

## YMCA NORTHUMBERLAND HONOURS LOCAL PEACEMAKERS

Cobourg, ON –During the morning of Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, YMCA Northumberland celebrated the presence of peace in our communities and reflected on the creative peace-building work that happens all year, both inside and outside the YMCA. YMCA staff, Maggie Weaver and Mikaela Lavoy hosted the celebration.

The 2024 YMCA Peace Medal Breakfast Event, sponsored by Koellner Tax and Accounting Services and Cobourg Police Service, was held at the Best Western Plus Cobourg Inn and Convention Centre. This year marked the 36<sup>th</sup> year of YMCA Peace Medals being awarded in Northumberland County. Over that time, YMCA Northumberland has recognized and celebrated dozens of adults, groups and youth for their efforts to make lasting change within our community and our world without special recognition, means or resources.

"YMCA Northumberland recognizes that peace is not a passive state but an active commitment to building a better world," says Eunice Kirkpatrick, President and Chief Executive Officer, YMCA Northumberland. "The Peace Medal Breakfast celebrates remarkable individuals who exemplify this commitment, whether through volunteer work in our local community or on a global scale."

Dr. Beth Selby, YMCA Board Chair, emphasized that a peaceful community is not created through grand gestures alone but through the small, intentional acts of kindness we show each other every day. Angelina Steppacher, a Child Care Assistant for YMCA Northumberland and a beautifully talented musician set the tone with lovely performances. YMCA Board and Committee Members, Lynda Kay and Dan Bulger presented Adult Peace Medals. Ian Koellner, Owner of Koellner Tax and Accounting Services and long-time supporter of the breakfast introduced the two youth winners.

Ashley Crews (Adult Peace Medal Recipient): Through her compassion and resilience, Ashley has made an incredible impact on our community. From fostering animals and supporting local rescues to raising over \$110,000 for mental health and addiction recovery through the Ryan Huffman Foundation, her selflessness inspires and supports others. Ashley's dedication to helping both people and animals embodies the spirit of peace and positive change.

Kat Ross (Adult Peace Medal Recipient): Kat has spent her life uplifting both friends and strangers through education, resilience, and selfless service. From teaching in remote Northern communities to volunteering with Meals on Wheels, Community Care Northumberland, and the YMCA, Kat's commitment to helping those in need has touched countless lives. She goes out of her way to help anyone in need. Her humility, kindness, and dedication to her community embody the very essence of peace.

Katy Nguyen (Youth Peace Medal Recipient): Katy's dedication to helping others spans continents, from volunteering locally with Habitat for Humanity and environmental projects to teaching children in remote villages in Vietnam. Her kindness and passion for service inspire everyone around her.

Cammy Nguyen (Youth Peace Medal Recipient): As a leader at school and an active volunteer locally and in Vietnam, Cammy has devoted countless hours to uplifting others. Her compassion and commitment make a lasting impact wherever she goes.

Thanks also to Board Member, Elizabeth Vosburgh for introducing Reverend Dr. Karen Hamilton, who spoke on the three essential steps, Listen, Act, and Hope that can lead us on a path to peace. Through Hamilton's lived experience, she shared how these important but simple steps are particularly relevant in a world experiencing unrest and can help produce constructive dialogue and positive results.

This event was part of YMCA Northumberland's Annual Peace Week, which ran November 16-22, 2024.

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### **ABOUT YMCA NORTHUMBERLAND**

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. 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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