



Frequently Asked Questions (F.A.Q.)

Can't find what you are looking for? Please call our customer service desk at 905-522-YWCA.

What is the YWCA Hamilton's Mission Statement?

YWCA Hamilton is a women-led, service organization supporting individuals through health and wellness programs for women, families, seniors and people with special needs. We advocate for the improved status of women locally and through our affiliation with **YWCA** Canada and the World **YWCA**.

What is the YWCA Hamilton's Vision?

YWCA Hamilton: The leading women's organization serving and empowering women to participate in the community.

What are the YWCA Hamilton's Values?

Respect: We honour and embrace all people.

Empowerment: We appreciate the abilities of each individual and encourage them to reach their potential.

Service: We provide quality programs and services responding to community needs.

Leadership: We advance the women's perspective through engaging the community.

Stewardship: We manage and grow the organization in a responsible and sustainable way.

How is the YWCA Hamilton related to other YWCAs?

We are linked to other **YWCA**'s across Canada and around the world. But even though our network extends globally, we think locally and operate autonomously. That way we can serve you better. Most of our programs and activities are developed to meet demands that are specific to our community.

What is the difference between YWCA and the YMCA – aren't they the same organization?

We might have similar names but we are separate entities. We have different boards, CEOs, employees, objectives, mission statements, and budgets, different mandates and different histories. For over 100 years, both **YWCA** Hamilton and the YMCA have served our Hamilton community. Both organizations are entirely separate and distinct - both share a unique place in the City of Hamilton. In some cases, usually in smaller communities, the two organizations have joined together (YM-**YWCA**), to better serve the community.

The **YWCA** is one of the world's oldest and largest women's organization in the world. Our own **YWCA** Hamilton was founded in 1895 by Adelaide Hoodless. **Empowering Women, Building Community, Changing Lives** remains the focus of all that we do in the community. It is reflected in the hundreds of programs and services that are offered year round for men, women and children of all ages and diverse cultures, the developmentally disabled, seniors, women in poverty and the homeless.

Why are you called the Young Women's Christian Association?

The name goes back 100 years to our creation. Our founders were dedicated Christian women who were concerned about the living conditions and salvation of young women in their community.

Today, we have a much broader focus. While we still strive to be at the forefront of social change, we also offer a wide variety of programs and services to help **women and their families** improve many aspects of their lives. We keep the name because it's part of our heritage. It also has to do with brand recognition: If you're in a foreign country and need some assistance, you'll know the **YWCA** is the place to go! Today, the **YWCA** stands for inclusion and support no matter where you are or who you are. Our membership is as diverse as the community we serve. We work with everyone, regardless of race, religion, age or gender.

What are the benefits of a YWCA membership?

Membership in the **YWCA** signals a person's support for what the **YWCA** stands for — an organization of women working on behalf of women. It stands for someone who believes in the **YWCA**'s mission, vision and values. A **YWCA** membership is not only local, but a national and international women's association. We are 25 million-strong represented in over 90 countries around the world. Your membership is a yearly commitment to help the **YWCA** serve the more than 300,000 adults and children in our community that benefit from our services each year. With your membership, you gain access to all the programs and services the **YWCA** provides at special membership rates. You can take part in the governance of the association if you are female and over the age of 16 with a vote at our Annual General Meeting. You receive our Quarterly Program Guide and newsletter (The **YWCA** Difference), and mailings regarding **YWCA** events and activities. Membership ensures that you are on our mailing list and considered a supporter of our mission, and your community.

How much is a YWCA membership?

Adults: \$25/year (+GST)

Seniors over 55: \$25/year (+GST)

Youth under 16: \$15/year

How do I become a YWCA member?

We welcome you to join our association. Please call 905-522-9922 or drop in to any **YWCA** Hamilton branch to purchase your **YWCA** membership.

Do you accept memberships from other Y's?

Yes, anyone with a valid YWCA membership from anywhere in Canada is entitled to use our facilities (at the same or comparable membership level) as a guest. Just fill out a Par-Q form at front desk and we'll have a staff member meet and greet you and give you a tour of the facilities to orient you to our building(s). We do not however, honour YMCA memberships as we are two separate organizations.

Are YWCA programs and services just for women?

No, not at all. All kinds of people can use our services and programs. We have something for everyone, whether you're young or old, male or female. We have both a women's only fitness centre downtown and a co-ed fitness centre at Ottawa Street. We offer child care, youth and leadership development programs, career services, seniors programs, services for developmentally handicapped adults, counseling and support services – just to name a few. The YWCA is accessible to everyone in our community.

How is YWCA Hamilton funded?

The largest source of funding, 27%, is program and client fees through fee for service.

Government Purchase of Service agreements from the Province and the City of Hamilton provide 49% of the YWCA's revenue. This includes Child Care subsidies, senior centre funding, employment grants, funds for our programs for developmentally disabled adults and pay equity. Membership Fees account for 1 to 9% of revenue.

Residence fees, food services and facility rentals make up 12.4% of the YWCA's budget. Donations from YWCA supporters account for the final 3% of our annual revenue.

Does the YWCA receive funding from the United Way?

Yes. The funds are allocated according to the priorities of the United Way and the community. These services include programs offered to children, youth and women and their families in our community. Programs and services at the MacNab Street and Ottawa Street facilities focus on nurturing children and youth, providing a safe environment, supporting families, and finding solutions to strengthen our community.

In each case, United Way support allows YWCA Hamilton to provide financial assistance in order to keep program costs affordable for those that might not otherwise be able to participate.

Why do you charge money for many of your services when many people can't afford it?

We charge reasonable rates for the services we provide. But if you can't afford to pay, you will not be left out in the cold. You can apply for full or partial subsidy for any of our programs and services, including our fitness facilities and child care.

How can I apply for membership assistance?

Pick up a copy of our Membership Assistance brochure from either branch of the YWCA for detailed instructions on the application process.

Where are the YWCA facilities located?

MacNab Street YWCA - 75 MacNab St. South (corner Jackson & MacNab)

Ottawa Street Community YWCA – 52 Ottawa St. North (corner Ottawa & Dunsmore)

West Mountain Community YWCA – **Construction to start 2006.**

How can I become a volunteer?

Volunteers are the backbone of our many program and services and enable us to continue to provide much needed community services. Steps:

- Pick up a volunteer profile at either branch of YWCA Hamilton and submit it to YWCA by mail, fax or in person.
- Participate in a two-stage interview which will be arranged upon receipt of your volunteer profile form and pending the availability of a volunteer assignment.
- Confirmation of volunteer selection is completed once the references are checked. Some positions require police clearance.
- Participate in an orientation session.
- Upon completion you are matched with a volunteer assignment (pending the availability of the volunteer position).

To find out more call our volunteer coordinator at 905-522-9922.

Are there opportunities to volunteer during school break?

Yes, the YWCA offers many programs for children during PD days, March Break, the Holiday Break, and of course at Summer Camp during the summer holidays. In addition, the YWCA hosts Breakfast with Santa and a Halloween Activity that utilizes the skills and the assistance of volunteers.

Can I complete my 40-hour volunteer placement with the YWCA?

Of course, we would be pleased to introduce the YWCA to you through a 40-hour placement. We can even help you identify volunteer opportunities which will build on your assets and customize a volunteer assignment especially for you.

Pick up a copy of **The Future is Yours** at either branch of the YWCA or at your high school. This volunteer youth journal will help you log your volunteer activity.

Is it true that there are people living at the YWCA?

YWCA Hamilton opened in 1889 as an 8 room residence for young women providing education, care and support. Today, with over 113 years of experience and the generous support of the community, the YWCA has emerged as a leader in providing safe, affordable housing for women of all ages. We have 65 rooms in our MacNab Street building made available to women for emergency, short and long-term housing. In the last 10 years, over 1100 women have called the YWCA home.

Do I need a YWCA membership to register for programs?

Not necessarily, but it makes the most sense. All of the pricing you see in our program guide is based on the purchase of an annual YWCA membership (only \$25 adults, \$15 for seniors and youth). If you would prefer not to purchase a YWCA membership, but still want to register for one of our great programs, you are more than welcome. For non-members, a surcharge of \$25 per adult per program and \$15 per child per program will be added to the price upon registration.

How do I register for a YWCA program?

Registration is accepted between the hours of 8:00 am - 8:00 pm Monday- Friday, and Saturday 8:00am – 5:00pm. There are several options for registration:

- You can drop by any branch of the YWCA to fill out a registration form.
- **Call us at 905-522-9922** and we'll get you registered right away.
- Tear out the registration form in the YWCA program guide and fax or mail it in.
Fax: 905-522-1870
Mail: YWCA Hamilton, 75 MacNab St. South, Hamilton ON L8P 3C1
- Visit our website at www.ywcahamilton.org to print and fax our online registration form.

What if I want to cancel my program?

YWCA memberships, packages and program fees are not refundable or transferable and may not be cancelled, with the exception of a medical reason. If something happens that prevents you from completing a program, notify us immediately and we will provide a credit voucher equivalent to the remainder of the program for future use. (A \$15 administration fee applies to all credit notes/refunds)

What if I want to workout or swim and I have a small child?

YWCA KidCare services are readily available for parents using the YWCA facilities. Drop-in babysitting is available Monday through Friday from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the MacNab St. branch. Your child will experience a wide range of activities such as games, art, stories and songs. Parents must stay on the YWCA premises.

I know the YW does preschool... what programs do you have for my school age child?

Summer Day Camps, after school programs, gymnastics, youth training, karate, leadership development, aquatics progression, creative crafts and dance programs are just a sampling of the vast array of programs we offer for children of all ages. Our YWCA Program Guide best describes all of the programs and services we offer.

Does the YWCA have programs for adults over 55?

Of course we do! In addition to our traditional program offering at the YWCA, we have two Seniors Active Living Centres that are run by the YWCA with the support of the City of Hamilton. Both centres cater to the needs of active adults over 55. Fitness, wellness, dance, social programs, education, outreach, and volunteering are just some of the program areas offered to members. Visit one of our Seniors Active Living Centres today to pick up a copy of the program guide or call 905-529-7727 (MacNab St.) or 905-545-7470 (Ottawa St).

Do YWCA branches have space available for room rentals?

Yes, you may rent out space at your local YWCA for: wedding receptions, meetings, dinner parties, social events, workshops, birthday parties, church meetings, and pool parties. To ask about room rentals call 905-522-9922.

Can I get something to eat at the YWCA?

Yes. We have a wonderful restaurant at our MacNab Street Branch called the Pool Side Café. It's open for breakfast, lunch and early dinner and customized catering service is also available. After the café closes, snacks and refreshments are available from vending machines and the tuck shop at front desk (available at both branches).

The YWCA has group homes and day programs for developmentally disabled adults. How can I get my son/daughter involved?

CONTACT Hamilton is the central intake for placing all individuals with developmental disabilities in programs within the Hamilton community. They can be reached at 905-570-8888.

Can I swim without a lifeguard present?

No, for safety and legal reasons we are not permitted to be open to the public without a lifeguard on the deck.

I want to get more frequent information about YWCA programs and events. Can I sign up for email news?

YES. We have a monthly electronic newsletter (YWCA Newsbrief) and we would be happy to include you in our mailings. Just send an email to npaterson@ywcahamilton.org (use @ in place of **at**) to request your email address be added to our distribution.