

HEALTHY LIVING SCHOOL

YEAR AT A GLANCE

2022 - 2023 SCHOOL YEAR

For many students, this year was the first full year that students were back in school since the restrictions were lifted. We were excited to open our doors and be able to welcome students back in the physical building at the YMCA. This was especially exciting as this was the first opportunity that many students have had to go on a field trip in over 2 years. For many of the younger students, this week at Healthy Living School was their first field trip ever.



Students connected with the Healthy Living School Supervisor as well as other YMCA experts and special guests to explore, learn, and reflect through journaling.

Despite challenges due to the ever changing and uncertain nature of these past few years, students embraced this learning opportunity with enthusiasm. Teachers were engaged, and actively excited as well to explore a new learning environment. Through activities, opportunities to reflect, and the chance to try new things, students were engaged and connected throughout the learning process.



2022 - 2023 Participating Schools

SHANE HOMES YMCA

Dr. Gordon Higgins	October 3 - 6/11. 2022	Grade 7/8/9 28 Students	"How to live a healthy life within my community?"
Olympic Heights	January 16 - 20, 2023	Grade 5 23 students	"What role do we play in creating an/or challenging the spirit of community?"
Olympic Heights	January 23 - 27, 2023	Grade 5 24 students	"What role do we play in creating an/or challenging the spirit of community?"
Hillhurst School	February 6 - 10, 2023	Grade 3 19 students	"How can I take care of myself so I can help take care of others?"
Coventry Hills	February 27 - March 3, 2023	Grade 5 28 students	"How can we impact communities we are a part of?"
Coventry Hills	March 13 - 17, 2023	Grade 5 30 students	"How can we impact communities we are a part of?"
Rideau Park	March 20 - 24, 2023	grade 3/4 22 students	"How are we connected?"
Jennie Elliot	May 8 - 12, 2023	Grade 4 20 students	"How do we foster a growth mindset?"
Jennie Elliot	May 15 - 19, 2023	Grade 4 21 students	"How do we foster a growth mindset?"
Jennie Elliot	May 23 - 26, 30, 2023	Grade 4 23 students	"How do we foster a growth mindset?"
Hawkwood School	June 12 - 16, 2023	grade 3 26 students	"How can we be healthy citizens and create a positive impact in our communities and world?"

Total 264 students

BROOKFIELD YMCA

Midnapore School	October 17 - 21, 2022	Grade 5 25 Students	"How can we help our youth to be lifelong learners and develop resiliency?"
Midnapore School	October 31 - November 4, 2022	Grade 5 24 Students	"How can we help our youth to be lifelong learners and develop resiliency?"
Midnapore School	November 14 - 18, 2022	Grade 5 23 Students	"How can we help our youth to be lifelong learners and develop resiliency?"
Harold Panabaker	November 28 - December 2, 2022	Grade 5 24 students	"What does wellness mean to me?"
Harold Panabaker	December 5 - 9, 2022	Grade 6 22 students	"What does wellness mean to me?"
Copperfield School	February 15, 21 - 24, 2023	Grade 3 23 students	"How do I live well in this world?"
Mahogany School	April 6 , 11 - 14, 2023	Grade 1 24 students	"How are we all connected? What is our story?"
Mahogany School	April 17 - 21, 2023	Grade 1 25 students	"How are we all connected? What is our story?"
Mahogany School	April 24 - 28, 2023	Grade 1 24 students	"How are we all connected? What is our story?"

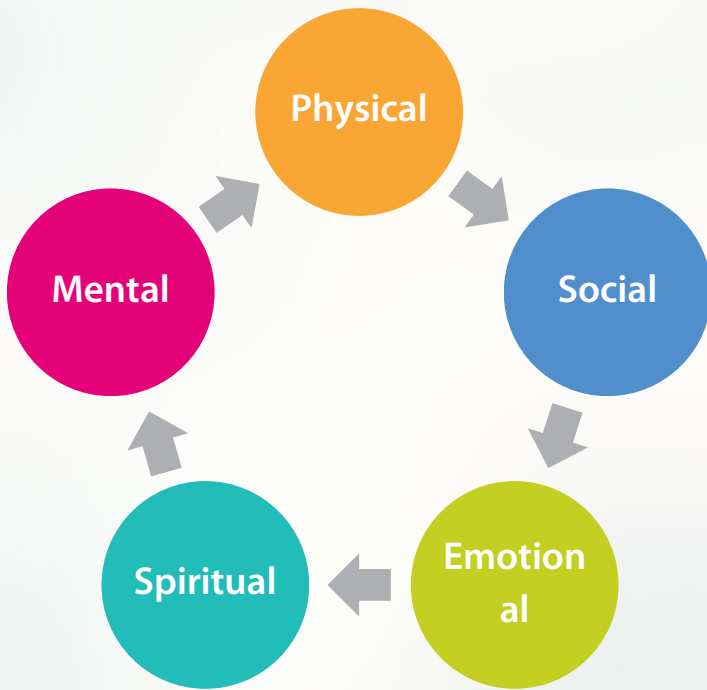
Total 214 students

We hosted a total of 11 schools, 20 classes, and 478 students!

Healthy Living School Curriculum

Healthy Living School aims to provide students with a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. The program provides opportunities for teachers and students to learn that healthy living goes beyond nutrition and exercise. In preparation for the 2022-2023 school year, a curriculum was developed to focus on the various dimensions of health including physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and mental health. These dimensions of health were talked about both independently, and together, as they are all inter-connected. The themes woven throughout the curriculum included gratitude, mindfulness, positivity, connection to ones self, connection to the community, and connection to nature.

Planning meetings between the Healthy Living School Supervisor and teachers were invaluable to create specific and personalized lesson plans for each class. Each class had it's own identity with strengths and challenges, and the daily schedule was modified to reflect this personalization.



Physical Health

Fitness
Active Play
Swimming
Climbing

Social Health

New Canadians
Let's Raise Community

Emotional Health

Visual Arts
Dance
Drama

Spiritual Health

Indigenous
Outdoors
Yoga

Mental Health

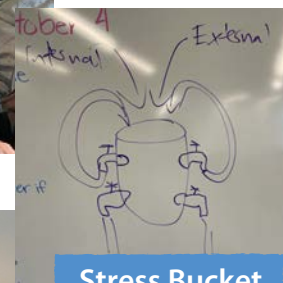
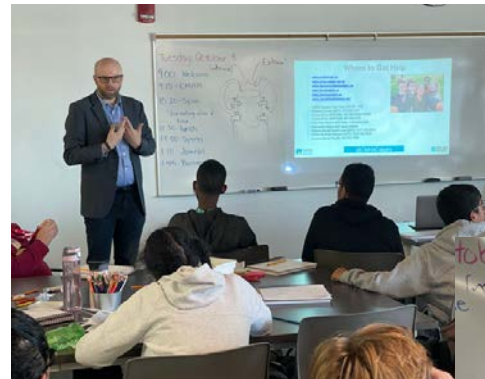
Journaling
Mindful Reflection
Art

MENTAL HEALTH

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a strong focus on the topic of mental health and wellness. When meeting with teachers, many expressed that they wanted their students to understand different ways to cope with stress and anxiety. When meeting with teachers, many expressed that they wanted their students to try new things but there is a mental block that prevents students from stepping out of their comfort zones.

YouthSMART (CMHA)

Students from Dr. Gordon Higgins studied what it meant to have a healthy life throughout the week and learned about the mental health aspect through a guest speaker from Canadian Mental Health Association's youth mental health program YouthSMART, an interactive program that helps educate and support youth with mental health. Students learned about the types of stress and ways to cope and manage stress in their everyday life.



Stress Bucket



Y-MIND

The students from Coventry Hills School met Christy and learned about self-care and grounding techniques. The students wrote their self-care activities on a flower and we then put them in water and proceeded to watch them bloom. We also talked about building a solid foundation of what kindness meant to them and they all wrote a reason why they rocked and added them to Christy's Rock Garden. Students also learned about otters and how they are kind to their communities. At the end, they got to make their own kindness otters/creatures.

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"I used to think that mental health was an illness or a disease but now I know it is something that everyone has and that we don't just need to cope with it but also manage it."

~ Grade 7 student, Dr. Gordon Higgins

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Mindfulness/Meditation Jars



The glitter jar that the students at Healthy Living School was a highlight of the week for many of them.

The students learned about mindfulness and meditation through these glitter jars that they made. Students were asked to imagine the glitter was like their thoughts and feelings when you are stressed, mad, or upset. As they shook the jars, the glitter whirls around and make it really hard to see clearly. Which is why it is so easy to make silly decisions when you're upset - because you are not thinking clearly. But when you set the jar down, the glitter will eventually settle to the bottom resulting in the ability to see clearly through the jar.

The jars served as a reminder that sometimes we can have lots going on in our lives, but it is okay to take a step back and let everything calm down before making any big decisions. Student were able to take home the jars to use as a tool to help regulate their thoughts and emotions.



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Students got many opportunities to try new things at Healthy Living School.

The teachers from Dr. Gordon Higgins wanted to expose their student to new things and so the grade 7, 8, and 9 students were tasked with identifying one thing that they wanted to be a part of that is new to them. They spent a day in their week participating in different sports like basketball, rock climbing and ice skating. Many of the students have never rock climbed or ice skated before and so they go the opportunity to explore these activities and were encouraged to try new things everyday.



SOCIAL CONNECTIONS



Team building and cooperation was a common theme that teachers wanted their students to explore.

Teachers wanted their classes to work together more and develop a closer sense of belonging with each other. Midnapore School spent their week learning about resiliency and how they can help each other bounce back and encourage their peers. They had defined resiliency as being able to "bounce back" so we used a tennis ball to demonstrate what it means to bounce back and how our actions and relationship with others can affect that.



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I was surprised that I had
more fun than expected, I also
made some friends as well!”
~Grade 5 student, Midnapore
School

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Each class got the opportunity to explore the different themes of health and wellbeing through fine arts. With the help of the experts from our Arts department, students were able to express themselves through visual arts, drama and dance.

Classes got to learn from our Drama experts, Judith and Miko, about expression and mindfulness through acting. They also got to learn from Nisha who is our Dance instructor about rhythm and movement.

Three grade 5 classes from Jennie Elliot School each spent a day out of the week working with Jennifer Ireland, who is a conceptual artist and a YMCA team member. She demonstrated how to paint with watercolor on rice paper to create a collaborative project. Students painted with watercolor, cut out circles and strung them on fishing wire which was then hung and displayed in the lobby of Shane Homes YMCA. The project was named "Blossoming Minds" (photo on the top right) to emulate the class' big question "How can we foster a growth mindset?" This project taught the students how to collaborate with others in order to achieve a greater task. It also focused on resiliency and dedication.

"Blossoming Minds" was inspired by the arrival of Spring, symbolizing growth, which influenced the students to think about nature. Therefore, their color inspiration came from the sky, the earth, water, and sunlight.

FINE ARTS



Community Garden



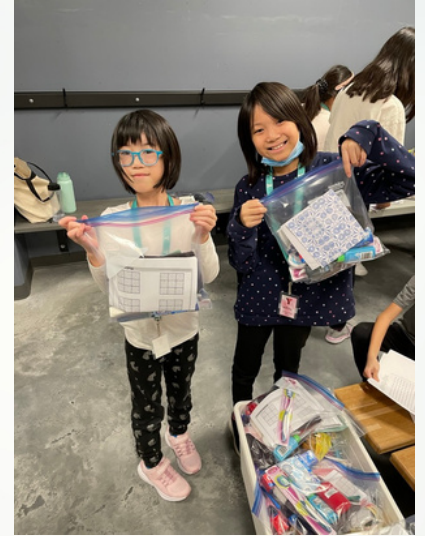
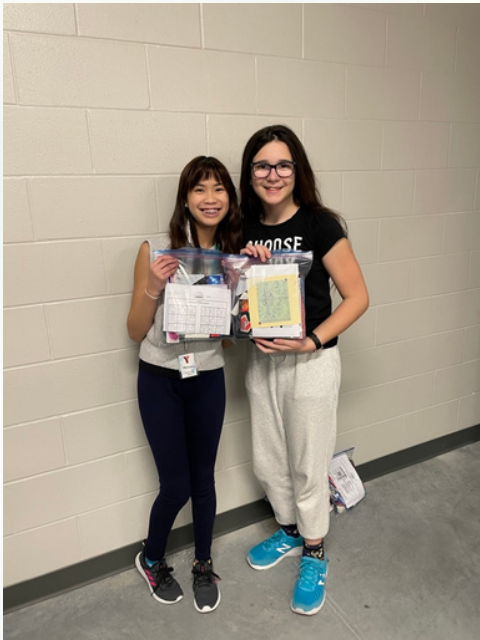
With the help of the Hawkwood grade 3 students, the Healthy Living School started a community garden for the Shane Homes YMCA. The Home Depot Foundation was kind enough to supply gift cards to purchase the necessary materials, in addition to 12 bags of dirt, and countless plants. Cedarglen Homes also donated 3 cubic yards of gardening soil to the project. The planters were built prior to the students' arrival, which they then helped fill with dirt. Next, they planted the fruits, vegetables, and flowers that were donated. Students also created signs to identify what was planted in the garden, and painted rocks to decorate the plant beds.

“I discovered that if every one does something all together we can establish something we've never done before.”

~Grade 3 students, Hawkwood School



PHILANTHROPY



Students also explored and learned about philanthropy and how the YMCA is also a charity. In honor of Joy day, the students from Harold Panabaker learned what it meant to give back and added a new word to their vocabulary and learned about philanthropy. They learned about what it means to be a person in need and they even got the chance to be philanthropists and helped pack care packages.

They created two types of packages; a wellness kit which includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, towel, hand warmers, lotion, deodorant, tissues and gloves. They also packed a snack pack filled with goodies and snacks. The students each made about 3 packs and then got to take one home to keep in their parent's car or backpack so that they could give it to someone in need. The supplies were generously donated by Gate Gourmet and the students made a total of 228 packages that were donated to the Mustard Seed.

A few words from teachers, students, and parent volunteers

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"I learned there was more than just mental and physical health and I learned some coping strategies for when I'm stressed."

~Grade 5/6 student, Harold Panabaker

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"I learned some good tips to help guide my kids at home through tough, stressful times. Also learned some fun team building strategies."

~grade 5 parent volunteer, Midnapore School

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"It gives me more ideas on how to work with my kids. Also made me think more about how to connect mental health with the five elements. It gives me opportunity to think more on the importance of life, people and community around me."

~Grade 5/6 Parent Volunteer, Harold Panabaker

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"I learned how to do teamwork and learned that teamwork isn't about screaming at your classmates."

~Grade 5/6 student, Harold Panabaker

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"I used to think that wellness was just mental and physical. But now I know that wellness is also spiritual, emotional and social. It is about doing the things you love! It's you!"

~Grade 5/6 Student, Harold Panabaker

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"It was wonderful to see the hard work from the students and myself leading up to HLS, pulled into perspective in a real-life experience. Also, students really understood what the YMCA is as a whole and it's purpose in the community."

~Grade 3 teacher, Copperfield

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Thank you to Cenovus Energy

In 2019, YMCA Calgary partnered with Campus Calgary and Cenovus Energy to bring Healthy Living School to life. Cenovus Energy continues to be a dedicated funding partner by supporting innovative educational opportunities for students in the community.

Our partnership with Cenovus Energy enabled us to bring students from their classrooms to a new learning environment at the YMCA. Every student received a journal to document their journey as they explored their big question throughout the year. In addition, we also gifted each student with a water bottle.

This year, we hosted 11 schools, 20 classes, and 478 students at Healthy Living School. We collaborated with community partners and introduced students to YMCA Experts who led customized classes and workshops.

Experiences like this would not be possible without the financial support from partners like Cenovus Energy.



The Healthy Living School Experience

How can we help our young people belong, grow, thrive, and lead in the community while choosing to live healthy & active lives?

Healthy Living School, at YMCA Calgary, focuses on the many ways that making healthy choices contribute to a vibrant community. Through a holistic approach to well-being, teachers and students learn that living a healthy life goes beyond good nutrition and regular exercise. It's about being a positive role model and building strong social connections in the community.

Healthy Living School gives students and teachers an opportunity to discover more about themselves by embracing new experiences. Activities like visual arts, dance, drama, climbing, sports, fitness, skating, and swimming help enhance experiential learning.

Every Healthy Living School experience is uniquely designed to explore a year-long inquiry about health and wellness. Ideas include:

- What does living a healthy and active life mean to you?
- How are we all connected to our community?
- How do we inspire others to live healthy and active lives?
- What role does our community play in supporting healthy choices?
- How can we become champions of health and wellness?
- How do choices we make today inspire a healthy future?



About YMCA Calgary

Ever since its inception in 1902, YMCA Calgary has been a hard working charitable organization that responds to the needs of Calgarians. YMCA Calgary has evolved into a vibrant charity where thousands of Calgarians are involved each year through health and wellness programs, leadership, and community outreach programs, child care, and day and overnight camps.

Guided by four core values of honesty, caring, respect and responsibility, YMCA Calgary strives to offer quality programs and services that give children, youth and adults the opportunity to belong, grow, thrive and lead.

YMCA Calgary has seven health and wellness facilities, seven child development centres with licensed child care, two outdoor camp sites and over 60 community program sites serving all quadrants of the city. These spaces and programs allow YMCA Calgary to deliver programs, services and opportunities to help the Calgary community connect with others, build life-long skills, and keep active and healthy.