

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Growing the AMA Youth Run Club's inclusivity

The AMA Youth Run Club's desire and mission has always been to be an inclusive school-based club that welcomes and supports children and youth of all intellectual and physical abilities in big and small, rural and urban schools and communities across the province. The club provides children and youth with a healthy, fun outlet for physical activity so they can receive its good-for-the-soul-and-mind benefits.

To date, funding and budget restrictions have limited the YRC's ability to develop and provide the types of adapted physical activities (and related instruction and/or equipment) required by children who are unable to participate in the running, walking, jumping or other physical activities that have comprised typical YRC activities.



Generous donations by member physicians are enabling the AMA Youth Run Club to develop an inclusivity strategy.

Removing barriers with adapted physical activity

With the addition of the AMA Youth Run Club to the charitable donation options on the AMA membership form, generous donations by member physicians (totalling approximately \$18,000 as of April) are enabling the Youth Run Club to develop an inclusivity strategy.

As the first step in this strategy, Ever Active Schools (EAS) is working with its community partners to develop professional learning and resources pertaining to adapted physical activity. Once these tools are established, the YRC will be able to apply the EAS's adapted physical activity learnings and resources to the Youth Run Club environment, ultimately resulting in YRCs being able to offer activities to children who previously saw no way to participate.

Still in its early stages, the inclusivity strategy will include adding a module to the Coach's Workshops, which are regular training sessions, facilitated by Ever Active Schools, that provide coaches (most often teachers) with guidance and instruction on running a club. The inclusivity module "10 tools for coaches to create an adaptive environment, route considerations, etc." will be online.

Program updates: GO! Run Club and growth of Indigenous School Communities

As it enters its sixth year, the [AMA Youth Run Club](#) has grown impressively from its beginnings in spring 2013 – with 74 schools and 4,000 participants – to this spring's goals of 550 schools and 27,500 students.

Growth in numbers has been accompanied by expansion in program offerings such as the launch of the [GO! \(Girls Only!\) Run Club](#) in October 2017. The goal of these clubs is to encourage girls to participate in physical activity and to decrease the significant gap in the athletic participation rates between girls and boys that starts at a young age and continues through high school. The YRC ended its 2018 fall season with 45 GO! Run Clubs and hopes for similar success this spring.

Another long-standing goal of the AMA YRC has been to increase the number of Youth Run Clubs and GO! Run Clubs in Indigenous school communities. Through the hard work and dedication of our YRC partner, [Ever Active Schools](#), as of April, YRCs and/or GO! Run Clubs are in 25 Indigenous school communities.

Celebrating Treaty 6 Winter Traditional Games Day



About 150 students celebrated Treaty 6 Winter Traditional Games Day. (Photo credit: Brian Torrance, Director, EAS)

On a gloriously sunny and soul-warming late winter day (March 13), about 150 students from six [Treaty 6](#) schools gathered at [Mother Earth's Children's Charter School](#) (MECCS), southwest of Stony Plain, to celebrate Treaty 6 Winter Traditional Games Day.

Staff from [Ever Active Schools](#) joined the MECCS Youth Run Club for the day of traditional winter games, which included archery, hockey, double ball, run and scream, and stick pull, and an [AMA Youth Run Club](#) Fun Run and Walk.

AMA Youth Run Club sponsors

Since it began in 2013, with 4,000 kids and 77 schools, the AMA Youth Run Club has been steadily growing in participant numbers and expanding its program offerings. The impressive growth of this school-based, inclusive health and physical activity initiative would not be possible without the support of generous program sponsors: Alberta Blue Cross (gold); MD Financial Management (silver); and Canadian Tire Jumpstart and Fast Trax Run & Ski Shop (in-kind).