

HEALTHY LIVING SCHOOL

YEAR AT A GLANCE

2024 - 2025 SCHOOL YEAR



This year at Healthy Living School, we explored many different themes and big questions that helped students discover their roles in the community. Whether it was through team building, sports, or philanthropy, each student had the chance to stop, think, and reflect on how their actions can impact the places and spaces around them. Each class focused on a unique guiding question, ranging from how our lifestyle choices shape our personal story, to how we can support the well-being of others, to how community, accessibility, and legacy all play a role in holistic wellness. Some groups reflected on how our past influences our future, while others explored the importance of connection, inclusion, and storytelling. Across all sessions, participants were encouraged to think deeply about what it means to be well, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, and how we can carry these teachings into our daily lives and communities.



HEALTHY LIVING SCHOOL

YEAR AT A GLANCE

20

WEEKS

9

SCHOOLS

529

STUDENTS

19

TEACHERS

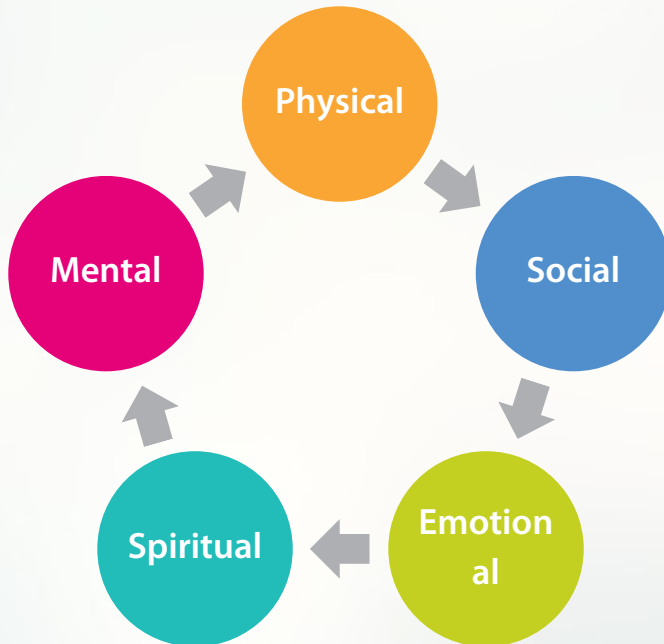
2024 - 2025 Participating Schools

Wilma Hansen	September 26 + October 1 - 4, 2024	Grade 5/6 22 Students	How can we incorporate the teaching of the medicine wheel to promote health and well-being in our daily lives?
Wilma Hansen	October 7 - 11, 2024	Grade 5/6 24 Students	How can we incorporate the teaching of the medicine wheel to promote health and well-being in our daily lives?
Wilma Hansen	October 15 - 18 + 21, 2024	Grade 5/6 23 Students	How can we incorporate the teaching of the medicine wheel to promote health and well-being in our daily lives?
McKenzie Lake	October 24 + 28 - 31, 2024	Grade 3 27 Students	How do we connect?
McKenzie Lake	November 1 + 4 - 7, 2024	Grade 3 27 Students	How do we connect?
St. Jerome	November 18 - 22, 2024	Grade 4 28 Students	How does lifestyle affect our story?
Citadel Park	December 2 - 6, 2024	Grade 5 24 Students	What role can our community play in our holistic well-being?
Citadel Park	December 9 - 12, 2024	Grade 5 23 Students	What role can our community play in our holistic well-being?
Citadel Park	January 13 - 17, 2025	Grade 5 24 Students	What role can our community play in our holistic well-being?
Citadel Park	January 20 - 24, 2025	Grade 5 24 Students	What role can our community play in our holistic well-being?
Grant MacEwan	February 3 - 7, 2025	Grade 4 24 Students	How does our past influence the legacy we leave?
Grant MacEwan	February 10 - 12 + 18 - 19, 2025	Grade 4 23 Students	How does our past influence the legacy we leave?
Grant MacEwan	February 21 + 24 - 27, 2025	Grade 4 24 Students	How does our past influence the legacy we leave?
St. Joseph	March 10 - 14, 2025	Grade 3 31 Students	How does taking care of my health help me in the future?
St. Joseph	March 17 - 21, 2025	Grade 3 32 Students	How does taking care of my health help me in the future?
Ian Bazalgette	April 3 - 4 + 7 - 9, 2025	Grade 7 35 Students	How can my school be a place for everyone?
Ian Bazalgette	April 10 - 11, 15 - 17, 2025	Grade 7 35 Students	How can my school be a place for everyone?
Queen Elizabeth Elementary School	May 5 - 9, 2025	Grade 2 24 Students	How do stories teach and connect us?
Cambrian Heights	May 26 - 30, 2025	Grade 3/4 27 Students	What steps can we take to establish a meaningful legacy within our community?
Cambrian Heights	June 2 - 6, 2025	Grade 3/4 28 Students	What steps can we take to establish a meaningful legacy within our community?

Healthy Living School Curriculum

Healthy Living School aims to provide students with a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. The program provides opportunities for teachers and students to learn that healthy living goes beyond nutrition and exercise. In preparation for the 2022-2023 school year, a curriculum was developed to focus on the various dimensions of health including physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and mental health. These dimensions of health were talked about both independently, and together, as they are all inter-connected. The themes woven throughout the curriculum included gratitude, mindfulness, positivity, connection to ones self, connection to the community, and connection to nature.

Planning meetings between the Healthy Living School Supervisor and teachers were invaluable to create specific and personalized lesson plans for each class. Each class had it's own identity with strengths and challenges, and the daily schedule was modified to reflect this personalization.



2 Locations

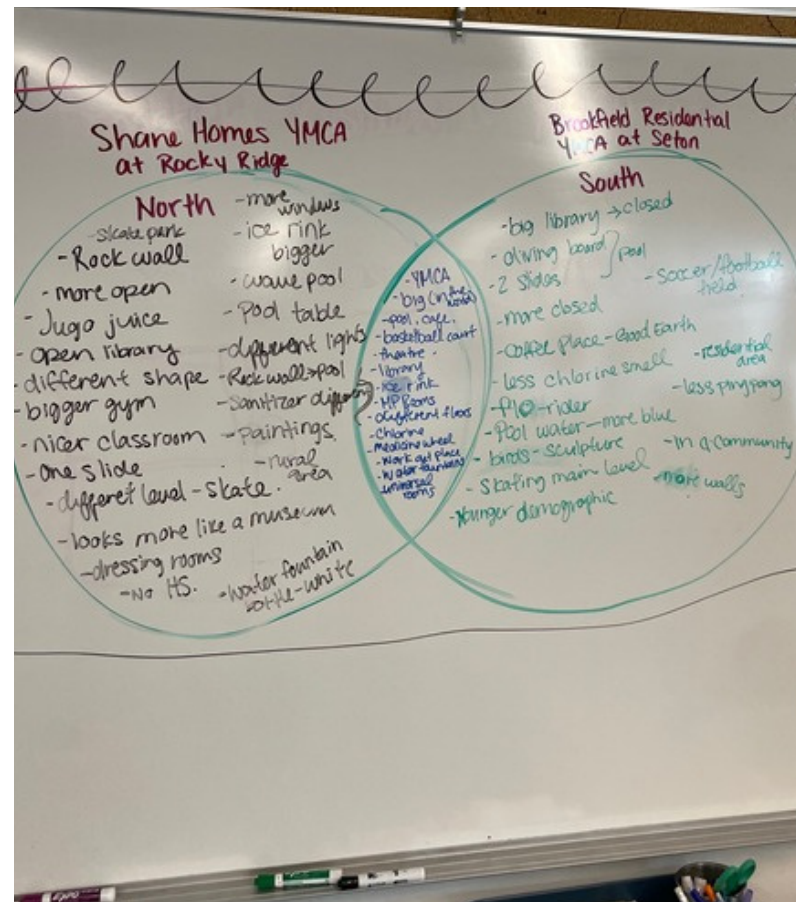
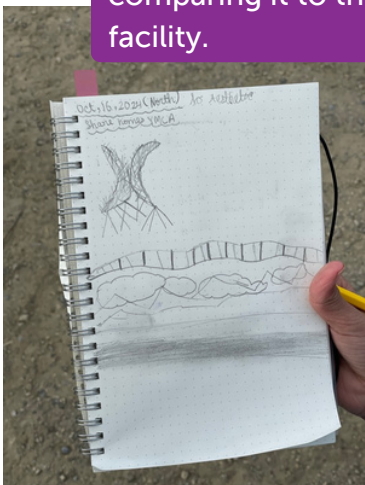
This year, we piloted a new idea where schools had the opportunity to experience both our North and South YMCA locations. Grade 5 students from Wilma Hansen spent two days at the Shane Homes YMCA in Rocky ridge and three days at the Brookfield YMCA in Seton, exploring the unique features of each space. Through hands-on activities and guided discussions, students compared the buildings, learned about the different demographics each YMCA serves, and reflected on how the YMCA supports the needs of its surrounding communities.



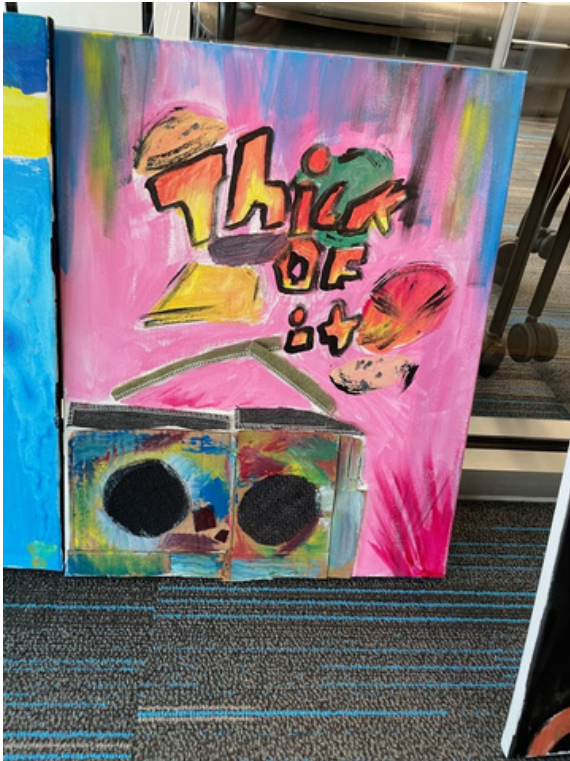
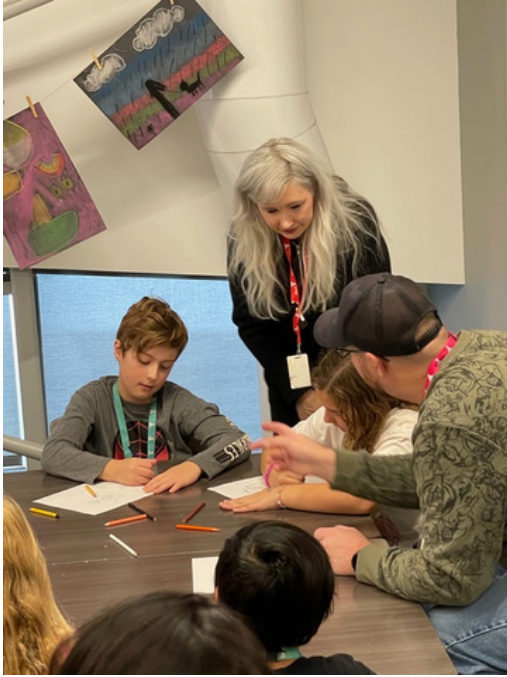
Learning from Crowfoot's Experience Manager Jessica, how the YMCA promotes health and wellbeing in their community



Looking at the South Health Campus building and how it is art itself and then comparing it to the Shane Homes YMCA facility.

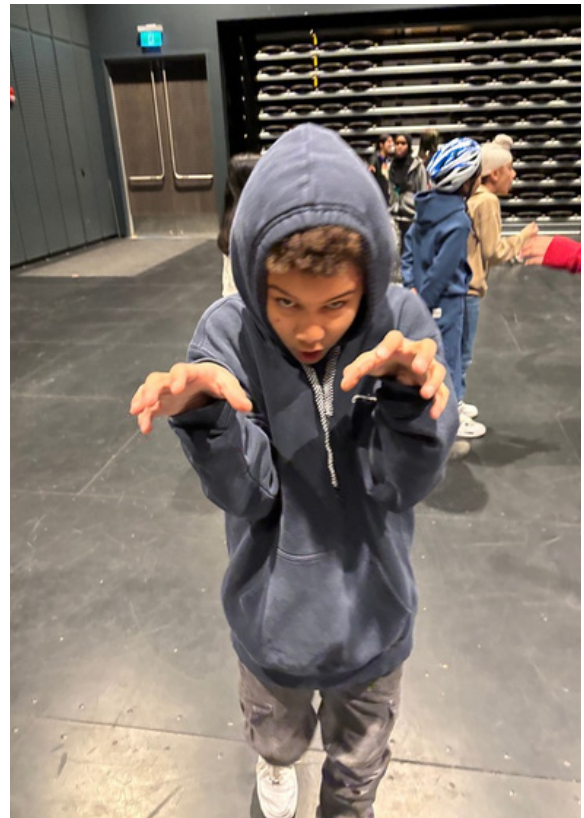


VISUAL ARTS



A class from St. Jerome explored how lifestyle can influence their stories. They worked with visual artist and art instructor Sinead to look at how artists choose to tell their story and how they create their work. Students then created a relief project which is a form of mixed media art where they combine 2 dimensional and 3 dimensional art together. They took inspiration from their passions and used bold colours and delicate lines to represent them.

DRAMA



Students stepped into the world of drama and discovered how storytelling can support emotional health. Through acting, they explored how to express and understand different emotions in a safe and creative way. They learned how lighting can set the mood, how body language and facial expressions bring characters to life, and how setting the stage helps tell a powerful story. By stepping into different roles, students built empathy, confidence, and emotional awareness, all while having fun in the spotlight.



LOOKING AT ART

Healthy Living School explored different public art pieces and how they fit in with the community. We looked at pieces like "The Nest" at Seton, "Convergence" and "The Flock" at Rocky Ridge.



Philanthropy



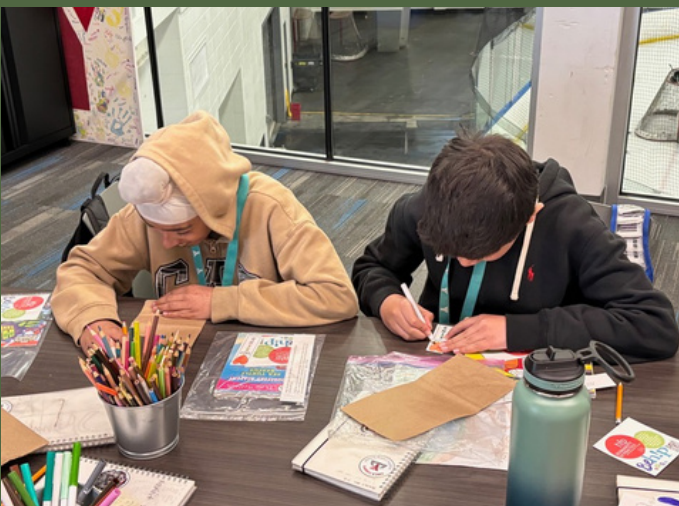
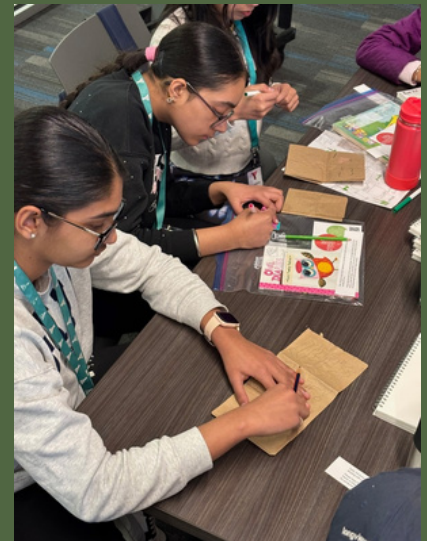
Backpacks

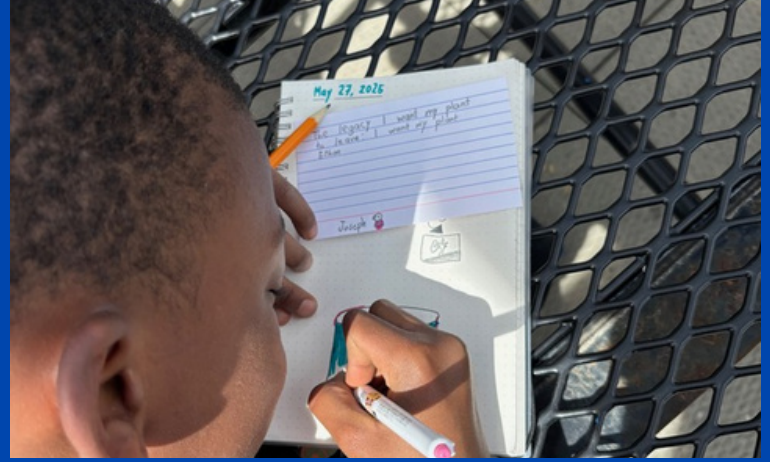
The grade 5 class from Citadel Park school came together to make a big difference in the lives of other students. With backpacks generously donated by YMCA members and school supplies provided by Gate Gourmet, the students packed a total of 102 backpacks. Each one filled with essentials like pencil crayons, pencils, pencil cases, notebooks, binders, crayons, a calculator, pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, and a handwritten note of encouragement. The completed backpacks were donated to Stephen's Backpack Society and will go to students in need across the community. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed and supported this meaningful project.



Book Drops

The grade 7 class from Ian Bazalgette talked about how they school can be a place for everyone. We talked about what makes a community inclusive and how they can contribute to the community. Healthy Living School partnered with Humanity in Practice to make a Book Drop where pack a bag with a book, a decorated bookmark and a poetry bomb (which is a quote or short verse that they hid in one of the pages in the book). These book bags are then dropped off to anywhere the student thinks would be a fun/cool spot for someone to find!

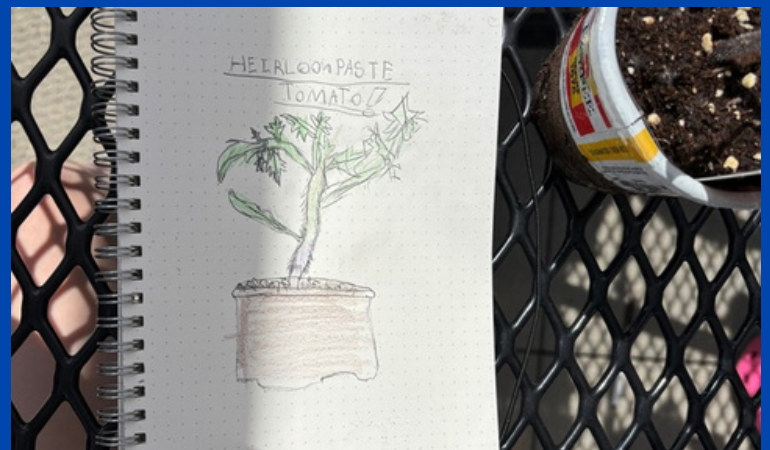




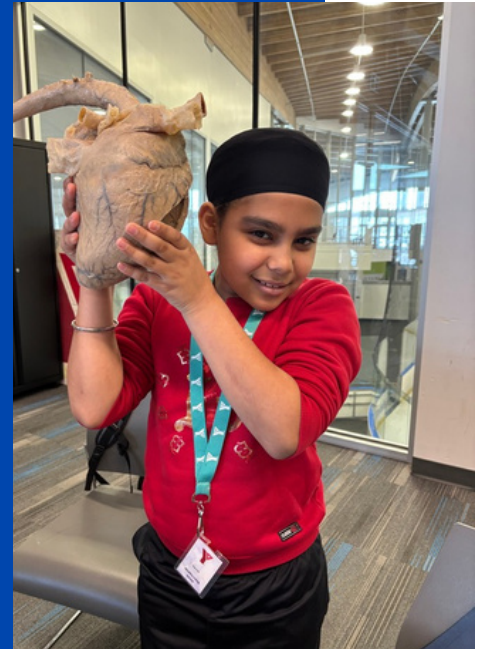
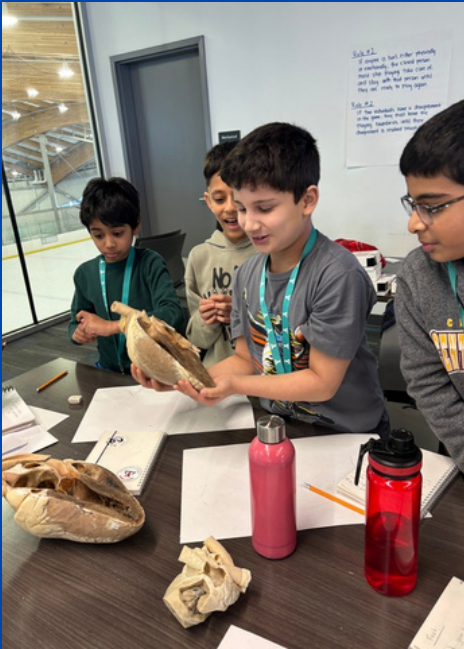
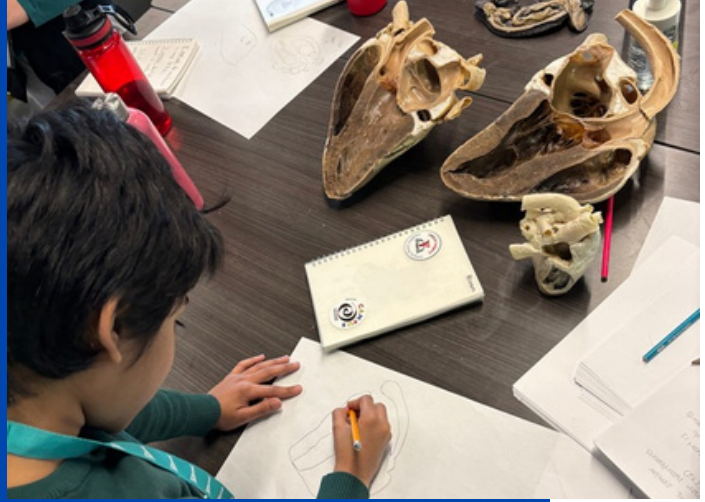
LEGACY

The Grade 3/4 class from Cambrian Heights School explored how to create a meaningful legacy in their community. With guidance from the Healthy Living School Supervisor, they successfully applied for the Strategic Initiatives Grant, provided by YMCA Calgary, to upgrade the community garden at Shane Homes YMCA. As part of the process, students wrote letters to the grant committee, expressing how the garden would support community well-being and help them learn about lasting impact.

In May and June, they partnered with the neighboring LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) class to bring the project to life. Students worked together across age and language backgrounds, planting, learning, and caring for the garden. Through this hands-on experience, they grew both a vibrant community space and a deeper understanding of legacy and connection.



HEARTS



The grade 4 students from Grant MacEwan explored the theme of legacy by looking at how knowledge from the past can influence the future. One highlight of the experience was a visit from a representative of the University of Calgary's Veterinary School, who brought a collection of preserved animal hearts for students to examine. This hands-on opportunity sparked curiosity and conversation as students compared the size, structure, and function of hearts from different species. They explored why some animals have faster or slower heart rates, and how factors like body size, environment, and activity levels play a role. By looking closely at these differences, students began to understand how science helps us learn from the past to care for living things today, and how they, too, can leave a meaningful impact through learning and discovery.



Traditional Games

Two classes from Citadel Park School explored their big question through Traditional Indigenous Games. Teigan, Ibssa, and Dakota from the Indigenous Team visited the classes and taught students how to play Double Ball, Ring the Pin, and Hoop and Arrow. Students learned how these games were traditionally used to help young Indigenous youth, particularly boys, develop important skills for hunting, agility, and survival.



Yoga

HEALTH & FITNESS

Through health and fitness classes, students had the opportunity to build healthy habits and learn how to care for their bodies and minds. From strength training and cardio to mindfulness and stretching, students explored different ways to stay active, reduce stress, and understand the importance of lifelong wellness. These sessions helped students gain confidence in movement and make meaningful connections between physical activity and overall health.



Group Fight Fitness Class



Physical Health



Students had the chance to learn from community experts and explore how physical health can be fun and engaging through a variety of activities. Whether it was their first time trying pickleball, skating, or rock climbing, or they were building on skills in basketball and esports, each experience supported movement, confidence, and connection in a new way. Even in esports, students explored the importance of posture, reaction time, and balance between screen time and physical activity as part of overall well-being.



Connecting with Community Experts

Students from Queen Elizabeth Elementary explored how stories teach and connect us. They met Nick Wiggins, VP of Operations, and Barney, the future Service Dog, and reflected on how Barney's training relates to building their own stamina and perseverance.



Students from St. Joseph connecting with Health and Safety to learn about what to do and how they can help in an emergency situation.

Grade 5 students connecting artists from YMCA Arts Programs in partnership with Silvera for Seniors

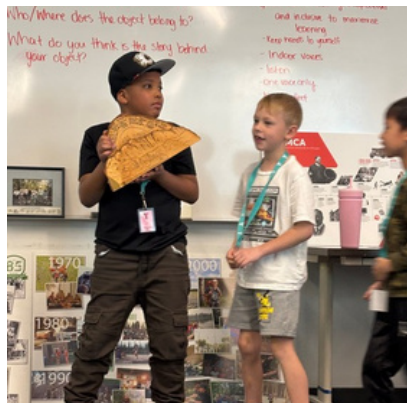


Grade 3 students from McKenzie Lake School connecting with the local fire station and learning about fire safety and how they help the community.

Learning about Camp



Grade 2/3 students from Queen Elizabeth explored artifacts from Camp Chief Hector and learned about the camp's history at the YMCA. After examining each item, they imagined and created their own stories about what the artifacts were and what they might have meant.



They also had the chance to play a classic Camp Chief Hector game called The Animal Game led by a Camp Chief Hector alumni counsellor



Message from a Teacher



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I'm writing to briefly share the incredible story of one of my Grade 5 students, Theo Begin, for two reasons. I hope to highlight the impact the YMCA and Healthy Living School has had on his life.

Theo is a Grade 5 student at Citadel Park School who I have known since teaching him in Grade 3. He loves animals, technology, and his friends. Theo is also an exceptional young man who lives with Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Despite the challenges inherent to his diagnosis, he has achieved remarkable feats including recently setting a world record for frisbee throwing through the World Flying Disc Federation. His positivity, determination, and infectious sense of humor inspire everyone around him daily.

Theo's recent visit to the YMCA was a transformative experience. Not only was Theo able to explore activities that would never, under normal circumstances, be available to him (like photography, ice skating, and Zumba), Theo's time at Healthy Living School meant he got to walk again. To be more specific, Healthy Living School gave Theo access to a pool. Swimming is one of the few times Theo can walk under his own power due to his diagnosis and, with the help of the dedicated YMCA staff, he was able to stand and move freely without his wheelchair. This moment meant the world to him, his friends at school, and the entire Citadel Park School staff. Moreover, it highlighted the life-changing impact your facilities and employees have on the lives of our students.

Thank you for this incredible experience. It truly had been a gift that keeps on giving for an extraordinary young person who inspires us all.

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A few words from teachers, students, and parent volunteers

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It was impactful to learn all the things the YMCA supports in the community and what needs are there. This experience provides different perspectives to learn and grow from.
~grade 2/3 parent volunteer, Queen Elizabeth Elementary

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My child came home each day eager to share about her day at Healthy Living School. Generally my child does not say too much during a "regular" school week, however she was very excited about healthy living school week.
~Grade 4 Parent Volunteer, St. Jerome

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I loved the drama experience and how it helped the kids connect with emotional wellbeing and expression.
~Parent Volunteer, Queen Elizabeth

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I was resourced with many fun and engaging activities that are easy to apply back in our classroom! My students loved activities such as sticker making, which can be applied to various areas of study as a review tactic. We have also been provided with calming jars which we plan to use throughout the school year for students to regulate with. We were given the opportunity to engage with the medicine wheel and various words to reflect how we engaged with that component. I learned about the diversity available at the YMCA, and how much variation there is in the facility. I was unaware of the arts aspects, crafting and library connections. I saw my students engage in a wide variety of activities which all were willing to engage in and found joy in! We built a tool box of activities as well as ways of thinking which we can apply to our daily life!
~Grade 5/6 teacher, Wilma Hansen

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A few words from teachers, students, and parent volunteers

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I was surprised that I could do a really good serve in pickleball! Something that surprised me is ME actually ice skating for the first time!

~Grade 4 Student, St. Jerome

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My favorite activity at HLS was everything! I really enjoyed this time studying at YMCA. Everything is very fun!!!

~Grade 5 student, Citadel Park

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It was nostalgic, Reminding me about all my field trips through the years. This is my best school year yet and it had a good field trip to end the year. YMCA IS SO FUN!

~Grade 3/4 student, Cambrian Heights

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We learned how to connect kindness, calmness, control, determination and discomfort to the medicine wheel.

~grade 5/6 student, Wilma Hansen

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It was the best place I've been to so far. We got to do lots and lots of activities, and that I was able to do things that I have never done before. ~Grade 4 student, Grant MacEwan

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My overall experience at Healthy Living School was great, it helped me overcome challenges.

~Grade 5 student, Citadel Park

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The Healthy Living School Experience

How can we help our young people belong, grow, thrive, and lead in the community while choosing to live healthy & active lives?

Healthy Living School, at YMCA Calgary, focuses on the many ways that making healthy choices contribute to a vibrant community. Through a holistic approach to well-being, teachers and students learn that living a healthy life goes beyond good nutrition and regular exercise. It's about being a positive role model and building strong social connections in the community.

Healthy Living School gives students and teachers an opportunity to discover more about themselves by embracing new experiences. Activities like visual arts, dance, drama, climbing, sports, fitness, skating, and swimming help enhance experiential learning.

Every Healthy Living School experience is uniquely designed to explore a year-long inquiry about health and wellness. Ideas include:

- What does living a healthy and active life mean to you?
- How are we all connected to our community?
- How do we inspire others to live healthy and active lives?
- What role does our community play in supporting healthy choices?
- How can we become champions of health and wellness?
- How do choices we make today inspire a healthy future?



About YMCA Calgary

Ever since its inception in 1902, YMCA Calgary has been a hard working charitable organization that responds to the needs of Calgarians. YMCA Calgary has evolved into a vibrant charity where thousands of Calgarians are involved each year through health and wellness programs, leadership, and community outreach programs, child care, and day and overnight camps.

Guided by four core values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility, YMCA Calgary strives to offer quality programs and services that give children, youth and adults the opportunity to belong, grow, thrive and lead.

YMCA Calgary has seven health and wellness facilities, seven child development centres with licensed child care, two outdoor camp sites and over 60 community program sites serving all quadrants of the city. These spaces and programs allow YMCA Calgary to deliver programs, services and opportunities to help the Calgary community connect with others, build life-long skills, and keep active and healthy.