



MEDIA RELEASE

NOV. 30, 2018 | 167-18

Laurier Brantford YMCA hosts official grand opening celebrations

BRANTFORD – On **Saturday, Dec. 1 at 10 a.m.** Wilfrid Laurier University and the YMCA of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford will co-host a celebration to mark the official **grand opening** of the new **Laurier Brantford YMCA**. Believed to be the first time a university and YMCA have ever partnered to create a jointly owned and operated facility, the Laurier Brantford YMCA serves both local community members, and post-secondary students. On hand to participate in the official celebrations will be representatives from federal, provincial and municipal governments, as well as local elected Indigenous community leaders.

Nearly a decade in the making, the Laurier Brantford YMCA project was made possible thanks to a collaborative effort from all levels of government, and the local community. The project received \$16.7 million in funding from the **Government of Canada**, \$16.7 million from the **Ontario Government** and \$5.2 million from the **City of Brantford**. The remaining funds were raised thanks to generous support from corporate and individual donors, and through contributions from the university and the YMCA.

“The new Laurier Brantford YMCA will have a positive impact on the lives of Brant, Brantford, Six Nations and Mississaugas of the New Credit residents who will benefit from new opportunities for athletics, recreation, learning and social activities,” said **Marco Mendicino**, parliamentary secretary to the minister of infrastructure and communities, the Honourable François-Philippe Champagne. “This project is a great example of how the Government of Canada is working with partners to invest in infrastructure that supports dynamic and inclusive communities, while promoting economic growth.”

“I would like to congratulate the entire community on the completion of the new Laurier Brantford YMCA,” said **Ernie Hardeman**, minister of agriculture, food and rural affairs. “This is a wonderful facility that was built for local residents and made possible in large part by the community involvement in the project. It’s the result of many people working together to make a vision become a reality. In fact, the partnership between the YMCA and a post-secondary institution is thought to be the first of its kind in North America.”

“Research is clear; we can improve the well-being of people in our community by creating spaces for health, belonging and social connectivity,” said **Jim Commerford**, president and CEO of the YMCA of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford. “The Laurier Brantford YMCA is a response to this opportunity – bringing individuals, families, and students together to improve overall well-being. Our two organizations share common values and

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a commitment to their local communities. We're proud to celebrate our grand opening today and grateful to our federal, provincial and municipal partners whose support made this vision a reality."

"As a university we are keenly aware of the many social, mental and physical benefits our students and employees can enjoy by living active lifestyles, whether that be through competitive sport, recreational leagues, classes or individual fitness regimens," said **Deborah MacLatchy**, president and vice-chancellor of Wilfrid Laurier University. "It is gratifying to see that our students are already making excellent use of the space. Five years ago our Brantford campus students voted to support the Laurier Brantford YMCA through a levy on their student fees. The fact that our recent alumni contributed financially to a project that they knew would not be completed until after they graduated says so much about our student body, and is an incredible point of pride for me as president."

Formal remarks for the grand opening celebration begin at 10:30 a.m. in the double-gymnasium, followed by a reception and building tours. On Saturday, the Laurier Brantford YMCA will also open the doors to community members to enjoy free activities including fitness classes and family swim.

Features of the new Laurier Brantford YMCA include:

- Aquatics Centre with two pools for lane swimming, swim lessons, aquatic fitness and therapy, plus an on-deck hot tub for teaching, fitness, therapy and leisure
- Five inclusive member change rooms, which include: Family/Universal Access, Adult General Male and Female, and Adult-Only Male and Female change rooms, plus four team change rooms for Laurier Athletics and other special events
- Child-minding area
- Youth Zone for recreational, social and leadership development programs
- Double gym designed for sports and competition with retractable stadium seating for 860 people, plus taping and first aid room for event athletic therapists
- Single gym for drop-in sports and larger programs
- Fitness Centre with state-of-the-art stretching, small group training, cable machines and cardio equipment with Wi-Fi capabilities for fitness programs and access to apps
- Health intake consultation rooms for specialized community-based health care programs in partnership with Hamilton Health Sciences and Brant Community Healthcare System
- Three studios for a large variety of group fitness classes, including Cycle Fit and dance
- Multi-purpose spaces for social, educational and cultural programming
- Fitness area equipped with strength equipment, including pin loaded and free weights (2.5 to 100 lbs)
- Student Lounge for group work and socialization

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CONTACT

Beth Gurney, Associate Director, Communications & Public Affairs
Wilfrid Laurier University – Brantford Campus
T: 519-756-8228 ext. 5753
M: 519-802-5447 or bgurney@wlu.ca

Kyla Kumar, Regional Vice President, Marketing & Communications
YMCAs of Hamilton | Burlington | Brantford, Niagara & Oakville
T: 905-529-7102 ext. 7311
M: 289-921-1187 or kyla.kumar@ymcahbb.ca