



YMCA-YWCA of Guelph
For Immediate Release

Rest Along the Way

YMCA-YWCA of Guelph providing long-haul truck driver's a safe stop along their routes

Guelph, ON – April 20, 2020 – For almost 150 years, the YMCA-YWCA of Guelph has sought to respond to community needs. While many of our services and programs are similar across the province, nation, and even world, COVID-19 is changing this, as each organization is looking for the most appropriate way to respond to needs and serve our communities.

“The Guelph Y is not alone in this,” says Geoff Vogt, CEO. “The nation-wide response to COVID-19 has left everyone reconsidering ‘normal,’ especially in terms of work. For us, it means working from home and offering a variety of services and programs online. And, starting today, it also means becoming a safe space to stop and practice hygiene for long haul truck drivers.”

Working in collaboration with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, the Guelph Y is opening its doors daily from 7:00 – 10:00 am to provide these front-line service providers a safe space to use the bathroom and shower.

“Hearing that rest stops were closed to them and knowing we’re such a short distance from the 401 – with both east-bound and west-bound exists, it made sense to us. We’re relying on truck drivers to deliver our essential services; this is our way of providing them access to a clean and accessible space to take care of themselves as they work to provide for us.”

To ensure the health and well-being of Guelph Y staff and the drivers themselves, numerous protocols are in place. These include self-screening (drivers need to be symptom free), increased hand sanitizing stations and drivers having to call the Y to be let in, with no more than 15 drivers allowed in the facility at one time. Only a limited number of showers and bathrooms will be open, and there will be increased cleaning procedures followed.

“As a charity with a service mindset, the Y has a legacy of responding to community needs,” says Vogt. “Our Y has the facilities and the ability to meet the need of this particular group. It just makes sense that we would do so.”

This is just one way the Guelph Y is responding to community needs in the new COVID-19 reality. Last week they announced partnering with the Wellington Catholic District School Board to deliver a YGym program, and at the start of the provincial shutdown they worked with regional YMCAs to launch a ThisIsY.ca – free, virtual programming, and services for individuals of all ages and abilities.

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About the YMCA-YWCA of Guelph

The Y is more than just a gym, pool, child care or camp. We are Guelph's wellness leader. Our programs support the Guelph community in countless ways. We believe in the benefits of community spaces, reducing isolation, increasing community connections and overall health. We are a leading authority in child care, child development and family wellbeing. We are specialists in recreation and aquatics program delivery. We offer memberships geared to all income levels to ensure all members of the community have access to quality, high-impact programs within our facilities or wherever the Y is. This adds up to a nearly \$500,000 investment each year to make sure everyone who wants it has a place at the Y.