



YMCA of Greater Toronto Establishes GTA's First Model Community in West Don Lands

The charity partners with Waterfront Toronto, Infrastructure Ontario and the Province of Ontario to create an 82,000 sq. ft. Centre of Community to serve young families, low-income groups, visible minorities and immigrants

Toronto, Ontario May 29, 2013 – The YMCA of Greater Toronto today celebrated two major milestones in the charity's 10-year expansion plan to fight childhood obesity, provide quality child care, and boost youth education and employment in communities across the GTA.

YMCA of Greater Toronto partners, major donors, supporters and board members, and representatives from the West Don Lands community today witnessed the “*topping off*” of the new YMCA on Cherry Street, currently under construction as part of the CIBC Pan Am/Parapan Am Athletes' Village. “*Topping off*” is a significant construction milestone that signifies a building has reached its highest point.

The new development allows the YMCA of Greater Toronto and partners to build a model community from the ground up to meet the immediate and growing needs of this area.

The new 82,000 square foot YMCA Centre of Community will serve a diverse neighbourhood comprised of young families (30%), visible minorities (41%), immigrants (34%) and low-income groups (16%), as well as George Brown College students. The population of this community is expected to grow 13.5% by 2020.

The second milestone is the generous private donation from Krystal Koo and Michael Cooper, long-time Toronto philanthropists. Their gift of \$2-million is a significant contribution toward the progress of the YMCA [*Strong Start, Great Future*](#) fundraising campaign. The new centre will be named Cooper Koo Family YMCA in honour of their family's dedication to building healthy communities in Toronto.

Built to LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) green building standards, the new YMCA facility will offer youth and community activities, a gymnasium, swimming pool, and fitness studios and exercise areas. It will also include an accessible green roof to create an additional 11,000 square feet of healthy outdoor space. The Centre of Community will provide

services and programs immediately to support more than 8,000 people with the potential for future program expansion.

The new YMCA Centre of Community on Cherry Street is part of the charity's expansion strategy, announced in January this year in a related [news release](#).

For additional announcement and on-site photos please visit:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ymcagta/collections/>

Quotes

“At the YMCA of Greater Toronto, we believe if we give kids the chance for a Strong Start, they are on the path to a Great Future – and all communities across the GTA will benefit. The development of the Cooper Koo Family YMCA brings us one step closer to our vision of bringing 10 new Centres of Community and much needed services to diverse neighbourhoods in the GTA.” Tim Penner, Vice Chair, YMCA of Greater Toronto

“The future of Toronto depends on our collective effort to ensure that everyone in our city feels they belong here and can have an opportunity to succeed. The YMCA is giving people this opportunity and my family is honoured to help build a new model community from the ground up.” Krystal Koo, major donor, Strong Start, Great Future fundraising campaign

“The inclusion of the YMCA in the CIBC Pan Am/Parapan Am Athletes' Village will be a lasting legacy that will not only provide athletes with an excellent training centre at Games-time, it will also provide much-needed access to health and fitness activities for the diverse communities it will serve thereafter. This, along with the Village's transformation into a vibrant, sustainable, mixed-use neighbourhood post-Games, furthers the province's vision to help build strong, healthy communities across Ontario. Michael Chan, Minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan American Games

About the YMCA of Greater Toronto

For well over a century we've provided leadership and worked with partners solving complex social problems to create real, measurable outcomes that have strengthened the social health and fabric of communities. As a charity, the YMCA offers a variety of programs responding to the needs of the community, including education and training, employment and immigrant services, family and youth services, health and fitness programs, child care and camps. Serving the population of the GTA, Durham, Peel, York, Halton Regions and Dufferin County, last year the YMCA connected with more than 489,000 people across 334 locations. www.ymcagta.org/StrongStartGreatFuture

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