

September 16, 2025

A Message from the Chair of the Board of the YMCA of Northern Alberta



The CEO Selection Committee and our Board of Directors are pleased to announce the appointment of Katherine O'Neill to the position of President and CEO of the YMCA of Northern Alberta. Katherine will be taking the helm from Nick Parkinson, who is retiring following a successful career at the YMCA.

For the past five years as the CEO of YWCA Edmonton, Katherine demonstrated her motivation for mission-driven work and a passion for creating safe, strong, and inclusive communities. She successfully led the organization through an organizational reset, balanced budgets, and significantly improved fundraising efforts, which included partnership efforts, program standards, and the ongoing capital renewal of its historic social enterprise (Camp Yowochas) to a thriving charity, supporting 10,000 women and families through counselling, disability services, youth programming, and outdoor education.

Katherine's background as a Globe and Mail journalist, including covering the war in Afghanistan, instilled in her a deep commitment to public service and community building, values that align perfectly with the YMCA's mission, vision, and values.

Katherine holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wilfrid Laurier University and a Master of Journalism from Carleton University. In 2022, Katherine was awarded Alberta's Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal in recognition of her significant contributions to community.

Katherine also brings vast community engagement to the YMCA as she has led and volunteered with several not-for-profit boards and committees, including organizations with a focus on early childhood education, literacy, and disability services. She currently serves on the International Women's Forum Edmonton board, Real Talk Editorial Board, and Canadian Vote Summit's Advisory Committee.

"I am incredibly excited to welcome Katherine as the next President and CEO of the YMCA of Northern Alberta," said Jeremy Herbert, Board Chair, YMCA of Northern Alberta. "This is pivotal time for both our organization and the communities that we serve. Katherine's extensive experience and passion for connecting and building community will enable us to build upon our 118-year legacy of igniting people's potential across the communities of central and northern Alberta".

"I'm humbled and honoured to step into this role and continue the YMCA's powerful legacy of building stronger, healthier communities in Northern Alberta," said O'Neill. "Many hands over many years have helped build this incredible 118-year-old organization, and I look forward to working with the Y's passionate staff, volunteers, and community partners to continue that vital work."

The Board of Directors extends their thanks to the members of the CEO Search Committee, led by Chair, Jeremy Herbert for their hard work during this process. Katherine will officially begin her new role on Monday, October 27, 2025.

Nick Parkinson and the Senior Leadership Team will develop and implement a plan to welcome and support Katherine's transition into her new role. Nick will continue transition support to Katherine through the end of the year.