

June 5th 2020

To the leadership of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia,

Hi, my name is Madison Hubbard, I'm 14 years old and I live in Tusket. I am writing this email because of the recent news that the Yarmouth YMCA will close permanently. This news is very upsetting to me as well as the entire community. This affects me personally because I'm on the Yarmouth Y Whitecaps (YYW) swim team. This team means so much to me, I have been swimming on it for 4 years. In these last 4 years, I have learned so much. I want to put as much effort as possible into giving our communities facilities that mean so much more to us than just a pool and gym.

As I said earlier, I've been swimming for 4 years on the YYW swim team. The YYW is very important to me, my fellow teammates, and my coaches. Not only is it important to us, the team has been a part of our community since 1968, when our pool was built in the Yarmouth YMCA. Over 2500 swimmers have participated in the program over the last 52 years. Most swimmers have grown up in the program, they enter around the age of 10 and leave after graduating at the age of 18. The YYW has a huge impact on kids' lives, so at least 25 swimmers have returned after graduation to volunteer as coaches in order to give the new generation of swimmers back what they gained from their childhood of swimming. Several of the previous swimmers have continued to swim, the sport having a lifelong impact. Our team has had several swimmers achieve times enabling them to go on to Nationals, as well as paralympians achieving times to make Canada Games teams. The Yarmouth Y Whitecaps has so many years of history starting with our pool at the YMCA. It's devastating to see that history be taken away from many generations of swimmers.

The swim team is important in my life, and has shaped my teenage years so far. I know that for me and my teammates the lessons we've learned from this incredible program will stick with us for the rest of our lives, helping us with our future, to be successful and give back to our community. I have learned from swimming how crucial dedication and hard work is to succeed and excel. I've learned this from my teammates, who I watch dedicate their time and effort to swimming, who push themselves at every single practice and strive to improve their swimming. They continue to push themselves in swimming while maintaining good grades in school and doing dryland training outside of the pool. Some of them have jobs on top of all that and still manage to work hard every day. Some of the swimmers complete nine hours of practice per week, practice up to six times a week, do hours of out of water training and do hours of homework, balancing and excelling at it all. It teaches us amazing life skills, like time management, responsibility and determination - all qualities that we may not learn otherwise. It also provides a supportive team of swimmers and coaches, and being on a team like the YYW can lead to lifelong friendships. Our coaches are remarkable, they dedicate years of volunteer work to give us our swim practices, our fundraisers, our team activities, and our swim meets. Our amazing coaches are proof that the YYW swim team produces determined, motivated, caring, supportive, selfless, organized, kind people who willingly give back to the kids of our community. Our coaches are incredible role models for young swimmers to grow up with, they teach us so many lessons and are all amazing people who put 52 years worth of effort into our team and the YMCA for it to be taken away from us. For many of the swimmers and coaches, The Yarmouth Y Whitecaps team is one of the best things in our lives. It's one of the best things in mine. We all are hoping that you will be able to help us in any way possible.

The YMCA isn't only important to the athletes, it also means so much to the people of our community. It has always been a place for kids to gather and have fun. They have several

programs for kids and adults that hard work was put into by all the dedicated employees and volunteers. One of the most prominent programs is the Friday Night Fun program. Every Friday several kids showed up to play in the game room, play sports in the gym, and swim. It was always so easy to see how much fun they had with their friends, and how important their YMCA family was to them. It was also so incredible to see how much the employees cared about them. They will carry their great memories from this program with them for the rest of their lives. The YMCA was also a great place to socialize with your friends. It was rare that there wasn't a group of teenagers together having fun. It provided a safe and comfortable environment for kids of all ages. It's so important to have a safe facility in our town for everyone. There are also several amazing volunteers at the YMCA who dedicate so much of their time to helping. All of these volunteers receive great opportunities to learn important life skills, like leadership, personal growth and organization. With their volunteer work, they can build great resumes to help them greatly in the future. The YMCA brings our community together, and the community will be forever changed without it.

The health of our community is so important. The people of Yarmouth deserve a facility that improves their health. In 2018, the Yarmouth YMCA had on average 27 fitness classes held per week, over 1000 kids took part in different types of swim programs and over 2078 people used the pool on day passes. In 2017 lane swim was attended over 5200 times, community swim was attended over 3700 times and free swim was attended over 3200 times. The YMCA has a crucial role in keeping our community healthy and active.

As you can see, I am very passionate about the YMCA, as is our entire community. We are all standing together in this fight. I am looking to be part of a solution for maintaining a facility that is very important in this town. Thank you for your time, I urge you to make the right choice for our town and support us.

Sincerely,
Madison Hubbard
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