

## **President's Highlights of the Year 2024**

I can't believe we are at the end of another year. This year has been another year full of activities led by your Executive Committee. We started our year off focusing on developing several documents that will support our recruitment of new members.

Our Membership Engagement Committee developed a Purpose statement and a Value Proposition statement, both of which can be found on the Alumni page on YMCA Canada's website. These documents allow us to consistently communicate who we are, what we do and why everyone would want to join our group. As any good communication staffer will tell us, using consistent language is so important to ensure our message gets out. Now we just need to implement our recruitment plans.

This year we continued to work closely with YGTA Alumni group in providing virtual Gatherings like this one throughout the year. Some of this year's sessions focused on how we can control how we live our later years as well as updates on YMCA Canada and how both World YMCA and Canadian YMCAs continue to work on the Environmental pillar of World Alliance's strategic plan.

The Executive Committee also focused our energies on our Summer/Fall Check Ins with all of you. Thank you for taking the time to chat with us and share your thoughts on how we can improve how we connect with all of you. One comment we heard was about your wish for in-person opportunities. Until we can come up with a viable option for in-person events, we are encouraging people to start their own hub in your area. If you're looking for support on how to begin to connect with those in your area, please reach out to our Member Engagement Committee. Gayle Graham and Mimi Price are the Co-Chairs of this group.

Our History Project, or should we call it capturing the leadership voices and learnings of the past 60 years in our Canadian YMCA history, continues on with Franco Savoia's able leadership. We have now reached over 70 'visits' with Alumni and past leaders, and that number continues to grow each month.



In May, I had the privilege and honour to be part of a panel for YMCA Canada's orientation to the National conference. For that event we hired a strategic communication firm, STIFF communication out of Ottawa. Their task was to assist us as we took 60 years of history and put it into a 20-minute presentation. Our hope was that we would use this first presentation to help us with our development of our larger project, a book to be produced for the World Council conference in 2026. By all accounts our presentation did what we had hoped it would. It provided information on how and why leadership responded to societal changes and challenges, and was much more than just a list of dates and achievements. We've developed a small sub-committee of Franco, Scott Haldane, Bryan Webber, me and John Haddock to really roll-up our sleeves and get to work on this project – because Summer of 2026 is NOT that far away. Look forward to more information on this project in the coming months – and if ANYONE is interested in joining our merry little group – please reach out to Franco or myself.

I can't think about the past year without commenting on the Support we've received and continue to receive from YMCA Canada and YMCA of Northern Alberta. YMCA Canada is so supportive of all we do in the Alumni – it is a relationship that really started with Franco and Peter Dinsdale and one which is very important for us to continue to develop. YMCA of Northern Alberta has been very generous with producing our Tielines newsletter. We couldn't have such a great newsletter without their assistance.

Now on a sadder note, I would not be able to close off this year's reflection without remembering that we lost two individuals who contributed to our work on the Executive. Those two were Jackie Jenkins, an extraordinary individual who managed our Membership portfolio for many, many years. She did every task always with a kind and friendly manner and that got it done attitude that nothing was too small to do. The other individual was Hal Studholme. Hal was a prolific YMCA story teller, who always added so much to our Tielines newsletters. Both of these individuals are sorely missed.

Lastly: I want to let you know we're making a change within our Executive Committee for the next two years:



We are making a change in the Vice President position. John Haddock has been my trusty VP for the last two years, although for the first few months of 2024 he was VERY involved in managing the very difficult situation at the Sault Ste. Marie YMCA. For the next term Marilyn Kapitany has agreed to take on the VP position. I'm sure you will all agree she will be a great appointment for this position. Marilyn will be our first VP who comes from our Volunteer leader stream of the Alumni. I'm so looking forward to working with Marilyn in this new capacity. Please congratulate Marilyn and thank John and the rest of the Executive for their dedication and work on your behalf for this term.

Our Executive Committee for the next two years is:

Franco Savoia – past chair

Marilyn Kapitany – Vice chair

Treasurer- Sol Kasimer

Secretary- Martha Lee Blickstead

Committee Chairs – Communication Gary Gray

- Member Engagement – Gayle Graham and Mimi Price
- Secours Speciaux – John Haddock

Hub Representatives from -YGTA – Laura Palmer Korn

- Moncton – Trudy Brydges

And lastly – myself as your President

I want to wish all of you and your families. All the best for this holiday season.

Stay healthy and we'll see you next year!!

Janet Giles

President

Canadian Alumni Association