YMCA Northumberland
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MEDIA RELEASE

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Peacemakers Honoured at YMCA Northumberland's 38th Peace Breakfast

COBOURG, ON — On Thursday, November 19, 2026, YMCA Northumberland welcomed a packed house of local leaders, elected officials, police officers, high school students, Y staff and community members to the Best Western Plus Cobourg Inn & Convention Centre for its 38th Peace Medal Breakfast. Sponsored by Koellner Tax & Accounting Services, Cobourg Police Services and Port Hope Police Service, the morning celebrated individuals, groups, and youth who foster lasting impact in our world.

YMCA staff, Jillian Colbert and Noah Wright, opened the morning by highlighting hand-painted "stepping stones" on each table created by YMCA Child Care children. They were provided to guests as reminders that the journey toward peace often begins with simple steps that may seem insignificant but put together, create meaningful change

"At YMCA Northumberland, we believe in the power of people and the strength of community. Creating stronger and more peaceful communities isn't the responsibility of one organization, but belongs to all of us," said Eunice Kirkpatrick, President and Chief Executive Officer. *"Each of us has an opportunity to make a difference, and that is why today we celebrate those individuals whose self-less actions light the way and inspire us all to take our own steps forward."*

The event also featured the premiere of *Let Hope Shine*, a new philanthropic commercial created by a volunteer cast, crew and post-production team, in support of the YMCA's upcoming holiday giving campaign (See https://ymcanrt.org/donate).

Afterwards, Mark Galonski, YMCA Board Chair, addressed the crowd by emphasizing that peace is built when we work together with a shared purpose, a willingness to listen and a commitment to making our communities better for everyone. Board Directors Spencer Selhi, Lynda Kay, and Yvette McCartney then presented the 2026 Peace Medals.

- **Adult Peace Medal Recipient, Judi Sawyer:** From decades of caring for neighbors as a local nurse and leading fitness classes for seniors, to incredible volunteer work organizing holiday dinner donations through St. Mark's Church and providing compassionate palliative care at Ed's House, Sawyer has shown a lifelong commitment to uplifting others. She quietly and warmly leads by example to make Northumberland a kinder and more connected place.

- **Group Peace Medal Recipients, Fred and Collette Stegmayer:** The dynamic duo were honoured for their extraordinary 28-year leadership and operation of the Cobourg Terry Fox Run. Through nearly three decades of tireless dedication—including keeping the tradition alive through the pandemic—they have not only guided the local event toward raising nearly $1 million for cancer research, but their humility, warmth, and enduring commitment to community have inspired generations, proving that kindness and determination can unite an entire town in hope.

- **Youth Peace Medal Recipient, Valentina Santa Cecilia:** Since arriving in Canada from Brazil, Valentina has brought boundless energy and a steady calm to her school and community. Serving as Student Council President, leading the volleyball team, and volunteering with Town Hall initiatives, local sports groups, the Knights of Columbus, and her church, she consistently makes others feel valued and included.

Following award presentations, keynote speaker Liz Stone, First Nation Manager from Alderville First Nation, addressed the room on how the *Seven Grandfather Teachings* can guide the community toward hope, peace, and reconciliation. The morning closed with a powerful vocal and drumming performance by Aiden Gorveatt of the Alderville First Nation's Cultural Department.

The breakfast served as a highlight of YMCA Northumberland's Annual Peace Week, running November 16–21, 2026. The final event of the week, **"Shop for Peace,"** takes place on Saturday, November 21, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Ten Thousand Villages Cobourg where a portion of all proceeds supports the YMCA.

For more information, please contact:
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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.