



**YMCA of Niagara**

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ymcaofniagara.org  
Charitable No. 11930 7064 RR0001

December 11, 2019

Honorable Jim Bradley, Regional Chair  
Niagara Region  
1815 Sir Isaac Brock Way  
Thorold, ON L2V 4T7

Re: ProKids Funding Cut

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Good Day Honorable Jim Bradley, Chair and Regional Council,

My name is Ian Brown, YMCA Board Chair for the YMCA of Niagara. I am writing you today on behalf of the YMCA of Niagara Board of Directors in response to hearing that the regionally funded ProKids program is at risk.

On Tuesday evening our YMCA Board of Directors met and discussed the recent announcement and unanimously agreed that we needed to reach out to you directly to urge Council to reconsider.

We recognize that YMCA staff did not appear to represent the program based on the advice of the Region, however as the Voluntary Governing Body of the YMCA we want to ensure the organizations view is clear.

ProKids is vital to Niagara, supporting the participation of financially disadvantaged children and youth (0-18) in sport, recreation and the arts of their choice. Many of these children/youth and families are the most vulnerable in our community. ProKids is the only program that works directly with the family and their barriers, ensuring that all children feel they belong; supporting each child/youth in reaching their potential.

The funding is further leveraged through continued efforts to work with recreational providers, with results showing that optimum numbers of children and youth are participating in local sport, recreation and arts programs across Niagara.

The reach provided by the directed funds of \$200,000 cannot be overlooked, with 2400 children annually supported. The success of this program is based on a collaborative commitment of 141 providers across Niagara, who additionally



provide in-kind contributions of \$395 000. This equals a total funding support of \$644,716 annually. There is no better return on investment.

The partnership between the Niagara Region, providers and families in need, with the YMCA acting as the conduit, makes this one of the most unique programs in the Niagara community.

Research tells us that investing dollars to support the involvement of children and youth in sport, recreation and the arts is a sound investment in the healthy development of children, benefitting their families and the Community.

We strongly recommend Council to re-consider maintaining this valuable and needed program for children/youth and families across Niagara. It is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Brown".

Ian Brown  
Board Chair  
YMCA of Niagara