

Dear Councillor Bourque,

The recent announcement of the closure of the Yarmouth YMCA has broken my heart. I was aware they were in trouble but not to this extent, that they would need to close.

I belong to the family of the Yarmouth Y Whitecaps (YYW) and our home has been the Yarmouth YMCA. I am a swimmer, a parent of two swimmers and a volunteer coach as well as Vice President of the Parent Executive and Chair of Officials. Our YYW family has struggled first with the closure of the YMCA in December due to a broken light fixture then the closure due to COVID19 and now we are told our home will not reopen. We are homeless. Where are we to go?

And what about the seniors from all over the tri-counties who enjoy some social time as well as some exercise at aquatic fitness classes? Or those who attend fitness classes led by volunteers? Those who go into the Y to workout in the gym?

And what about all the youth who rely on the YMCA as a place to go, learn leadership skills? A safe place to meet new people and grow up to be a community leader? What about them? I have seen how many attend the Free Swims, the Friday Night Rocks program and how many youth who attend those programs become leaders in those programs with the guidance of the YMCA staff. Where do they go?

The YMCA also housed the Kidzact program whose mission is to keep youth off the streets, out of the drugs and alcohol through a dance program benefiting hundreds of youth since it began. Where are they to go?

Yarmouth County is without a public pool. Where are children going to learn to swim? We are an area with fishing as the biggest economic driver. We are going to have fishers who do not know how to swim because we lack the infrastructure to teach them.

I understand that the YMCA had requested funding from all three local municipal units and that Argyle was willing to give \$50,000 over two years on a monthly payment term. I have been watching the council meetings online. Is the Council willing to increase funding?

What is council going to do? Are you going to sit idle and let the physical and mental health of our community deteriorate? Where are we all to go?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your reply. I can be contacted at this email address or by phone at 902 637 8979.

Heather Nickerson
Pubnico, NS