



YMCA CENTRE FOR LIFE

COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN



DECEMBER 2025

In this edition of the Community Building Campaign newsletter, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to the Community Building Campaign, whether through their time, investment, or dedication. Your generosity will make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many, and we are deeply grateful for your support. As we approach the holiday season, we wish you a time filled with love, laughter, and the warmth of knowing you've played a crucial role in building a stronger, healthier community.

Alva Foundation Celebrates 60 Years of Service and Philanthropy

The Alva Foundation proudly marks its 60th anniversary, celebrating six decades of commitment to philanthropy and community service. Established in 1965 by Philip and Margaret Fisher, the Foundation began with a simple yet powerful mission: to help family members learn about generosity and actively engage in acts of service.

Philip Fisher, a Canadian businessman and former president of Southam Company Ltd. (later Southam Inc.), was deeply committed to social welfare. He co-founded the Canadian Welfare Council and served on its Board for 30 years—an organization that later evolved into Community Chest and ultimately United Way. During the First World War, Fisher also served as a pilot with the Royal Naval Air Service, exemplifying his lifelong dedication to service. Known affectionately as “Gwam” and “Gappy” within the family, Philip and Margaret were influential members of the Red Feather movement in Montreal and played a role in advancing health and welfare programs across Canada. Philip even worked alongside Tommy Douglas in the mission to bring universal healthcare to Canadians.

Margaret Fisher shared this same spirit of compassion. She regularly visited seniors’ homes and girls’ schools, often accompanied by her children and grandchildren, and mentored young women throughout their lives. In recognition of Philip’s contributions, the Philip Fisher Chair in Social Work was established at McGill University in 1986—the

same institution where his daughter, Dr. Sydney Duder, taught for nearly 50 years before retiring at age 99.

Today, the Alva Foundation remains a family-led organization, with its Board comprised entirely of descendants of Philip and Margaret Fisher—now in its fifth generation. Each member researches charities and brings forward causes for support, ensuring the Foundation remains dynamic and responsive to community needs. Its mandate focuses on Canadian registered charities that serve children, youth, and the environment, imagining a world where all children are happy,

healthy, and connected to the environment around them.

The spirit of giving continues through generations. Amanda, granddaughter of the founders, recalls childhood visits to senior homes and fundraising events—experiences that shaped a family culture of compassion and action. Today, her daughters, Breanne Mathers and Rebecca Mathers-Phillips, great-granddaughters of Philip and Margaret Fisher, proudly carry this legacy forward.

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Dave Allen, Sue O'Brien, Heather Williams, Kristin Crowe, Breanne Mathers, Rebecca Mathers-Phillips, Amanda Mathers, John Mathers, Ed Lehtinen and Bruce Mackay.

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Breanne serves as a foster parent with the local Children's Aid Society—a connection that resonates deeply, as foster care was one of the programs supported by Community Chest, the iconic Red Feather movement. Rebecca is equally committed to community well-being through her active involvement with local charities and Public Health. Rebecca leads by example to show her teenage sons the importance of being involved and carrying the legacy on further.

As the Alva Foundation celebrates this milestone, it reaffirms its commitment to fostering philanthropy within the family and supporting initiatives that strengthen communities for generations to come. As members of the Board of Directors, have championed the Alva Foundation to donate nearly \$500,000 to Belleville and Quinte region charities in the past five years.

Beneficiaries include: Community Development Council of Quinte – Good Food and Good Baby Box programs, Three Oaks Foundation – Children's Support Worker programming, The Children's Foundation – "Strive to Thrive" program, Quinte West Youth Centre, Hastings and Prince Edward Learning Foundation – Food for Learning, Sharing Cupboards, Rescue Readers, and the Student Emergency Fund. The next generation is also encouraged to apply for up to \$10,000 for a charity of their choice, highlighting their personal connection to the cause. Past

grants have supported organizations such as Quinte Hospice, Children's Safety Village, St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs, Quinte Conservation, and the Hastings and Prince Edward Learning Foundation.

In celebration of its 60th anniversary, the Foundation recently contributed \$100,000 to the YMCA's Centre for Life building campaign—a visionary project that will unite organizations to create lasting impact for individuals and families. "We were inspired by the Centre for Life's commitment to strengthening communities," said Breanne Mathers in a joint statement. "This gift reflects our ongoing dedication to building a better future."



Phillip and Margaret Fisher



Rebecca Mathers-Phillips and Breanne Mathers



Your generosity can make a real difference—and it may also reduce your taxes! Donate before December 31 and start the new year knowing you've helped your community thrive.

As we celebrate the season and look ahead to 2026, consider a late-year donation. It's a meaningful way to share your blessings and enjoy potential tax benefits.

Decide on the Type of Gift

Monetary Donations: The most common and easiest way to give.

Stock or Asset Donations: Appreciated assets can offer additional tax advantages.

Recurring Gifts: Set up monthly contributions for sustained impact.

Give Before December 31. Donations made by midnight on December 31 count toward this year's tax deductions. Online giving is often the fastest way to ensure your gift is processed in time.

Year-end giving makes a difference!

