

CEO & Board Chair Letter

Dear Friends,

Our YMCA of Oakville is resilient! Despite the challenges and the social isolation caused by the pandemic, this year has proven that – as a YMCA and as a community – we are, #Stronger Together!

Throughout 2020, we nurtured our local, provincial and national networks, collaborated more and leveraged the power of this collaboration to influence policy makers and government at all levels. The adversity we faced forced our organization to embrace constant change, master rapid adaptation and employ innovative thinking.

We are so proud of our staff and volunteers who challenged themselves to stay focused on our future. And we are very grateful to the donors and volunteers who supported our YMCA through their time and through their generous financial contributions.

Since we restarted in August, our Licensed Child Care operations have not stopped. This essential service, continued to ensure healthy, caring, high quality care for children every day. We are thankful for our committed professional educators and childcare staff team, who consistently prioritize the needs of the children and families in their care.

While many of our in- person programs were paused, restarted and paused again, we launched and delivered experiences virtually, engaging people and providing social connections in our community daily, through virtual classes, personal training, and community outreach programming.

Our administrative team mastered remote work and adapted all our systems and processes to ensure the viability, security, and continuity of our organization. This was a year of changing legislation, remittances, funding opportunities and reporting. The workload was greater than ever before and, behind the scenes, our administrative team met these changes with optimism and endurance.

Many of our staff, even while on layoff, stepped up individually and volunteered their time participating in local food delivery to families in need, curb-side donation drives and community programs.

As an organization, we also reflected on our role and responsibility to understand and combat systemic racism. We recommitted to ongoing learning about diversity, inclusion and equity, and to continuing intentional work with our Board and staff. We will learn and listen to our community and our stakeholders throughout this journey.

We managed a lot of the risks during this pandemic; mitigating practical challenges of finance, health and safety; and we seized emergent opportunities, transforming our Peter Gilgan Family YMCA into a vaccination site.

A group of committed staff and volunteers completed a full community scan and assessment of new, strategic opportunities that will shape our future, helping reinvent our YMCA as we craft our 2022 Strategic Plan.

In all these ways, the adversities of COVID-19 have strengthened our resolve and our commitment to building a healthier community. We encourage you to read on and see for yourself all of the ways our YMCA has responded, reached out and found resilience.

We look forward to a time when we can all reconvene in person and celebrate all of the ways we are # StrongerTogether.