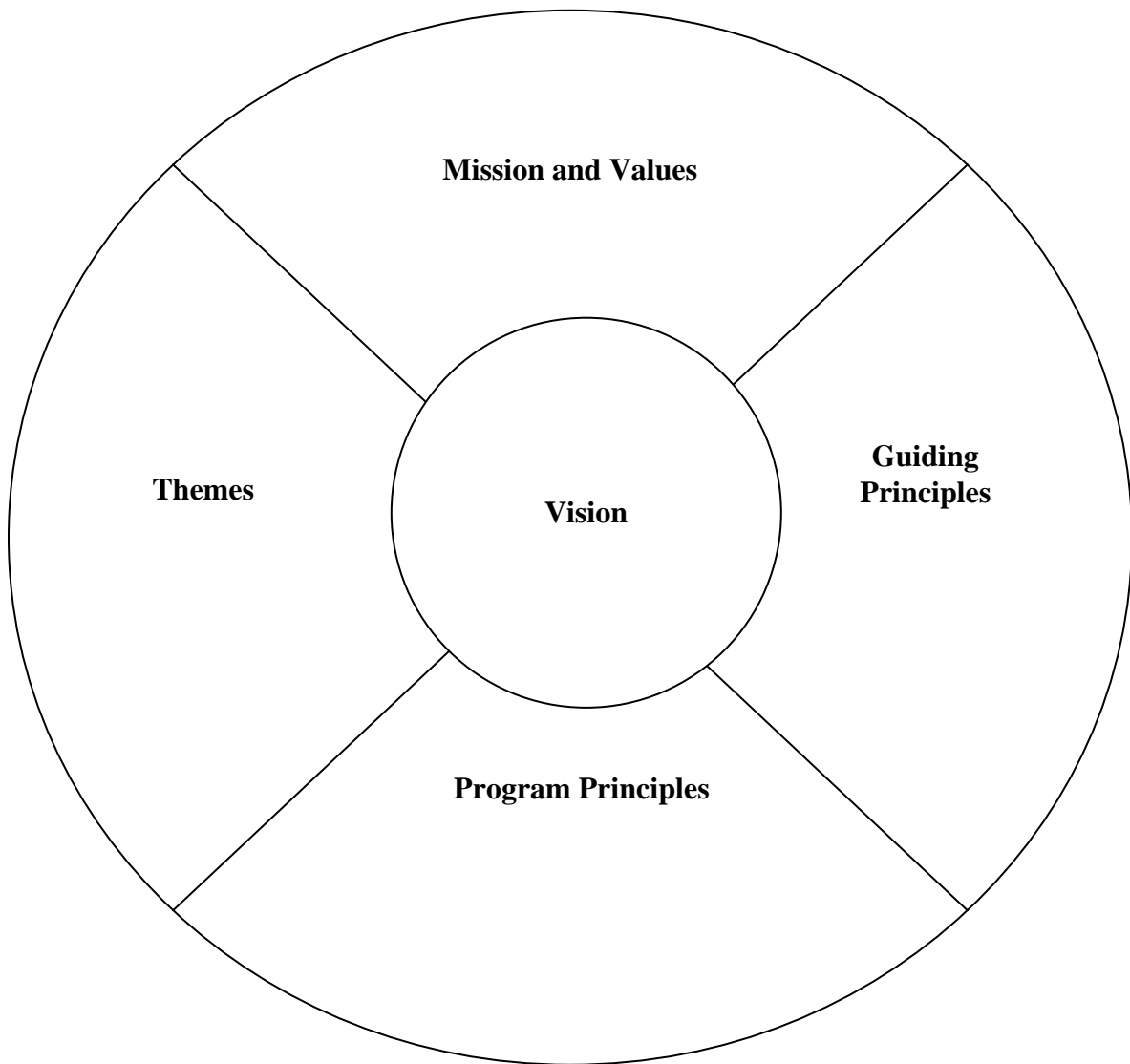
*Then:*

- we will have a positive influence on more people, and play a constructive role in the lives of more youth.
- we will be a sought-after partner, an effective developer of volunteers and donors, and a trusted collaborator.
- we will be able to see groundbreaking possibilities where others see only problems and obstacles - and to inspire people to do their part in moving these new ideas forward.

The YMCA was created for this!

## Section I: Strategic Framework

This first section of the strategic plan defines the parameters and sets the direction for our work in the next five years.



*The **mission** is a broad and enduring statement of the Association's aspirations – always worked toward, never fully achieved. It answers the question: why do we exist?*

*The YMCA of Greater Toronto shares a statement of purpose with YMCAs across Canada. Adopted in 1970 and amended in 1995, it states: "The YMCA is dedicated to the growth of all people in spirit, mind and body and in a sense of responsibility to each other and the global community."*

**Personal growth** –  
*Physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development*

**Community involvement** –  
*active participation in groups bonded by common interests and concerns and bridging differences in age, gender, race and ethnicity, class, image, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and traditions, and physical and mental ability*

**Leadership** –  
*the act of effecting positive change for and with individuals and groups*

## **Mission**

*The YMCA of Greater Toronto is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth, community involvement and leadership.*

In recent years, our mission statement described “offering opportunities for participation and service to others” as one of our central functions. Today, we want more from ourselves and for the people who call the GTA home.

There is a pressing need for a deeper commitment of time, talent and resources from more people – greater community involvement. There is also a need to give more people the chance to exercise responsible community leadership. This revised mission statement declares our intention to increase our efforts in these areas.



*These **values** express the beliefs that the Association holds, models and encourages – they communicate expectations for behaviour*

*The YMCA of Greater Toronto is committed to **character development** – the process of transmitting moral values and wisdom while inspiring a commitment to leading a purposeful life.*

## **Values**

### **Caring**

Acting with compassion and concern for the well-being of others.

### **Health**

Being committed to physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development.

### **Honesty**

Demonstrating integrity and trustworthiness.

### **Inclusiveness**

Appreciating diversity. Striving to be open to all. Seeking to understand differences and find common ground.

### **Respect**

Recognizing and protecting the inherent worth of every person, including oneself.

### **Responsibility**

Being dependable and accountable for choices, actions, and commitments.

**Member** –  
*all those who engage in the mission and values of the YMCA, including participants, volunteers, donors, staff, alumni, and partners; different opportunities and responsibilities are associated with each category of membership*

**Collaboration** –  
*the act of working together to achieve a shared objective*

**Partnership** –  
*a strategic, highly structured, mutually supportive relationship based on negotiated roles, responsibilities and ends*

## **Guiding Principles**

These principles guide decision-making related to organizational culture, policy and practice – what matters most to us and will be advanced in all that we do.

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is committed to:

### **Member Involvement**

We want to move casual users of YMCA programs to become connected and then committed members and leaders. We want to develop communities based on shared interests, concerns and a desire to effect positive change.

### **Collaboration and Partnership**

We want to explore ways to collaborate before acting independently. We want to develop a select number of strategic partnerships for greater impact.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

We want to create an environment receptive to diverse experiences, perspectives and interests, and inclusive of all.

### **Ethics**

We want to lead in a manner consistent with YMCA policies and the highest community standards.

### **Accountability and Stewardship**

We want to protect and enhance our reputation for leadership and excellence, demonstrating high standards of operational performance and fiduciary responsibility.

### **Volunteerism and Professionalism**

We want to acknowledge the interdependence of volunteers and staff and to strengthen this critical relationship in everything we do. We want to devote the same energy to the personal growth and development of volunteers and staff as we do to other YMCA members.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

We are committed to responsible environmental stewardship, management practices and education.

*Evidence-based – demonstrated to be effective and congruent with YMCA values; backed by reputable research and supported by conceptual tools, draws on the expertise of relevant professions and disciplines as well as the experience of YMCAs throughout North America and around the world.*

## **Program Principles**

These principles guide decision-making related to the development and delivery of programs – what we will start, stop, keep or change.

### **Alignment with Mission, Values and Vision**

Does this program advance our mission, adhere to our values and achieve our vision?

### **Commitment to Quality and Excellence**

Does this program meet desired standards of quality and performance?

### **Potential to Deepen YMCA Involvement**

Does this program provide opportunities to engage YMCA members, to deepen their involvement and to build and maintain commitment?

### **Competency to Lead**

Is the YMCA qualified to lead or to become a leader in this field? Does this program strengthen the YMCA's reputation and build its *core* competencies?

### **Capacity to Operate and Sustain**

Does this program conform to the YMCA's financial guidelines? Does this program have a sound and sustainable financial plan with specific targets and measures? Does it realistically assess the human resources needed and our capabilities? Does it meet health, safety and environmental standards and the obligations of charitable status? Has risk been assessed and a balance between risk and opportunity struck?

### **Evidence-based Approach**

Is this program based on sound research, theory and practice? Will this program contribute new evidence to the field?

### **Relevant and Significant in Impact and Scope**

Is there a verifiable need and is the program a timely response? Does the impact and scope of this program merit the investment of resources? Does it have the potential for expansion and replication? Does it have potential for collaboration or partnership? Does it create opportunities for collaboration among YMCA programs?

*The **vision** statement is a vivid,  
inspiring and achievable  
description of our preferred  
future.*

## **Vision 2010**

*The YMCA of Greater Toronto will focus on making connections: connecting people, connecting with youth, and connecting with the community.*

To this end, we will do more *with* people than *for* people. We will turn everyday transactions into opportunities to strengthen relationships and make helpful links between people, resources and ideas. We will take on the role of connector with as much passion for excellence as we have demonstrated consistently as service provider. We will recognize our interdependence and respond collaboratively to the critical issues of the day.

The concept of YMCA membership will no longer apply only to participants in YMCA health, fitness and recreation programs and will be expanded to include all participants, volunteers, donors, staff, alumni and partners. As diligently as we now deliver high quality programs, we will build lasting relationships among YMCA members. As carefully as we now measure member satisfaction and fiscal performance, we will measure levels of member involvement and commitment. As imaginatively as we now pursue solutions to the challenges facing the YMCA, we will pursue innovative solutions to the complex challenges facing the GTA and young people in particular.

We will extend our reach by driving our programs and facilities to their full potential. We will reach out beyond the borders of our buildings to be where we are needed most, to become more reflective of the community, and to make it easier for people to connect with each other and with us. We will step up to play our role in shaping the future of the region. We will change not only what we do but how we do it so that everyone involved deepens their sense of belonging and broadens their circle of support.

As a result of these new and stronger connections, the entire community will be healthier, more creative and more resilient – and so will the YMCA.

*The **themes** are the broad areas to be addressed by the plan.*

## **Themes**

This plan makes the connection between critical trends, emerging opportunities, and the YMCA's unique competencies. It focuses on the best use of current resources and identifies the ways in which new resources can have a positive impact on pressing social issues. It recognizes the tight connection between organizational capacity and performance, and the three core YMCA programs. Three themes will guide our actions over the next five years:

### **Community Connections**

#### **Connecting Members, Encouraging Leadership**

We will focus on relationship building and encouraging members at every age and stage to connect and commit to more involvement in the YMCA and the wider community. This will entail working with people to learn more about who they are and what will motivate greater participation.

#### **Collaborating, Partnering, Leading and Learning**

We will collaborate and partner with others throughout the GTA to understand critical issues, plan responses, take action, and equip members for leadership. We will lead in those fields where our experience is valued. We will pursue research to contribute to the base of knowledge and to learn from collective experience. Similarly, we will work cooperatively with YMCA partners in Ontario, across Canada and around the world to achieve shared goals and learn from each other.

#### **Cultivating the Spirit of Giving and Receiving**

We will pursue a new approach to philanthropy that is broader than raising money. It will emphasize connecting people with our cause – creating YMCA communities with the capacity to take positive actions and to experience unity in the midst of diversity. It will require an organizational culture of asking, and creating opportunities, to give.

*The spirit of giving and receiving – the impulse to demonstrate concern for others and act with compassion; the give and take of a relationship; the mutual regard that people have for one another and that unites them*

*For the purposes of this plan,  
**children and youth** are  
grouped by these ages:*

*Pre-School (0 – 5)  
School Age (6 – 12)  
Teens (13 – 17)  
Young Adults  
(18 – 24 and 25 – 29)*

## **Youth Connections**

### **Investing in Child, Youth and Family Development**

We will create a positive, enriching environment for children and youth – and their parents or guardians - including the experiences and support needed for optimal development. We will pay particular attention to critical points of transition in the lives of young people. We will collaborate with other organizations to develop comprehensive approaches to child and youth development.

### **Engaging and Involving Youth**

We will reach out and listen to young people and learn about their culture. We will involve them in the development of programs and emphasize the integration of youth programming across the Association. We will involve young people in the governance of the Association as decision-makers while building a trusting relationship that will be sustained beyond youth and into adulthood.

### **Developing Young Leaders**

We will create opportunities for young people to learn as they lead today. These opportunities will include peer support and adult mentorship. We will share our global perspective and aim to develop communities of young people equipped to take action locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

## **YMCA Connections**

### **Developing Member Insight**

We will create a comprehensive process for acquiring and managing information about current, former and potential members for planning, developing and delivering timely and relevant programs. It will be based on a multi-directional flow of information and will touch everyone – participants, volunteers, staff, donors, alumni, and community partners. It will invite dialogue, and include opportunities to create and share knowledge across YMCA programs. We will focus on finding out who needs what we do best. With the information gathered, we will anticipate their needs and aim to exceed their expectations.

### **Attracting and Keeping Great YMCA Volunteers and Staff**

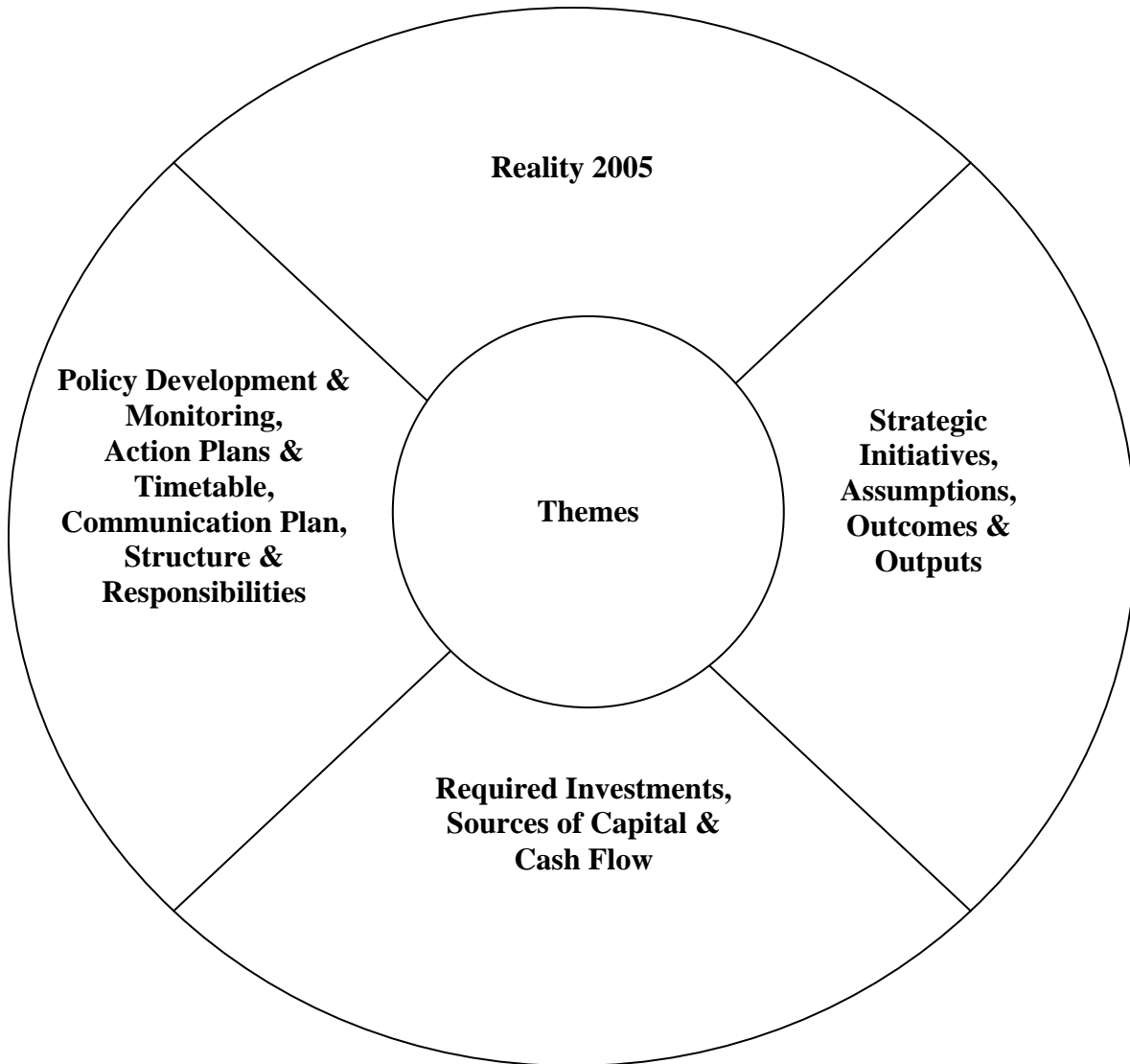
We will recruit, equip and retain extraordinary volunteers and staff – committed, talented and resourceful people. We will become an extraordinary volunteer developer, employer and workplace. We will create an organizational culture that supports life-long learning, personal growth and on-going professional development. We will continue to develop policies, practices and procedures aimed at greater diversity and inclusion. Our membership, volunteer base, workforce and leadership will reflect the GTA.

### **Investing in Sustainable Quality and Growth**

We will invest resources to achieve the overall vision of the Association based on agreed-upon financial guidelines, including principles and specific targets, measures and results. We will strike a balance between investing in existing programs, facilities and equipment, and new initiatives. We will ensure that we invest in the on-going capacity of the programs and facilities that make a financial contribution to the overall health of the Association. We will seek to maximize benefits for the greatest number of people and create sustainable, mutually supportive relationships with funders and other partners.

## Section II: Implementation

This second section of the plan focuses on the transition from our reality in 2005 to our desired future in 2010. It builds on the mission and values, principles, vision and themes described in the first section. It identifies assumptions and strategic initiatives, specific outcomes and outputs, required investments, sources of capital and cash flow for the coming years. A process for monitoring progress, responsibilities and revised organizational structure, an implementation timetable, and a communication plan are also included.



To a large extent, the achievement of this strategic plan depends on our ability to create full awareness of and seamless access to all YMCA programs. This means cutting across traditional lines of program autonomy to focus on the needs of YMCA members. We will address the following Association-wide priorities in this way:



### *Member Involvement*

The introduction of a comprehensive approach to attracting more casual users of YMCA programs, identifying and involving those who have the potential to become connected members, and then moving more members along a continuum of commitment – through volunteerism and philanthropy – until they are active leaders.

### *Diversity and Inclusion*

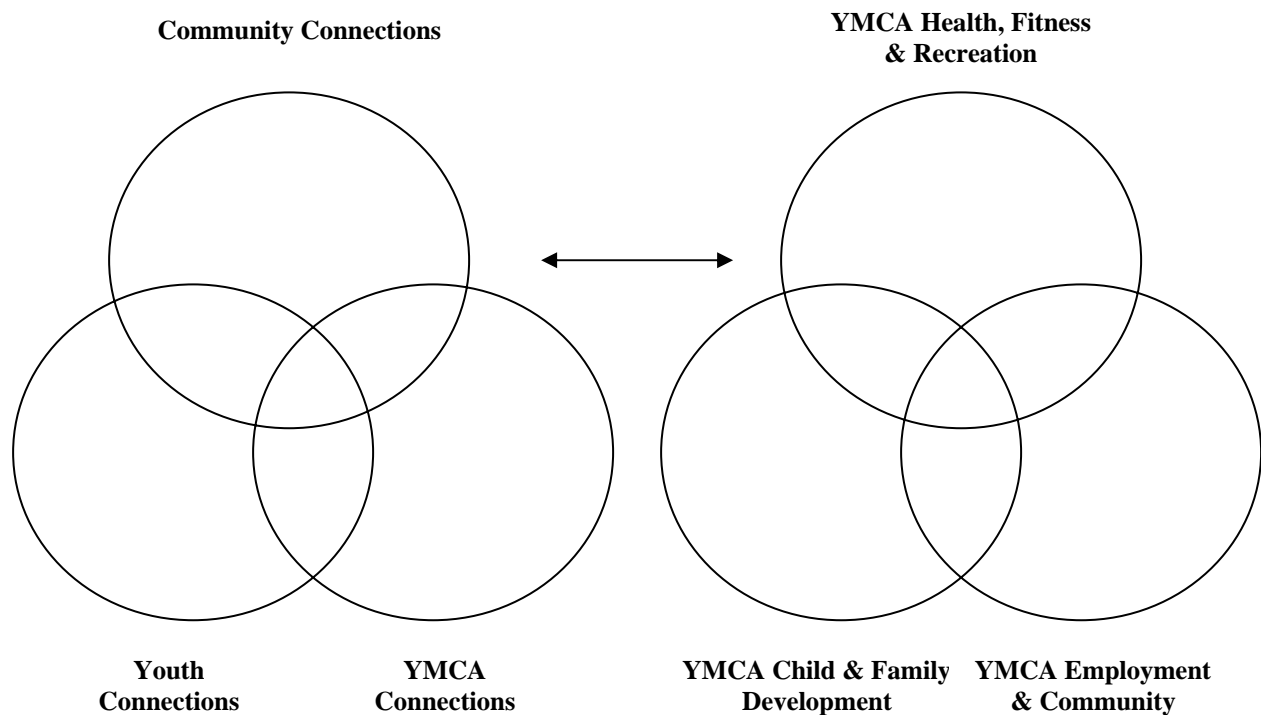
The creation of environments that offer diverse experiences, welcome different perspectives and interests, include all, and celebrate variety.

### *Capacity Building*

The renewal of existing facilities; the introduction of new technology and efficient and effective management processes; the strategic alignment of human resource systems, supporting both staff and volunteers; and the development of organizational expertise in anticipating members' needs and exceeding their expectations.

### *Collaboration, Partnerships and Research*

The development of collaborative relationships, a select number of strategic partnerships, and a research agenda to advance common concerns and public policy issues related to healthy active living; child, youth and family development; youth employment; newcomer integration, and youth at risk.



*Connecting Members,  
Encouraging  
Leadership*

*Collaborating,  
Partnering, Leading  
and Learning*

## Reality 2005

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is one of the largest YMCAs in the world, known for its capable leadership, high quality programs, and network of innovative facilities. We take pride in what we have achieved so far and are grateful to those who led the way. In assessing our current situation, we have carefully considered views and information shared through extensive consultations. This assessment, however, is not a critique of past decisions or current circumstances. Rather, it provides incentive for action. It surfaces situations that require our attention and opportunities that will take us to new heights.

### Community Connections

**Concept of Membership:** The concept YMCA membership has evolved over several decades to refer almost exclusively to participants in health, fitness and recreation programs.

**Member Involvement:** Most members and participants are casual users, fewer are connected to staff, volunteers and other members and participants and even fewer are committed leaders in the YMCA.

**Reputation:** We have a reputation as a strong and effective charity, and a valued partner of business and government in the delivery of programs. We are perceived as an organization that is more likely to act independently than to invest time and resources in working collaboratively with other organizations to build collective community capacity. We are known for upholding our responsibilities as a member of the worldwide YMCA family.

**Relationships:** We have an extensive network of relationships with organizations and individuals in the public, private and voluntary sectors – locally, provincially and nationally. Our relationships with government at all levels are in transition. Principles, standards, and expectations related to accountability, transparency, communication and management need to be negotiated and defined.

**Public policy:** We are actively monitoring public policy developments for risk and opportunity related to our mission, programs, participants and initiatives. While we are in conversation with decision-makers or influencers about the

*Cultivating the Spirit  
of Giving and  
Receiving*

issues of the day, we do not have a strategic or organized capacity to contribute our expertise and insight to the public policy development process in a consistently thoughtful way. Given our maturity as an organization, we are falling short of our own and others expectations in this area.

**Capacity:** We are raising millions of dollars and involving thousands of volunteers annually and yet we are only engaging a small percentage of current and former members and participants who already feel a strong sense of connection to the YMCA. We are not taking full advantage of the opportunities inherent in working with thousands of children and youth each day to help them discover and practice the values tied to philanthropy and volunteerism. We are also not doing all that we could be doing to equip the community in general and YMCA members and participants in particular – especially youth – for volunteer experiences.

### **Youth Connections**

*Investing in Child,  
Youth and Family  
Development*

**Call to action:** We are hearing the call to action from many quarters to invest more in child, youth and family development. Community leaders are asking us to focus on the needs of youth (ages 13 – 24), including the lack of recreational opportunities and “youth-friendly” places.

**Scope for growth and expansion:** We are experiencing demand for more child care spaces and centres, more attention on the middle childhood years, and more access for families at all income levels. We do not have a common YMCA framework or approach to understanding and supporting healthy teen and young adult development.

*Engaging and  
Involving Youth*

**Approach:** We are creating opportunities for young people to develop and use their leadership skills, but we are not engaging them in designing the programs offered to them. We are not involving them directly in the governance structure of the Association at this time.

*Developing Young  
Leaders*

**Scope for growth and expansion:** We have been contributing significantly to developing young leaders through many YMCA programs including youth employment, camping, and outreach and intervention. We are also continuing to excite and interest a diverse group of young people through *YMCA Leader Corps* – a program with a deep history in the YMCA and long tradition of service to

*Developing Member  
Insight*

communities. Many more young people could and should have this opportunity. Further, we are providing a limited number of national and international experiences for young people. We have not begun to realize our full potential to create formative experiences for young leaders across all program areas.

## **YMCA Connections**

**Approach:** We are involving more than 400,000 people each year in YMCA programs and yet we do not know them very well. We initiate transactions with participants more often than we initiate conversations about their aspirations or expectations. While there will always be a base of casual users of YMCA programs and facilities, we should be more deliberate about identifying and motivating those with the potential to develop a deeper relationship with the YMCA over time. We do not have systems to facilitate this kind of relationship-building and commitment.

*Attracting and Keeping  
Great YMCA  
Volunteers and Staff*

**Systems and supports:** We have the basic human resource systems and supports in place to meet the requirements of a diverse workforce. We must continue to build on these initiatives to align our employees with our new vision and to ensure that they experience personal growth, community involvement and leadership through their employment with the YMCA. We do not have a comparable system in place to facilitate the recruitment, selection, support and recognition of volunteers.

**Organizational culture:** We have invested in building a culture that embraces diversity and supports inclusion. We have a strategic framework to guide policy and program development as we continue to build awareness of diversity and the importance of inclusion among our staff, volunteers and members. While the YMCA reflects the diversity of our communities at many levels, the leadership of the Association does not yet mirror the GTA.

*Investing in Sustainable  
Quality and Growth*

**Financial model:** After twenty-five years of sustained growth, it is time to review and revive the YMCA's financial model. Management systems and processes have not kept pace with organizational growth. Rising construction costs and new YMCA models across North America are causing us to reconsider our facility development approach.

**Deferred maintenance and capital upgrades:** We are facing the costs of years of deferred maintenance and anticipating the need for capital upgrades in all YMCA facilities.

**Scope for growth and expansion:** Most of our programs and facilities have not reached their full potential in terms of participation. We have capacity for growth within our existing programs and facilities in addition to the potential for new programs and facilities to meet the evolving needs of a growing region.

*The **strategic initiatives** are our priorities for the use of human and financial resources – what we have to do over the next five – eight years to respond to the challenges posed to us and to realize our vision of connecting people, connecting with youth and connecting with the community.*

*The **assumptions** describe some of the thinking behind the strategic initiatives.*

## Strategic Initiatives

We carried the following assumptions into the process of developing the strategic initiatives:

**Strategic initiatives will be reviewed and modified as new information and actual results become available.** We will seek balance in pursuing aggressive goals with determination, and in responding to new and unpredictable circumstances with agility.

**Two initiatives will be carried forward from the last strategic plan.** The Markham Family YMCA (scheduled to open in May 2006) and the YMCA Youth Foyer (site selection continues) will be completed in the first year of this plan.

**There will be no change in the range of programs offered by the Association.** Management will make decisions to stop, start, keep or change programs on a regular basis (at least annually), using a process to assess the relative value of specific programs against our program principles. The Association's three core programs are:

- *YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs*  
Brampton  
Durham  
Markham  
Metro-Central  
Mississauga  
North York  
Scarborough  
West End
- *YMCA Child & Family Development Programs*  
Child Care  
Resident Camping  
Day Camping  
Outdoor Education  
Family Support
- *YMCA Employment & Community Programs*  
Employment Programs  
Newcomer Programs  
Youth Outreach, Intervention and Education  
Harm Reduction Programs

**Our financial model will guide the implementation process.** While it may take many years to fully realize this model, we will seek to generate, develop and allocate the Association's resources according to these principles:

- *YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs* should contribute sufficient cash to cover direct costs, administrative overhead costs, and full asset management costs; once these costs have been fully funded, any additional net contribution can be used to fund the Association's strategic priorities
- *YMCA Child & Family Development Programs* should contribute sufficient cash to cover direct costs, administrative overhead costs, and full asset management costs; once these costs have been fully funded, any additional net contribution can be used to fund the Association's strategic priorities
- *YMCA Employment & Community Programs* should contribute sufficient cash to cover direct costs, administrative overhead costs and full asset management costs; in some cases, we may decide to operate specific programs that are unable to cover full costs
- Philanthropic revenue should contribute sufficient cash to cover the costs of YMCA financial assistance, and support the operation of specific *YMCA Employment & Community Programs* as well as the introduction of new or innovative programs.
- Growth should be funded through capital campaigns, unrestricted endowment revenue, government support and operating nets over and above administrative overhead and asset management costs.
- The total number of members involved per year will increase from 400,000 in 2004/2005 to 500,000 in 2009/2010.

***YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs*** – formerly known as *YMCA Membership*

***YMCA Child & Family Development Programs*** – formerly known as *YMCA Children's Services*

***Outcomes*** refer to the benefits derived from an initiative and its impact – what will be achieved or be different after the initiative has been implemented.

***Outputs*** are the tangible results as determined by organizational performance metrics.

Five broad strategic initiatives flow from these assumptions:

1. Investing in the Development of Healthy, Active Children, Youth and Adults through *YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs* and *YMCA Child & Family Development Programs*
2. Realizing our Full Potential in Volunteerism and Philanthropy
3. Reaching out to Teens and Young Adults
4. Learning through Partnership, Collaboration and Community Leadership
5. Building Organizational Capacity

What follows is an overview of each initiative, underlying assumptions, outcomes desired for the community and the Association, and anticipated outputs.



## Strategic Initiative

*Investing in the Development of Healthy, Active Children, Youth and Adults through YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs and YMCA Child & Family Development Programs*

## Assumptions

**The demand for YMCA programs geared to the health of children, youth, adults and families is increasing.** Regional population growth means the need for more accessible and affordable programs. Increasing rates of obesity and growing awareness of the health impact of sedentary lifestyles have implications for *YMCA Health, Fitness and Recreation Programs*. Similarly, demand has been stimulated by evidence documenting the impact of the early years on future health. It also has implications for *YMCA Child & Family Development Programs*. Governments at all levels are making child development – and child care in particular – a priority in the allocation of resources. Therefore, the number of children and families involved in the YMCA is likely to increase significantly.

**The Association's financial sustainability depends on a significant capital investment in current and new facilities for YMCA health, fitness, recreation, and child and family development programs.** The Association's last strategic plan launched many new programs (including *YMCA Youth Foyers*, the *YMCA Academy*, *YMCA Newcomer Services*, and *YMCA CedarGlen*) in response to important community needs. Most of these initiatives may never contribute financially to the overall costs of operations. Ongoing operational support for these programs may also be required from within the Association.

Capital funding for these new initiatives came in part from reduced capital investment in existing infrastructure related to *YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs* and *YMCA Child & Family Development Programs*. These investment choices, the delay in opening the *Markham Family YMCA*, and the modest return on investment associated with the *North York YMCA* and *Metro-Central YMCA* re-launch projects, have resulted in deferred maintenance costs and higher operational costs overall – an unsustainable situation.

We must invest in these program areas to increase the number of participants and members on the roll as well as to improve retention rates. In this way, we will achieve twin goals: to live

## Components

out our mission through the programs we offer, and to be good stewards of our assets and financial resources. Without programs that recover their operational costs and make a contribution to the collective financial health of the Association, we will be unable to achieve our vision.

1. An increased capital investment in existing facilities, equipment and technology based on a comprehensive real estate assessment study.
2. The re-launch the *West End YMCA* and *YMCA Camp PineCrest* so that these operations can achieve their full potential.
3. The opening of new YMCA health, fitness and recreation facilities based on innovative, lower cost models of facility design and flexible programming; plus, the opening of 10 - 15 new YMCA pre-school child care centres located strategically to respond to community need and government initiatives.
4. The development and implementation of a “YMCA Family Access Strategy” to increase the participation of families from all income levels in the YMCA; thoroughly research the combination of program and policy changes (eg. scheduling, facility usage and pricing considerations).

## Outcomes

- an objective appraisal of asset management costs, best use of land and buildings and desired locations for future YMCA health, fitness and recreation centres, and child and family development facilities
- “as new and relevant” YMCA facilities, equipment and technology
- achievement of full potential in terms of usage and mix of members
- new, more cost effective facility models
- expansion of YMCA child care network
- more involvement of families from all income levels
- renewal of *YMCA Camp PineCrest* prior to the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2010)

## Outputs

- an increase in *YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs* from 110,000 (57,000 members on the roll) in 2004/2005 to 130,000 in 2009/2010 (85,000 members on the roll)
- an increase in child care/family support membership from 35,000 in 2004/2005 to 50,000 in 2009/2010
- an increase in camping membership from 21,000 in 2004/2005 to 28,000 in 2009/2010
- an increase in the number of financially assisted children and youth participating at *YMCA Camp PineCrest* from 5% to 15%; maintain financially assisted children in *YMCA Day Camp* at 30% of total campers; and reflect the diversity of the Greater Toronto Area to a greater extent

## Strategic Initiative

### *Realizing our Full Potential in Volunteerism and Philanthropy*

#### Assumptions

**Volunteerism and philanthropy are critical to the health of the community.** And yet, the greatest percentage of volunteer and philanthropic resources comes from the smallest percentage of people. The actual number of Canadians who volunteer has been declining in recent years. Positively influencing these trends is directly related to the YMCA's mission and values.

A concentrated focus on volunteer development and philanthropy positions the YMCA as a leader for these times of transition from traditional ways of thinking about volunteerism and organizing volunteers to new ways that reflect the cultural diversity and socio-economic realities of the GTA.

**Volunteerism and philanthropy are a means to generate human and financial resources necessary to meet the challenges of this plan.** There is a significant gap between the amount of financial assistance that we provide (approximately \$8 million annually) and what we raise through YMCA annual giving and the United Way (approximately \$3 million annually). We currently fund this shortfall through operations. This means that these resources are unavailable for other purposes such as re-investment in our capital assets. This \$5 million gap represents an important challenge for YMCA philanthropy programs.

Currently, *YMCA Employment & Community Programs* fall short of covering full costs by approximately \$2 million. We want to offer these important programs despite this financial challenge. Philanthropic resources address this shortfall along with contributions from *YMCA Health, Fitness & Recreation Programs* and *YMCA Child & Family Development Programs* after administrative overhead and asset management costs. Ongoing negotiations with government funders are also required to make this program area viable.

#### Components

1. The creation of a culture of philanthropy and volunteerism that permeates the Association and how leaders and members behave every day; includes developing and implementing a philanthropy education program that is delivered through all YMCA programs.

## Outcomes

2. The study and establishment of a *YMCA of Greater Toronto Foundation* fully integrated into the governance and management of the Association (giving the Board of Directors and President & CEO full authority for strategy and funds allocation).
  3. The development and implementation of a comprehensive financial development strategy including the integration of annual, capital, endowment, sponsorship and United Way initiatives, the recruitment and development of dedicated staff and volunteers, and a focus on donor-centred major gifts fundraising.
  4. The development and implementation of a comprehensive volunteer development strategy including full systems and support focused on building satisfaction and the retention of program and administration volunteers, philanthropy volunteers, and policy volunteers at all levels.
- an increase in revenue from financial development by 5% of total revenue excluding capital and 8% of total revenue including capital
  - the recruitment of no fewer than 30 of the GTA's top leaders with influence, affluence and a network of regional structures to support the development of a *YMCA of Greater Toronto Foundation*
  - recognition for the YMCA as a volunteer opportunity of choice
  - more people say, "I learned to volunteer at the YMCA" like many now say, "I learned to swim at the YMCA"

## Outputs

- an increase in the number of donors from 7,000 to 14,000
- an increase in total revenue from philanthropy from \$23.6 million (2000/2001 – 2004/2005) to \$42.3 million (2005/2006 – 2009/2010)
- an increase in the number of volunteers from 5,000 to 10,000

## Strategic Initiative

### Assumptions

*Teens are defined as age 13 – 17; young adults are defined as age 18 – 29.*

### Components

*Innovative programs for teens and young adults will emerge over time and may include initiatives not listed here. The programs listed are examples of potential initiatives.*

## Reaching out to Teens and Young Adults

**The community wants us to increase our efforts in support of teens and young adults.** Consultations and recent research on community needs have indicated that people in all parts of the GTA are very concerned about issues affecting young people. People believe that we have both the capacity and responsibility to take the lead in responding to these concerns. This reputation and experience obligates us to do even more, to improve our current programs, and introduce new opportunities for youth engagement and leadership development.

1. An investment in child, youth and young adult development through programs and initiatives such as:
  - *The School as YMCA Member* in which schools can become a member of the YMCA and select a customized range of YMCA programs from a menu of opportunities
  - *YMCA Healthy Teen and Young Adult Development* framework to complement *YMCA Playing to Learn* curriculum and *YMCA Healthy Child Development* framework
  - *Access to Recreation* through which the YMCA partners with other youth-serving agencies to broker the placement of children and youth in subsidized recreation opportunities
2. An investment in programs that promote youth engagement in program development and delivery such as:
  - *YMCA Youth Volunteer Program* in which high school students learn to volunteer through the YMCA
  - *YMCA International Youth Program* through which young people get involved in the work of YMCAs in developing countries, and participate in international youth internship experiences and exchanges designed to increase global awareness and involvement
  - *YMCA Youth Forums* designed to provide an opportunity for youth to speak out and interact with the leaders of their community

## Outcomes

3. An investment in programs that provide opportunities for youth to take leadership and learn related skills such as:
    - *YMCA Youth Leader Corps*
    - *Youth in YMCA Governance* through which teens and young adults participate in Advisory Councils, Committees and the Board of Directors
    - *Youth and Philanthropy* through which young people learn to raise, invest and disburse funds to support innovative programs for children and youth
- an increase in innovative child and youth programs
  - stronger relationships with school boards and schools
  - a clearly defined approach for working with teens and young adults
  - a collaborative effort with other organizations to increase access to recreation for children and youth
  - an increase in the number of young people who are engaged as volunteers, have international experiences and speak out on the issues and programs that affect them
  - an increase in the number of young people involved in leadership opportunities
  - the engagement and involvement of youth in YMCA policy development, philanthropy, and program design and delivery
  - evidence that children and youth who are involved in YMCA programs rate their health more positively than those who are not; children and youth who are involved in YMCA programs report that they have improved their lives through their YMCA involvement

## Outputs

*The achievement of the specific outputs will depend on which youth programs are implemented over the next five years.*

- the involvement of 1 in 10 of the children and youth in the GTA in YMCA programs
- the development of a “Healthy Teen and Young Adult” approach to complement other YMCA conceptual frameworks related to children and youth; the completion

of training of YMCA staff who work with teens and young adults

- an increase in access to recreation by low income children and youth through collaborative relationships with other youth-serving organizations; the placement of at least 1,000 children and youth in subsidized recreation opportunities
- the introduction of a YMCA volunteer education program in collaboration with school boards and schools, involving at least 500 youth
- the involvement of 500 youth in an international YMCA experience
- the delivery of four *YMCA Youth Forums* annually involving a total of 100 young people
- an increase in the number of *YMCA Youth Leader Corps* participants to 2,000
- the involvement of 3,500 youth (12 – 29) as YMCA volunteers in all areas (ie. program, policy, philanthropy leadership)
- the creation of a YMCA youth and philanthropy initiative engaging at least 50 youth



## Strategic Initiative

### *Learning through Partnership, Collaboration and Community Leadership*

#### Assumptions

**The community wants us to participate in the public arena and to become a more active and visible partner, collaborator and leader.** Through the consultation process, we heard the call to greater collaboration and involvement in public policy development (in those areas in which the YMCA has experience and expertise) and related research.

We have significant experience in developing collaborative models and using partnerships as a means of delivering effective and efficient programming. We have had less involvement in partnerships or collaborative ventures focused on public policy issues or research.

#### Components

1. The development of research partnerships with universities to use the YMCA as a “living laboratory” and to collect evidence related to the effectiveness and efficiency of YMCA programs.
2. The allocation of dedicated resources to developing strong external relations including leading individuals and organizations in the private, public and voluntary sectors.
3. The engagement with public policy development processes related to key program areas such as:
  - healthy, active living
  - child, youth and family development,
  - youth employment,
  - newcomer integration
  - youth at risk
4. The provision of leadership to the YMCA movement at the regional, national and international levels.

#### Outcomes

- a collaborative mindset and an awareness of interdependence become core competencies
- an increase in YMCA programs based on and contributing to evidence-based research
- an increase in awareness of the YMCA in the community

## Outputs

- strong connections diverse communities, community leaders and with all levels of government
- influence on public policy in key program areas
- a reputation as a capable leader in the development of the YMCA movement at the regional, national and international levels
- a bi-annual survey of key community and government leaders on their awareness of the YMCA and incremental improvements in scores over time
- the achievement of at least 8/10 as a satisfaction rating from Ontario YMCAs and YMCA-YWCAs related to our role as the Ontario Management Resource Centre
- a contribution of significant volunteer and staff leadership to YMCA Canada, the Canadian Urban Group, the North American Urban Group, the North American YMCA Development Organization, the World Urban Network and the international family of YMCAs
- the provision of an international YMCA experience for:
  - 50% of the Board of Directors and 100% of the Senior Leadership Team
  - an equal number of volunteers and staff from other levels of the Association
- a minimum of six international partnerships considered to be deep, relevant and meaningful to both parties
- full participation in YMCA Canada's international development efforts and the World Alliance of YMCA's Global Operating Plan.

## Strategic Initiative

### *Building Organizational Capacity*

#### Assumptions

**Everyone involved in the YMCA is a member.** We want to differentiate ourselves from providers of similar programs and services by our ability to create a sense of belonging and to deepen the involvement of people in the YMCA over time – in keeping with the concepts of ‘member involvement’ (ie. moving participants from casual users to connected members to committed leaders) and ‘member insight’ (ie. understanding past, present and future members and exceeding their expectations by helping them achieve their stated and unstated goals). This organizational change strategy requires a significant investment in human resources and technology.

**Higher rates of employee and volunteer satisfaction result in greater member satisfaction.** This investment will equip us to increase the quality and efficacy of our work.

**The demographics of the Greater Toronto Area continue to change rapidly.** This investment will equip us to understand and meet the diverse needs presented by these changes, and to actively engage current and future generations in the work of the Association.

#### Components

1. The development and implementation of a change management plan to support volunteer and staff human resources as we introduce the new membership model and focus on ‘member involvement’ and ‘member insight’.
2. The building of human resource systems, practices and policies aligned with the new organizational culture and strategic direction.
3. The introduction of new technologies to support ‘member involvement’ and ‘member insight’ and training of staff.
4. The implementation of the diversity and inclusion business plan (as approved by the Board of Directors).

#### Outcomes

- members are involved and feel a sense of belonging
- an increase in the number of casual users becoming connected members and committed leaders as well as an increase in the number of:

## Outputs

- donors and volunteers
  - members retained from one program or one year to the next
  - members registered in more than one program
  - members with other family members involved
- efficient and effective systems for the delivery of quality programs
- staff and volunteers experience personal growth, and act as connectors and relationship builders
- the make-up of the Association is more diverse and reflects the diversity of the GTA; the organizational culture is viewed as more inclusive
- triple the number of members who are “committed” to the YMCA – committed members renew their involvement over time, volunteer, donate, participate in more than one program and/or involve other family members
- the achievement of member satisfaction scores of 8/10 related to feeling connected to staff, volunteers and other members as well as receiving help to achieve their goals
- the achievement of 8/10 in volunteer satisfaction and commitment measures
- ranking in the top 100 employers in an external, objective appraisal by a reputable publication or organization
- the achievement of 8/10 in overall satisfaction among staff and volunteers
- 90% of staff and volunteers participate in awareness sessions related to diversity and inclusion