



MEDIA RELEASE

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YMCA Applauds Landmark Agreement on First Nations Education

YMCA Canada President and CEO Scott Haldane hailed [today's announcement](#) of a major new agreement on First Nations education as a significant breakthrough for Canada and First Nations. The announcement, made jointly by the Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations is accompanied by sweeping reforms and significant new investments in the First Nations education system that embrace most of the recommendations issued, almost two years ago to the day, by the *National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve*. The panel was chaired by Scott Haldane, who was present at this morning's announcement at Kainai Nation, near Lethbridge, Alberta.

"Today's announcement regarding Canada's increased investment in First Nations students was strongly influenced by the recommendations of the National Panel," stated National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo. "The YMCA's leadership has been an important factor in helping First Nations children and youth reach their full potential. I would like to recognize the role that the YMCA plays in realizing positive outcomes for First Nations youth."

Closing the gap in educational outcomes is widely held to be the key to improving the economic and social determinants of health for Canada's First Nations and their communities. "On behalf of my fellow panelists, I want to congratulate Prime Minister Harper and National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo on this landmark announcement," said YMCA Canada's Haldane.

"It is a breakthrough for current and future generations of First Nations young people in this country, their families and communities, and indeed for all Canadians – a significant step towards achieving the Canada we want."

The YMCA's leadership role in the Panel was the first major test of the federation's national strategy, PLAN Y. The strategy calls for the federation to take a greater role in issues of national importance through collective initiatives that advance the health and wellbeing of children, teens and young adults. It identifies gaps in outcomes for First Nations children and youth among the pressing issues requiring attention. In addition to advocating for the Panel's recommendations, this engagement has led YMCA Canada to launch a major youth-to-youth-initiative in collaboration with national Aboriginal organizations and other national youth-serving organizations and to step up its own Associations' outreach to First Nations and other Aboriginal communities.



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Scott Haldane (President and CEO, YMCA Canada; Former Chair, National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve) is available for interviews.

To arrange an interview, please contact:

Ken Lima-Coelho, Vice President Communications and Financial Development, YMCA Calgary

Cell: 403-852-9168

Email: ken.lima-coelho@calgary.ymca.ca

About the YMCA in Canada

YMCA Canada is a federation made up of 45 YMCA and 5 YMCA-YWCA Member Associations. Each of the 50 Associations within the Federation serves local community needs and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

As a registered charity, YMCA Canada is dedicated to building healthy communities by nurturing the potential of children, teens and young adults, promoting healthy living, and fostering social responsibility in order to create lasting personal and social change. Collectively, YMCAs in Canada serve more than 2.24 million people in more than 1,000 Canadian locations each year. Our focus on inclusiveness and accessibility means we welcome people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities through all stages of life. Through YMCA financial assistance programs and the YMCA Strong Kids campaign, the YMCA is accessible to all.

For more information please visit ymca.ca