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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The YMCA and Walk off the Earth re-imagine the YMCA anthem , focusing on youth mental health.

Oakville, Ontario, August 28, 2023 –

The YMCA and Walk off the Earth reimagine the YMCA anthem, focusing on youth mental health . The musical collaboration introduces expanded access to the YMCA's free youth mental health program, Y Mind.

The YMCA and Canadian indie pop band Walk off the Earth today released a modern take on the YMCA anthem to raise awareness of expanded access to the free youth mental health program, Y Mind. Originally released in 1978, the hit song has brought crowds to the dance floor, with an enduring legacy internationally. The reimaged cover of the classic party anthem, performed in a more soulful and sincere tone, brings new light to the original lyrics through a mental health lens as the YMCA aims to highlight today's need for community and open dialogue surrounding mental health. Alongside the new musical arrangement Walk off the Earth has also released an accompanying full-length music video now available on [YouTube](#).

"We've seen how music is so connected to emotions – for us and our fans – so we were honoured to take on the challenge of reinventing such an iconic song and give new meaning to its enduring lyrics," says Sarah Blackwood, lead singer of Walk off the Earth. "When we took a look at the original lyrics, it was staggering how a message about the YMCA from 45 years ago is just as relevant and pointed today - but now we're sharing that message with a focus on mental health tied to Y Mind."

The collaboration aims to bring awareness to a new era the YMCA of Oakville hopes to usher in, as our charity has expanded our broad range of programming to include free mental health services through Y Mind, serving the changing needs of Canadian communities.

Y Mind is an innovative early intervention mental health program that helps teens (ages 13-18) and young adults (ages 18-30) cope with stress and anxiety with the support of health professionals. The seven-week program is available online or in person, in English and French (under the name YMCA Libère ta tête). Add in additional local context for your program. The Y Mind program is offered completely free of charge thanks to support and funding by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

"We are proud to offer the Y Mind program here in Halton Region. The number of stressors that today's youth face can seem overwhelming, including the post-pandemic experience, school, and social media pressures. We recognize that cost is often one of the biggest barriers for youth in need of mental wellness programs. Y Mind removes that barrier for youth 13-30 so they can get the help they need," said CEO Kyle Barber, CEO, YMCA of Oakville.

"Mental health is health, and everyone, including Juno Award winners, like Walk off the Earth, are opening up and having conversations about their mental health. The music lets young people know that it's okay to not be okay and that there is help available through YMCA's Y Mind program. Our

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government continues to be very supportive of this initiative,” says The Honourable Ya’ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health.

The Y Mind program comes at a time when young people’s stress and anxiety levels remain at an all-time high. According to a survey conducted in 2023 by Deloitte, close to half of Gen Zs (46%) and four in 10 Millennials (39%) report feeling stressed or anxious all or most of the time. Guided by qualified mental healthcare professionals, participants in the Y Mind program have reported reduced anxiety, improved well-being, and reduced feelings of isolation.

To learn more about the Y Mind program or find a location near you, visit :

<https://www.ymca.ca/ymind>

To locally register for the Y Mind Program with the YMCA of Oakville visit:

<https://ymcaofOakville.org/programs/mental-wellness/>

About Y Mind

Y Mind was first developed by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver (now YMCA BC) and has been offered across British Columbia since 2018 thanks to financial support from the British Columbia government. Y Mind was born to meet the growing need for free, accessible mental health support. It quickly established itself as a pillar of support for the region’s youth, serving over 3,200 young people in 54 communities. Building on this momentum, the Y Mind program was extended across Canada, including Quebec with YMCA Libère ta tête, through the support of YMCA Canada and YMCA BC. Y Mind has now expanded to 24 YMCAs across the country and is currently being supported through the Public Health Agency of Canada’s investment Supporting the Mental Health of Those Most Affected By COVID-19.

About the YMCA of Oakville

The YMCA of Oakville is a charity that has been serving the community for over 160 years. It is dedicated to connecting people and fostering health and well-being in the community.

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