

## **THE YMCA AND WALK OFF THE EARTH REIMAGINE THE Y.M.C.A. ANTHEM, FOCUSING ON YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

The musical collaboration introduces expanded access to the YMCA's free youth mental health program, *Y Mind*

**St. John's, NL,, August 28, 2023** – The YMCA and Canadian indie pop band Walk off the Earth today released a modern take on the Y.M.C.A. anthem to raise awareness of expanded access to the free youth mental health program, *Y Mind*. Originally released in 1978, the hit song has brought crowds to the dance floor, with an enduring legacy internationally. The reimagined cover of the classic party anthem, performed in a more soulful and sincere tone, brings new light to the original lyrics through a mental health lens as the YMCA aims to highlight today's need for community and open dialogue surrounding mental health. Alongside the new musical arrangement, Walk off the Earth has also released an accompanying full-length music video now available on [YouTube](#).

"We've seen how music is so connected to emotions – for us and our fans – so we were honoured to take on the challenge of reinventing such an iconic song and give new meaning to its enduring lyrics," says Sarah Blackwood, lead singer of Walk off the Earth. "When we took a look at the original lyrics, it was staggering how a message about the YMCA from 45 years ago is just as relevant and pointed today - but now we're sharing that message with a focus on mental health tied to *Y Mind*."

The collaboration aims to bring awareness to a new era the YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador hopes to usher in, as our charity has expanded our broad range of programming to include free mental health services through *Y Mind*, serving the changing needs of Canadian communities.

*Y Mind* is an innovative early intervention mental health program that helps teens (ages 13-18) and young adults (ages 18-30) cope with stress and anxiety with the support of health professionals. The seven-week program is available online or in person, in English and French (under the name YMCA *Libère ta tête*). The *Y Mind* program is offered completely free of charge thanks to support and funding by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

"We are proud to offer the *Y Mind* program. The number of stressors that today's youth face can seem overwhelming, including the post-pandemic experience, school, and social media pressures. We recognize that cost is often one of the biggest barriers for youth in need of mental wellness programs. *Y Mind* removes that barrier for youth 13-30 so they can get the help they need," said Jason Brown, CEO, YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The *Y Mind* program comes at a time when young people's stress and anxiety levels remain at an all-time high. According to a survey conducted in 2023 by Deloitte, close to half of Gen Zs (46%) and four in 10 Millennials (39%) report feeling stressed or anxious all or most of the time.<sup>1</sup> Guided by qualified mental healthcare professionals, participants in the *Y Mind*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/mt/Documents/about-deloitte/deloitte-2023-genz-millennial-survey-mental-health.pdf>

program have reported reduced anxiety, improved well-being, and reduced feelings of isolation.

To learn more about the *Y Mind* program or find a location near you, visit [ymcanl.com/employment-enterprise-and-newcomer-services/y-mind/](https://ymcanl.com/employment-enterprise-and-newcomer-services/y-mind/).

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### **About *Y Mind***

*Y Mind* was first developed by the YMCA of Greater Vancouver (now YMCA BC) and has been offered across British Columbia since 2018 thanks to financial support from the British Columbia government. *Y Mind* was born to meet the growing need for free, accessible mental health support. It quickly established itself as a pillar of support for the region's youth, serving over 3,200 young people in 54 communities. Building on this momentum, the *Y Mind* program was extended across Canada, including Quebec with *YMCA Libère ta tête*, through the support of YMCA Canada and YMCA BC. *Y Mind* has now expanded to 24 YMCAs across the country and is currently being supported through the Public Health Agency of Canada's investment *Supporting the Mental Health of Those Most Affected By COVID-19*.

### **About the YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador**

The YMCA of Newfoundland and Labrador is a charity, open to everyone at all stages of life that provides opportunities to grow in spirit, mind, and body. Our vision is a province of vibrant and healthy communities where everyone can belong, grow, and thrive.

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