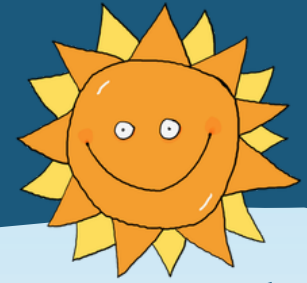


RPAY  RECREATION + PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE YUKON



2027 Calendar



It is an honour to serve people and communities across the Yukon from the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council. RPAY recognizes and values the leadership of all Yukon First Nations, whose stewardship, knowledge, and vision inspires meaningful connections to parks, recreation, culture, and community.



At RPAY, we believe that recreation and parks enhance mental, physical and social well-being, build strong families and communities, enable connections with nature, and contribute economically. This is why we support Yukon communities to engage their citizens in active, healthy lifestyles through recreation and parks. We do this by:

1. Promoting the benefits of active living, recreation and parks.
2. Fostering active, accessible, inclusive, and culturally-relevant recreation.
3. Strengthening recreation capacity and leadership, prioritizing support for rural and First Nations communities.
4. Operating effectively, efficiently and sustainably.



At RPAY, we are proud of the way we achieve our mandate. Our 2027 calendar showcases our programs and some of the highlights from the 2025-26 fiscal year. Please reach out to us for more information.

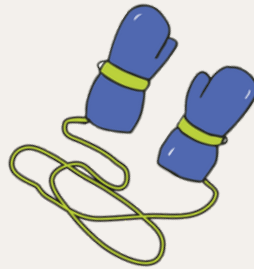
September 2026

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December 2026

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Executive Director's Message

Over the past year, the Recreation and Parks Association of Yukon (RPAY) has focused on strengthening connections and community recreation leadership. We believe that recreation is essential; to physical and mental health, to social wellbeing, and to the unique character of each Yukon community.

Through a small but dedicated team of three full-time staff and four program contractors, we reach communities across the territory. Most of our programming took place in rural Yukon; only 33% occurred in Whitehorse. When recreation is accessible and inclusive, more people participate. In the last fiscal year, we recorded more than 3,000 counts of participation in our programs.

We share information that can be used to make decisions about recreation. Recently, in partnership with the Yukon Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research at YukonU, the fourth collection of the Yukon Healthy Living Study was completed. Since 2009, this Study has provided valuable insight into recreation and active living patterns across the territory and helped guide future programs and community priorities.

As we approach our 35th Anniversary, we are grateful for the strong relationships, locally, across the territory, and nationally, that allow all of us to contribute to healthier people, stronger communities, and a more active Yukon.

On behalf of RPAY, I wish you all an active and healthy year!

Anne



January

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Community Outreach

RPAY plays a vital role in strengthening recreation across the territory providing in-person support that reflects the realities of rural living. Through outreach, programs, grants, training, and equipment loans, we help recreation thrive.

Community visits are one of the most effective ways we support Yukon communities. Being physically present allows staff and contractors to build trust, strengthen relationships, and deepen engagement with recreation staff, educators, youth, and partner organizations. By showing up, listening, and working alongside local leaders, we gain a deeper understanding of each community's unique strengths and challenges. These visits often lead to new partnerships, future programming opportunities, and lasting relationships that grow stronger over time.

Last year, RPAY had the honour of supporting community events in Beaver Creek, Burwash Landing, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Mayo, Ross River, Teslin, and Whitehorse. Twelve Yukon communities received free promotional items for 27 different events. Bike repair stations, bike racks, and Toy Sheds were placed in rural communities through the GO Yukon Equipment Grant program. Although this program has ended, the equipment will continue to make recreation more accessible for years to come.



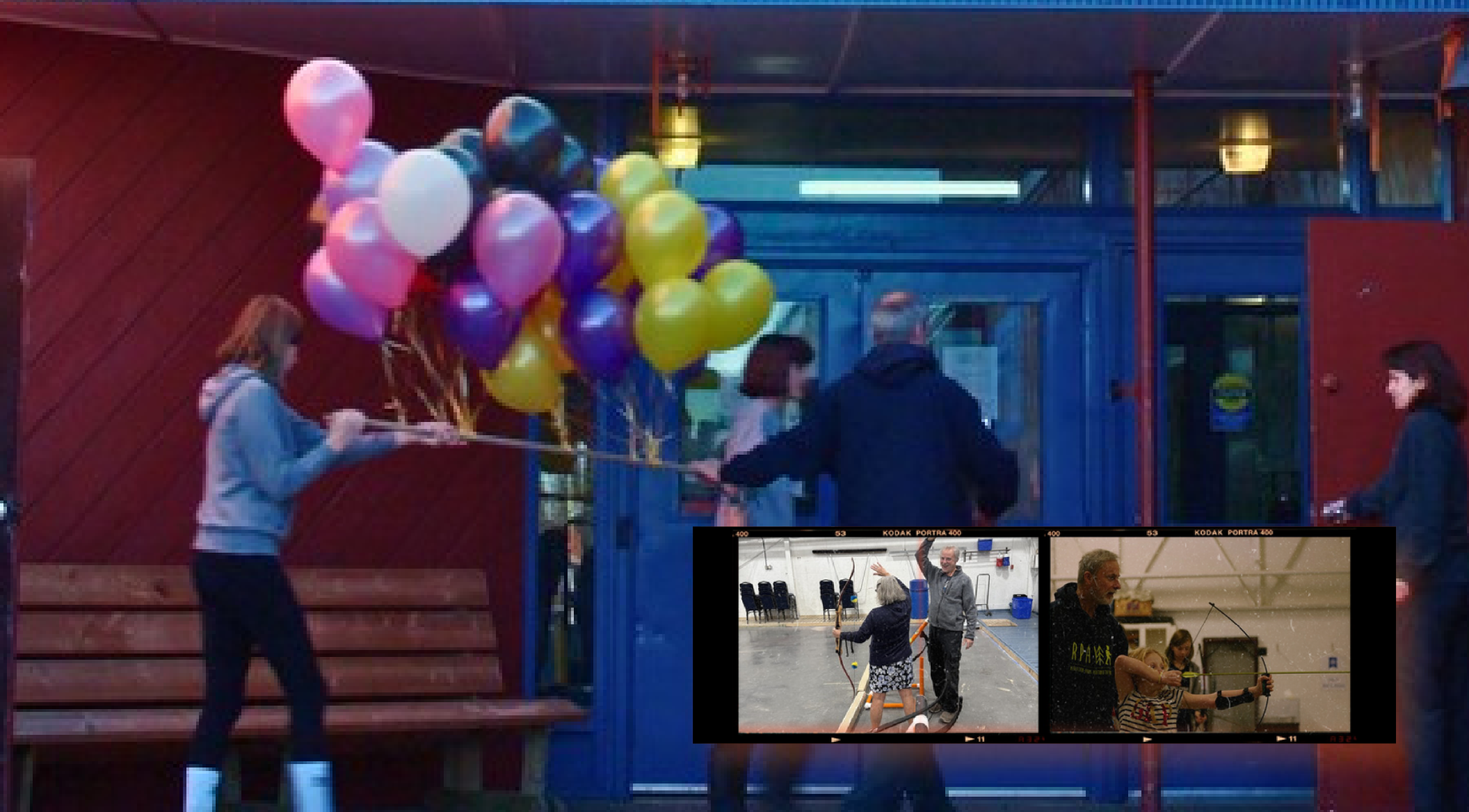
"During our visit, children of all ages were excited to participate and try new activities, and many showed increased confidence, teamwork, and enthusiasm for being active."

February

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RECREATION CENTRE



RHEAL Program

RHEAL = Rural Healthy Eating Active Living

The RHEAL Program encourages people in Yukon's rural and First Nation communities to get active, have fun, and feel their best!

With RPAY's support, local leaders offer fun, inclusive recreation activities, many of which take place outdoors. Whether it's trying a new activity, connecting with others, or getting outside, the RHEAL Program helps create healthier, happier communities.

In the past year...

- 578 Yukoners were more active because of the RHEAL program; and
- 17 leaders offered programs, such as Youth Drop-in, Cross Country Skiing, Yoga, Group Fitness, Kids in the Kitchen, Mini and Might Movers, and Archery in
- 8 communities: Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mendenhall, Mount Lorne, Teslin, Watson Lake, Whitehorse.

Peter Kazda, a RHEAL Leader, recently retired from leading Faro's Archery program where everyone, young and old, would participate. As Peter explained, "Lots of participants took up archery as their hobby after attending the program; some even purchased their own equipment."

To learn more about Peter's impact, watch *The Recreation Effect* on RPAY's website.



"People of all ages and mobility ranges would join our Stretch 'n' Strengthen program and leave glowing happily and saying "thank you sooooo much".

March

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Active Play Experience (APE)

Yukon children spend more than half of their day at school, making it an important setting for developing lifelong habits of physical activity. The APE program helps create positive school environments where students develop leadership skills and experience the benefits of active play.

Through classroom activities, recess programming, and leadership opportunities, APE supports schools to foster a culture of active play and inclusion. Last year, 160 intermediate students learned to lead play during recess through APE Leadership. Another 233 students from schools in Beaver Creek, Dawson City, Haines Junction, Pelly Crossing, Teslin, and Whitehorse were introduced to games and activities through APE Classroom.

A growing component of APE is the use of Play Activation Kits (PAKs)—collections of loose parts that encourage outdoor, creative, and imaginative play. In the first year, 528 elementary students benefited from PAKs introduced in two schools. By supporting free play, exploration, and experiential learning, PAKs help make recess more engaging, inclusive, and fun while encouraging students to create their own games, adventures, and opportunities for active play. Students love pretending; the spoons and buckets; balls and pool noodles; playing hotel; and scooping up snow, putting it in a pile and jumping in it.



*"My students are so excited
to come see their big buddies
—it's like the energy of a
special day like Halloween or
Valentine's Day."*

April

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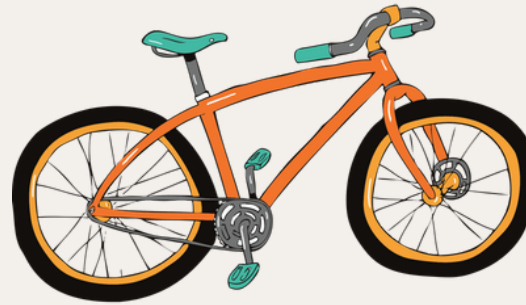
Cycle Smart

Cycling is an active mode of transportation that fosters independence and supports lifelong habits of physical activity.

The Cycle Smart program helps Yukon children develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to ride safely while promoting cycling as a healthy and sustainable way to get around. Delivered in partnership with Terra Riders, Cycle Smart combines classroom learning, bike handling skills, on-road riding, and basic bike maintenance. Children learn everything from balance, braking, gear selection, and signaling to repairing a flat tire and adjusting bike controls. Strong support from teachers, educational assistants, and volunteers contributes to a positive experience.

In 2025, Cycle Smart ran for six weeks. Among the 631 participants, 182 were from rural schools in 8 communities and another 449 were from 8 Whitehorse schools. Throughout the program, students continually challenged themselves, improved their bike handling and road safety awareness, and often exceeded their own expectations—some learning to ride independently for the first time.

"One girl learnt to ride a bike today! And, many of the grade 5 and 6 kids remembered the rules of the road and signaling that we taught them last year."



May

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Spring Aquatics Workshop

The Spring Aquatics Workshop (SAW) plays an important role in preparing rural Yukon communities for a successful summer swim season. Hosted annually by RPAY with Government of Yukon's Sport and Recreation Branch, SAW provides training, networking, and orientation to the territory for staff who manage, operate, and maintain community swimming pools.

The 2025 workshop was held in Dawson City and brought together 16 participants from communities across the territory while the 2026 workshop was jointly hosted in Whitehorse and Carcross for 11 participants. Through classroom instruction, hands-on pool training, re-certification opportunities, and discussions with experienced aquatic leaders, skills in safe pool operations, facility opening and shutdown procedures, troubleshooting, environmental health regulations, risk management, and emergency response were developed.

One of the workshop's greatest strengths is the opportunity it provides for aquatic staff to connect with peers and build a supportive network that extends beyond the training itself. By helping staff gain confidence and practical skills before pools open, the Spring Aquatics Workshop supports safe operations, strengthens local capacity, and helps communities welcome residents back to the pool each summer.



"The pool school is incredibly important for anybody going to work in community pools, I would of been significantly worse off without it."

June

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Swim Camps

Active and safe outdoor recreation is a priority. Outdoor recreation can be low-cost, accessible and sustainable as well as inclusive when people take part in ways that suit their interests and schedules. More people in rural Yukon use lakes and rivers for recreation than pools. RPAY's Swim Camp programs teach children, in communities without a pool, water safety skills so they can safely recreate in and around water-based environments.

Eighty-five children participated in Swim Camps held in Old Crow, Ross River and Teslin. Another Swim Camp for Haines Junction involved bussing children into Whitehorse for lessons.

Swim Camps were once again successful, with strong participation and solid skill development among youth. Although teaching in cold water conditions comes with challenges, leaders observed noticeable gains in confidence and water safety skills.

In partnership with Swim Yukon and Green Jobs, another 53 children took part in Swim Camps held in Mayo, Carmacks, Faro, and Pelly Crossing and in a Swim Meet hosted in Watson Lake. Swim camps and events follow the Lifesaving Society Junior Lifeguard Club program and provide an opportunity for children to develop the essential water safety and lifesaving skills to stay safe around lakes, rivers, and open water.



"There was an outstanding turnout of 26 children at Swim Camp in Old Crow. Great weather, community enthusiasm, and adult engagement made this year an absolute home run!"

July

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Active Play Leadership Workshops

Active Play Leadership Workshops foster the skills, confidence, and knowledge needed to create positive, inclusive, and active experiences for children and youth. Delivered by RPAY's APE Programmer and Government of Yukon's Physical Literacy Coordinator, this training is typically offered in the spring to help prepare staff to lead summer camps, after-school programs, and other community recreation programs.

Workshops focus on key topics such as group dynamics, physical literacy, inclusion, leadership, and active games. Through hands-on activities and practical learning, participants gain valuable tools to engage children and foster positive, active environments where everyone can participate and succeed.

In 2025, 31 recreation leaders took part in three Active Play Leadership Workshops while in 2026, 10 took part in one workshop in Whitehorse. Participants represented a variety of organizations and communities and left with increased confidence, new ideas, and practical strategies they could immediately apply in their programs.

By investing in recreation leaders, RPAY is helping strengthen local capacity and create high-quality recreation experiences for Yukon children and youth.



"This was a great active play workshop! I was introduced to some new games and ways to approach play that will translate well to my role as a recreation programmer. Janna and Alycia were WONDERFUL session leaders who created a safe space for growth and reflection."

August

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Annual Recreation Gathering

The Annual Recreation Gathering brings together recreation leaders from across the Yukon to connect, learn, share ideas, and celebrate the important role recreation plays in building healthy communities. The event provides valuable opportunities for networking, professional development, and peer support, helping participants feel inspired, motivated, and better equipped for the year ahead.

In 2025, the Gathering was hosted in Faro and Ross River. Twenty-five 25 participants from seven Yukon communities took part in workshops, discussions, local recreation activities, and a visit to Old Ross.

The Gathering is consistently described as a place for recreation leaders to reconnect and recharge and the opportunity to return home with fresh ideas, renewed energy, and a stronger sense of community.

Each year, we recognize an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to recreation. The 2025 RPAY Recognition Award was presented to Sophia Flather of Old Crow. Sophia lives a traditional, healthy lifestyle, leading her community by example. From maintaining ski trails to organizing annual bush camps, Sophia encourages everyone to get active out on the land. Her kindness, strength, and dedication to Gwich'in culture make her a true role model for her community and beyond.



"I love the Rec Gathering. The RPAY team does a phenomenal job. Rebecca is AMAZING!!! She should feel really proud of her efforts to coordinate this event and to foster a familial atmosphere, even between strangers."

September

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Recreation North Training Program

The Recreation North Training Program strengthens recreation leadership and management capacity in northern, rural, and remote communities. Delivered by RPAY and the recreation and parks associations of NWT and Nunavut, the program provides accessible online learning that helps recreation staff and volunteers develop the skills needed to support healthy, active communities. Training is offered in two streams leading to a certificate in Northern Recreation Leadership or in Northern Recreation Management.

In 2025, 19 Yukon recreation leaders from ten Yukon communities took part in 19 different learning events (aka mini-courses). They learned about leadership in community recreation; how to plan and budget for programs and events, and to manage risk. They learned about proposal and report writing, and how to create an annual plan.

Since the program began in 2018, 36 Yukon leaders have earned a Certificate in Northern Recreation Leadership and 13 have earned a Certificate in Northern Recreation Management. At the 2025 Recreation Gathering, leadership certificates were presented to Amber (Pelly Crossing) and Rebecca (Whitehorse) and management certificates were presented to Robyn (Marsh Lake) and Alycia (Whitehorse). These achievements reflect the growing strength and professionalism of Yukon's recreation sector.

"The leadership training inspired me to shape our recreation programs with purpose while the management training expanded my ability to do my job well. Above all, I learned that recreation is more than games; it is the most impactful thing you can do to grow healthy, happy, supportive, and safe communities."



October

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Winter Active for Life

The Winter Active for Life (WAFL) program encourages Yukoners of all ages to embrace winter and enjoy the many benefits of being active outdoors. The program includes an equipment library and support for winter programming and events.

Through the WAFL Library housed at the Whitehorse Nordic Centre, eligible schools, community groups, and organizations can borrow cross-country ski equipment, snowshoes, and kick sleds. Since 2009, WAFL equipment has removed barriers to being active in winter for families, schools, elders, newcomers, and community groups.

Last winter, 22 organizations—including schools, community groups, and a Yukon First Nation—accessed the WAFL Library. In total, 301 sets of skis, 319 pairs of boots, 192 sets of poles and 131 pairs of snowshoes were borrowed. Kick sleds were loaned out 106 times. WAFL equipment helped 1,174 individuals from Beaver Creek, Carcross, Dawson City, Faro, Haines Junction, Mayo, Mount Lorne, Tagish, and Whitehorse be more winter active.

As Dawson City leader explained, “We had many folks participating in our ski lessons who were new to the North. We simply introduced movement on skis and infected them with the joy of being outside even on the coldest days. Having a program like WAFL really fosters appreciation for getting outside and choosing healthy lifestyles in our northern climate.”



“The biggest impact of the WAFL Library for us (the Yukon Literacy Coalition) is getting families outside and moving together.”



November

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Gratitude

As another year draws to a close, we at RPAY would like to express our gratitude. We are grateful for many things, but most of all we are grateful to the people who share our passion for the powerful impact that recreation and parks can have on us all; our individual health and our collective well-being.

During December, take the time to reflect on the impact of recreation on the lives of the people around you. We see the benefits across the Yukon all the time. Community recreation happens because of you!

Thank you to our dedicated Board and for your many years of guidance.

Thank you to our committed funders, we certainly couldn't do what we do without your support!

Thank you to our partners and stakeholders - communities, schools, non-profit organizations, First Nations, and governments - across the territory and beyond.

Thank you to the recreation practitioners, leaders, and volunteers; you put your heart and sole into making your community welcoming, fun, active and healthy.

And, don't forget to celebrate the season with the RPAY Board and staff at our Open House this month!

"Recreation and parks are more than programs and places—they are catalysts for connection, well-being, and community."



December

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Thank you - Mähsi' cho - Shähw níthän - Gunatchîsh - Sógá sénlá' - Merci



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada



Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability
Association of Yukon Communities
BC Coastal Health
Canadian Parks & Wilderness Society
Canadian Parks and Recreation Association
Canadian Playground Safety Institute
Canadian Trails Federation
City of Whitehorse - Canada Games Centre



Coast Mountain Sports
Cycling Association Yukon
ElderActive Recreation Association
EverActive Schools
Fireweed Market Society
Government of Yukon Sport and Recreation Branch
Grant Dunham
Lifesaving Society
Local Authorities for Recreation
Lotteries Yukon
NWT Recreation and Parks Association
ParticipACTION
Public Health Agency of Canada
Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut
Recreation Facilities Network
Rural Yukon communities
Sean Healy
Sport Yukon
Swim Yukon
Whitehorse Nordic Centre
YSPOR Unit, Yukon Research Centre at YukonU
Yukon Physical Literacy Education Coordinator
Yukon Schools