

York West Active Living Centre Executive Director and President's Report
For the year ending March 31st, 2013

Exciting steps are being taken to improve our Centre. The Board of Directors along with senior management developed a 2013-2016 strategic plan facilitated by Chris Govern, an outside consultant with Management Advisory Services, at no cost to the Centre. To ensure that we were capturing a true understanding of how the Centre was viewed by others, the process saw a number of members participate in focus groups held at the Centre, one to one individual interviews and key community informant interviews. Chris facilitated these sessions allowing these groups of individuals to speak freely about their experience at the Centre. From that process, 6 attainable deliverables have been identified as the working goals for the plan.

They are:

- 1. We will ensure our programs meet the needs of our members .**
- 2. We will increase our revenue and improve the stability of our funding.**
- 3. We will increase and diversify our membership.**
- 4. We will develop marketing strategies to increase membership and revenue.**
- 5. We will maintain our current infrastructure with flexibility to enhance as needed.**
- 6. We will reenergize and build more effective partnerships and community relations.**

Some accomplishments have already been made! The Board and staff are hard at work on these goals as shown by the evidence of new programs such as Nordic Pole Walking, Bollywood Fitness, Get Up and Go Men's Fitness and Balls, Bars and Balance. Staff submitted funding proposals to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport for our men's program, submitted (and received in May 2013) funding from Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Summer Experience Program for a marketing summer student position and requested (and received in May 2013) additional funds from the City of Toronto for a new program stream. We have secured our lease with Toronto Community Housing for another 10 years and will continue to build our relationship with Toronto Community Housing Corporation. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Keep your eyes open for many new and exciting opportunities coming our way!

For the first time, YWALC took on the Toronto Challenge. In total, 23 walkers laced up their shoes and participated in the 1k or 5k walk to raise money for the Centre. All funds raised went directly to the Centre to purchase new fitness equipment, new chairs and turbo fans. A grand total of \$5165.00 was raised. Thank you to all who participated as well as those who supported the walkers. We received a one time, Special Grant from the Ministry of Health to purchase new office furniture and the new reception area. To support Centro Esperanza, funding was received from the New Horizons for Seniors program for Latinos Amigos: Vive, Rie, Aprende! (Latin friends: live, laugh, learn!). The goal of the this project was to overcome the social challenges that contributed to the isolation of Spanish speaking elders in our community, increase motivation to participate in interactive programs, raise awareness in the mainstream community of the cultural heritage of our target group, raise awareness of the benefits to mental and physical health through social interaction and increase the diversity of our volunteer enrollment. The project surpassed its goals. We now have an active group of Spanish speaking members who are thoroughly enjoying what the Centre has to offer as well as giving back to the Centre in a variety of volunteer capacities. Building on the success of the Latino Amigos project, on March 19th we hosted the first ever Spanish speaking OACAO Active Living Fair. At the fair, we had 21 exhibitors and 146 participants. The day was a huge success. On hand we had representatives from the OACAO and the Ontario Senior Secretariat (the 2 organizations who funded the fair). They were extremely happy with the turnout and the organization of the whole fair. In June 2012, we submitted a New Horizons for Seniors grant to cover the following capital expense items: repaint the entire Centre, purchase and install heaters for the games room and the Maggie Knap room, purchase a new phone system for the office with additional lines, purchase a new shuffleboard court and fitness equipment. We are happy to report that in March 2013, we received the news that the proposal was approved! These grants allowed the organization to put funds into (capital) infrastructure that we could not have managed to do with only the recurring core funding from the three levels of government.

One of our most memorable moments last year was when we saw Maggie Knap, Executive Director of 14 years, retire and join us on the fun side as a member.

YWALC could not ask for a better group of volunteers. Our success as an organization rests squarely on the shoulders of our dedicated volunteers. We ask a lot from them and they rarely say no. They give their time and support freely and happily. It is our volunteers and members that create the warm and welcoming atmosphere that people visiting for the first time mention when they arrive. We thank you for your continuing support.

You know how much fun you have at the Centre so why not share that with others! Did you know that word of mouth is by far the highest compliment we can receive as an organization? It's true! So we encourage you all to spread the good news about us. We are very grateful for your appreciation and continued support. Thank you.

Joan Bonk MacKenzie
President

Suzanne Teixeira
Executive Director