

Secours Speciaux

Secours Speciaux is a program of the World Alliance of YMCAs aimed at providing support to Y retirees experiencing health and financial challenges. It is an initiative of retired Y leaders voluntarily reaching out to assist other retired Y colleagues in need.

There is a comprehensive application, review and granting process of Secours Speciaux funds.

The Canadian Y Alumni undertakes an annual campaign among its membership to contribute.

75 individual donations were made by the Canadian YMCA Alumni in 2021 for a total \$13,340. The Canadian YMCA Alumni organization committed an additional \$2000. The total 2021 donation: \$15,340.

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Secours Speciaux -- FAQ

Secours Speciaux translated from French to English means **Special Aid**.

1. What is Secours Speciaux?

It is an Emergency Relief Fund of the World Alliance of YMCA's, providing financial support to YMCA Staff (active or retired) and/or their dependents who are facing emergencies such as medical, natural disasters, lack of pension. problems created by political turmoil and human rights violations.

2. What is the origin of Secours Speciaux?

During the 1950's, when YMCA's in Eastern Europe were forced to close down in the wake of communist regimes, many staff and volunteers were left with no means and many pressing needs.

The wife of the Secretary General of the World Alliance, Anna Limbert, started an aid program based on her personal commitment to assist YMCA people who were in dire need. Over time, the World Alliance provided some organizational support to the initiative while retaining the voluntary nature and scope of the "Secours Speciaux" Fund.

3. How did it expand to a worldwide initiative?

During the 1980's the Secours Speciaux Fund assistance was extended to YMCA people who were experiencing injustices and human rights violations around the world. In the 1990's the purpose of the Fund expanded its scope due to an emerging need and began to support many YMCA staff who were retiring without pension benefits.

4. Who contributes to the Secours Speciaux Fund?

True to its origins, retired YMCA staff and volunteers from several countries make gifts to the Secours Speciaux Fund. The primary countries providing support include USA, Canada, UK, Germany and YMCA's in SouthEast Asia.

5. How has the COVID pandemic impacted Secours Speciaux?

In the Spring of 2020, General Secretary Carlos Sanvee indicated that the impact was severe on many YMCA retirees in several countries. In response to a survey of YMCA's around the world, over 70 retirees were provided an initial payment of \$500 in the early summer, with the option of repeat requests up to 3 times.

Through November, 85 people have been served with over \$94,000 gifted in 2020 and this year is not yet complete.

6. What is the need for Secours Speciaux going Forward?

It is expected that there will be a continuing vital need for financial and medical aid for the current recipients and an additional number of beneficiaries as it is anticipated that the impact of COVID will be long-lasting.

7. What is the level of giving by Canadian YMCA Alumni?

In 2020, the Canadian Y Alumni gift to Secours Speciaux will be slightly over \$8,000 which will match the 2015 gift level. From 2016 to 2019 the gift level has been between \$6,200 and \$6,900.

The number of individual donors has been in the range of 35. We also have some Y Alumni groups who are now choosing to support Secours Speciaux.

8. What are the plans for the Secours Campaign in 2021.

We plan to actively inform and promote the need for the Secours Speciaux Fund to all Y Alumni members in Canada.

9. Why should Canadian Y Alumni give to Secours Speciaux?

A gift to Secours Speciaux represents who we are as Y people, even though now retirees. We didn't just work for the Moncton Y, Toronto Y or Calgary Y - we were colleagues with Y staff and volunteers around the globe. As a Y employee, we were about encouraging individual growth and development and supporting communities and neighbourhoods to work for the benefit everyone.

Secours Speciaux is the most direct way that we can support our colleagues who are in need. Sometimes we may not fully appreciate the retirement and health care supports we enjoy in Canada that are not available in many other countries. With a financial gift to Secours Speciaux you will know that you have extended your hand to a Y retiree in need.