

THE YMCA AND WALK OFF THE EARTH REIMAGINE THE Y.M.C.A. ANTHEM, FOCUSING ON MENTAL HEALTH**The musical collaboration introduces expanded access to the YMCA's free mental health program for younger Canadians, Y Mind**

Cobourg, Ontario – YMCA Canada and Canadian indie pop band Walk off the Earth released a modern take on the Y.M.C.A. anthem Monday, August 28th to raise awareness of expanded access to the free mental health program for Canadians aged 13 to 30 called Y Mind. Originally released in 1978, the hit song has brought crowds to the dance floor, with an enduring legacy internationally. The reimagined cover of the classic party anthem, performed in a more soulful and sincere tone, brings new light to the original lyrics through a mental health lens as the YMCA aims to highlight today's need for community and open dialogue surrounding mental health. Alongside the new musical arrangement, Walk off the Earth has also released an accompanying full-length music video now available on YouTube that you can [view here](#).

"We've seen how music is so connected to emotions – for us and our fans – so we were honoured to take on the challenge of reinventing such an iconic song and give new meaning to its enduring lyrics," says Sarah Blackwood, lead singer of Walk off the Earth. "When we took a look at the original lyrics, it was staggering how a message about the YMCA from 45 years ago is just as relevant and pointed today - but now we're sharing that message with a focus on mental health tied to Y Mind."

This collaboration brings awareness to the next era at YMCA Northumberland. Through YMCA Canada's Y Mind, we have expanded our broad range of programming to offer free virtual mental health services and better support the changing needs of our community.

Y Mind is an innovative early intervention mental health program that helps teens (ages 13-18) and young adults (ages 18-30) cope with stress and anxiety with the support of health professionals. The seven-week program is available online for those in Northumberland County. The Y Mind program is offered completely free of charge thanks to support and funding by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

"We are proud to offer the Y Mind program here in Northumberland. The amount of stressors faced today can seem overwhelming, including the post-pandemic experience, school, and social media pressures. We recognize that cost is often one of the biggest barriers for those in need of mental wellness programs. Y Mind removes that barrier for those aged 13-30 so they can get the help they need," said Eunice Kirkpatrick, CEO, YMCA Northumberland.

"Mental health is health, and everyone, including Juno Award winners, like Walk off the Earth, are opening up and having conversations about their mental health. The music lets young people know that it's okay to not be okay and that there is help available through YMCA's Y Mind program. Our government continues to be very supportive of this initiative," says The Honourable Ya'ara Saks, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health.

The Y Mind program comes at a time when young people's stress and anxiety levels remain at an all-time high. According to a survey conducted in 2023 by Deloitte, close to half of Gen Zs (46%) and four in 10 Millennials (39%) report feeling stressed or anxious all or most of the time.¹ Guided by qualified mental healthcare professionals, participants in the Y Mind program have reported reduced anxiety, improved well-being, and reduced feelings of isolation.

To learn more about the Y Mind program, visit www.ymca.ca/ymind.

About Y Mind: Y Mind was first developed by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver (now YMCA BC) and has been offered across British Columbia since 2018 thanks to financial support from the British Columbia government. Y Mind was born to meet the growing need for free, accessible mental health support. It quickly established itself as a pillar of support for the region’s youth, serving over 3,200 young people in 54 communities. Building on this momentum, the Y Mind program was extended across Canada, including Quebec with YMCA Libère ta tête, through the support of YMCA Canada and YMCA BC. Y Mind has now expanded across the country virtually and is currently being supported through the Public Health Agency of Canada’s investment Supporting the Mental Health of Those Most Affected By COVID-19.

About YMCA Northumberland: The YMCA Northumberland is a local organization dedicated to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility programs. With a steadfast commitment to making a positive impact, YMCA Northumberland continues to be a driving force in promoting well-being and fostering a sense of unity among residents of Northumberland County. As a charity, YMCA Northumberland provides vital community services that have a positive impact on pressing social issues—from chronic disease to unemployment, social isolation, poverty, inequality and more. The Strong Community Campaign helps countless children, teens, adults, and seniors in the community. Visit ymcanrt.org to learn more.

YMCA Canada is one of the longest standing and largest charities nationally, with a presence in Canada since 1851 and now serving more than 2.1 million people annually across 1,700 program locations.

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¹ <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/mt/Documents/about-deloitte/deloitte-2023-genz-millennial-survey-mental-health.pdf>