

Alberta Doctors' Digest

The AMA Youth Run Club reaches an amazing milestone

The Alberta Medical Association (AMA) Youth Run Club first began in spring 2013 as a partnership between the Alberta Medical Association and Ever Active Schools. It started as a pilot project of just 75 schools. The program was put in motion and following its initial success, officially launched in September 2013.

In year one, AMA Youth Run Club coordinator Hayley Degaust travelled around the province, working closely with schools to set up run clubs in ways that would work for their unique contexts. She fondly remembers visiting a colony school in southern Alberta and helping them find a solution on how to run games and activities in the basement of their small schoolhouse throughout the winter. Year one took Hayley all across our beautiful province, promoting the program and watching students find the joy of movement and physical activity. We quickly saw the program expand, and it became clear that schools were eager for support to get their students moving.



Helping children and youth move in the right direction towards developing a healthy lifestyle.

Over the years, we have had to pivot from visiting every school to hosting regional coach workshops so that the program could become more sustainable. We have hosted coach workshops province-wide, and at our peak, we supported more than 500 run clubs. In 2019, we purchased the first of our bright green AMA Youth Run Club branded start/finish arches and began supporting schools to host their own fun run/walk events.

From coach workshops to fun run events, the AMA Youth Run Club has continued to grow in depth of support. This past year, we attended more than 40 fun run events with our start/finish arch in tow. The energy, joy, and enthusiasm that our team has witnessed at fun run events is unparalleled.

Now entering our 10th year, we look forward to expanding the program to offer support to clubs who wish to walk instead of run. Our focus is on growing run club numbers back

up to pre-pandemic levels, and we are excited to work with more than 400 schools this year. We are also looking forward to a busy fall and spring of events across Alberta.

Program registrations and fun run requests started pouring in before the start of September. As we celebrate 10 years, we will be walking and running across the province to help children and youth move in the right direction towards developing a healthy lifestyle.