

YMCA • Life is Better Together

YMCA Week Celebrates 125 Years of Bringing People Together



Kids and families have made the YMCA their second home for more than a century.

Walk into a YMCA in Vancouver, Surrey or Chilliwack and you will see hundreds of families spending time together, getting fit and having fun. To celebrate these families and to mark the YMCA of Greater Vancouver's 125th anniversary, we declare October 22-28th to be YMCA Week—a time for families to come together and make new memories for the next century.

It all began in 1886. Vancouver was booming and the city was filled with new people. It was then that a group of concerned citizens decided our burgeoning city needed a YMCA—a place to “look after the welfare of young men.” But today's YMCA is much different. While we are still committed to strengthening community, we are no longer just for men. Thousands of women, men, children, teenagers and families call the YMCA their second home every day.

Ivana Bisaro, Ricardo de Faria and their two kids are just one such family. Ivana first met Ricardo after joining the YMCA in 2005. “I took the Capoeira class he was teaching and we started training together,” she says. “Now we're married, have two kids and are expecting a third—needless to say, we've been inseparable ever since we met!”

The Bisaro-de Faria family spends a lot of time each week at the Robert Lee YMCA. “The YMCA really fits our family's lifestyle,” says Ivana.

Their four-year-old son, Luca, attends the preschool every day. “He absolutely loves it here,” she says. “At first I was hesitant, but I've gotten to know the staff and the other families so I really trust that it's a great place for him to grow.” Ivana and Ricardo also take advantage of Kids Night Out at the Y each month so they can spend some quality time together while their kids enjoy an evening of fun activities. Ivana works out each day in between work and caring for her busy family. “I run for eight miles on a treadmill,” she says. “Running is my personal therapy session—I don't know what I'd do without my running.”

Ivana admits that life would be more challenging without the YMCA. “It's kind of like our second family because we've met so many new friends,” she says. “The Robert Lee YMCA is like a small community in a big city.”

As part of YMCA week, we are challenging all families to spend more time together. That's why we've created the Family Passport to Fun, which includes dozens of fun activities that can be done together as a family. Activities like having an indoor picnic, attending a family drop-in and taking a hike. Supporting families by providing ways to spend quality time together really helps to deal with today's pressure packed schedules, making healthy living a bit easier. To get your very own Family Passport to Fun, visit www.vanymca.org/anniversary.



The Bisaro-de Faria family playing together at the Robert Lee YMCA.



Help us celebrate by spending time with your family during **YMCA Week on October 22-28th**. To get your very own Family Passport to Fun, visit www.vanymca.org/anniversary.