

# THRIVE HERE

GIVE A GIFT TO TRANSFORM LIVES



# WHAT IT MEANS TO THRIVE

/THrīv/

1. To grow or develop well or vigorously
2. To prosper, be fortunate, or successful
3. To progress towards or realize a goal
4. Ultimately - it is the mind's and body's ability to flourish.

## MUCH MORE THAN A GYM

Sports – whether competing or playing for fun – are a significant part of life for many of us. Whether you remember being a player on the court, cheering from the bleachers, or celebrating a big win with teammates – sports enrich our lives and shape who we are.

At Okanagan College, we're celebrating more than 60 years of history, developing students who use their learning to contribute to our local workforce and communities. More than 60,000 alumni have graduated from OC since 1963, giving back and making impacts here in the region and around the world. Our OC community is diverse and welcomes everyone: we offer a place for students from all backgrounds, ages, and perspectives to come together to learn and grow.

That's why it surprises so many people to learn that our Kelowna campus does not have a gym or recreational facility today. There's no place for intramurals, pick-up games or tournaments, and no home side venue for the OC Coyotes' basketball and baseball teams to train. When the College community comes together to celebrate convocation or invites new students for orientation – we don't have a large indoor central hub or space.

This needs to change – and that's why we're prioritizing a new Recreation and Wellness Centre.

As our Kelowna campus continues to grow with new student housing and modern facilities, we want to be able to offer the best College experience possible – including one that prioritizes student health, wellness, and active lifestyle opportunities.

Generous donors have already stepped up to help make this project a reality sooner. Through their incredible giving, the OC Foundation has already built a fund of \$9 million. Now, we need to take this effort across the finish line and as a community, raise the remaining \$5 million together.

When built, we know the new Recreation and Wellness Centre will be a place that benefits OC students and through them, our broader community – because sports, wellness and recreation are essential in bringing people together to stay connected, learn and thrive.

## OC FACTS:

- ▶ Largest college in BC, outside Lower Mainland
- ▶ Second largest trades training, after BCIT
- ▶ 17,000 students annually
- ▶ Nearly 70% of students are local
- ▶ 20+ communities within 50 km of OC campus

*Dr. Neil Fassina, Okanagan College President  
Helen Jackman, Okanagan College Foundation Executive Director*

# WELLNESS THRIVES HERE.

## Build it and they will come

The impact of having a centralized facility that can accommodate so many different activities, from academic to recreational, cannot be overstated. It will be the “living room” of the campus where we can all gather; whether that be to join in cheering on our OC Coyotes teams, practicing mindfulness or celebrating the success of our graduating students.

- Intramural sports
- OC Coyote competitive sports
- Community gathering space
- Cultural celebrations
- Convocation setting
- Camp OC recreation facility
- Meditation and yoga
- Fitness Suite
- Running Track





# CONNECTIONS THRIVE HERE.

**James Coble**  
Dean of Students

**“Wellness is a priority at the College as we know that student well-being is directly linked to academic success.** Our OC Wellness Strategy takes cues from Indigenous perspectives on wellness as we strive to support students physically, emotionally, psychologically, and financially for a holistic approach to student well-being.

The new Recreation and Wellness Centre will be huge for our college community and is central to our wellness strategy. The Centre will be a gathering place where students can connect to each other and the campus itself. It will bring a sense of belonging outside the classroom and help to remove barriers, lower anxiety and stress, and ultimately contribute to student success.”

**Rebekah Dingwall**  
4th year Business Student

**“It is key to have connections when you come to college.** The students that you connect with are experiencing the same things you’re going through and when you have someone to talk to, someone that can relate, this becomes your support system and helps get you through the stresses of your courses. The Recreation and Wellness Centre is going to create an environment where students can go and meet people and connect.”

**Choi Leong**  
International Student

**“The Recreation and Wellness Centre will help international students more quickly find a sense of community and belonging.** This will help us learn about our new environment and classes, and if someone has questions there will be people that we have met to help us find our way. There is a sense of support that comes with belonging, and this will help international students get the most out of their college experience at OC.”

**Ernest Li**  
OC Students’ Union Elected Student Representative

**“The creation of the Wellness Centre is a very important project for students.** This facility will help improve the health and wellness of all our students, especially those of us who spend a lot of time on campus. A centre like this will help create additional opportunities to connect and thrive together.”

# DRIVING THE DREAM:

## Folk family gift of \$5M is inspired by belief that sport transforms lives

It takes vision and trust to be the first to commit to a new project. A belief in the organization behind it and complete conviction in the impact it will have. In this case, it was an unwavering certainty that sports and recreation have the power to transform lives.

It is this vision and faith that we are indebted to. It inspired the Folk family's transformational gift. A gift that will result in Okanagan College's Recreation and Wellness Centre on the Kelowna campus.

Don, Karen and their son Rodney – a family united by their love of sport. Football was the family favourite thanks to Don's passion for the game, while Karen also loved curling, racquetball and golf. Karen and Don could often be found at the golf course on a beautiful Okanagan day. As competitive as they were, it was the comradery and friendship that they enjoyed most. Sport wasn't just about staying healthy; it was a way of connecting with your community. It was a way of being a part of your community.

And being a part of the community, being instrumental in the growth of Kelowna was something the Folk family did through their business vision and entrepreneurship. Back in 1971, Don acquired the local Chevrolet dealership. With a discipline learned as a young sportsman, for the next 43 years Don oversaw the growth of the dealership from a 15-car showroom to a major retailer of over 750 vehicles. The Folk Chevrolet dealership grew to be a pinnacle employer in the Okanagan, instrumental in the economic growth and prosperity of the region, with a reputation the community trusted and believed in.

In both a business and personal capacity, the Folks have supported countless sports teams, charity events and deserving causes in Kelowna. From healthcare to education, they understood that philanthropy has the power to elevate everyone to realize their potential.

“*Playing sport and staying active is crucial to physical and mental well-being, says Don Folk. No matter the level – whether you are chasing a gold medal or playing for fun – it teaches life skills, teamwork, risk taking. It builds confidence and resilience, and forges bonds that last a lifetime.*”



So, it should be no surprise that when the time came to support the community once more, this time by kick-starting a much-needed Recreation and Wellness Centre at Okanagan College, the Folk family stepped forward to ensure students have access to the facility they deserve.

They gifted an incredible \$5 million. Their gift is the largest in Okanagan College's history, and one of the largest gifts ever to a college in British Columbia. Karen sadly passed away on August 10, 2023. Her passion for sports and community will live on, as thousands of students compete, play and connect in the Centre, building the skills and strength to

become the next generation of community leaders and skilled professionals.

**“This is not just a gymnasium.** It will be the heart of our campus. This new Recreation and Wellness Centre will foster belonging and community, helping our students thrive in their education and their future endeavours,” says Neil Fassina, Okanagan College President.

“The Folk family's gift is the driving force behind one of our most important classrooms, and we are truly grateful for their generosity, trust and vision.”



# MAKING IT HAPPEN

**Cliff and Lois Serwa**  
Honorary Campaign Chairs

When approached to support the campaign to build a much needed Recreation and Wellness Centre at OC, not only did Cliff and Lois step forward and contribute financially, they agreed to become Honorary Chairs for the campaign.

**“The Recreational and Wellness Centre has to happen, and sooner rather than later. There’s no question of it.**

We believe firmly that access to recreational sports and fitness on campus will enhance the quality of life for the students at OC, and ultimately the students are the future of our community.”

# FACTS SUPPORT THE NEED

- ▶ Since much of their day can involve sitting in lectures and studying, post-secondary students are prone to a sedentary lifestyle, which without the addition of physical activities can lead to physical and mental health issues.
- ▶ In a national survey of Canadian post-secondary students using campus mental health services, 95% reported being overwhelmed and exhausted, 83.7% reported anxiety, 86% were depressed, and 81% experienced loneliness.
- ▶ Research shows that there is a demonstrated association between physical activity and positive mental health. Adults who engage in physical activity are nearly three times as likely to have good mental health than those who lead an inactive lifestyle.
- ▶ Evidence suggests that increasing physical activity and physical fitness will improve basic cognitive functions related to attention and memory which facilitate learning and academic performance.
- ▶ With the addition of the new student housing (216 additional beds, 359 in all) there is a real need for a facility that will enhance student life on campus. The Recreation and Wellness Centre will be a much needed central meeting place on the Kelowna OC campus for students away from home to gather and socialize.



# RESILIENCE THRIVES HERE.

**Nick Pelletier**  
Alumni, Ultra-Endurance Athlete

**“Sport is a driving force that has shaped my life.** I moved to Kelowna at 19 to play on the OC Coyotes Baseball team but I struggled with concussions and had to leave the team. I pivoted to lower impact endurance sports and quickly developed a passion for ultra-endurance sports. I recently swam the entire length of Okanagan Lake, which took 71 hours. It wasn’t my first attempt, and I didn’t break a world record as I hoped, but the perseverance learned through sports reminded me I could achieve it.

There are lessons in sport for everyone. Sport puts you in situations that force you to adapt and learn things on the fly. You may find yourself in a position to be challenged but by putting yourself in these tough spots you learn how to push yourself and develop resilience.

With a place like the Recreation and Wellness Centre, anyone can get involved and benefit from sports – whether it is to play on an intramural sports team, workout, or meet your friends on the indoor running track. The camaraderie as well as the mental well-being students will get will make this an awesome place for everybody to have in a centralized location, right on campus.”



# SUCCESS THRIVES HERE.

**AJ Gill**  
Partner at MNP

**“This facility will enhance student life at Okanagan College, and it will also do a great service to the business community and the community at large – it is long overdue.**

As a parent who drove my son for the better part of three years to Penticton for his basketball games, I often wished that there had been a gymnasium or a recreation centre on the Kelowna campus. A facility such as this would have been a real game-changer for my son and his team.

Through my work at MNP I have seen firsthand the value of OC graduates to our local economy. We bring on many co-op students from the College, not just from accounting and business, but from other faculties too.

Maintaining a student’s wellbeing while studying is critical for success, so when a student has access to a facility that can help them relax, exercise and socialize – a better academic performance and more positive college experience will be realized.”



# COMMUNITY THRIVES HERE.

**Helena Jordo**  
Program Administrator - Youth Programming

"Camp OC has grown significantly in the last 20 years. We now have 400 kids on campus each week throughout the summer and we need larger space where we can move around and explore, and challenge the kids in different ways to let them learn new things.

**With the addition of the Recreation and Wellness Centre, Camp OC will be able to expand its programing and include some of the sports camps that we have not been able to do before, in a safe and healthy environment, no matter what our summer conditions are like."**

Camp OC participants are Okanagan College's youngest students. Studies indicate that when children are exposed to post-secondary education at a young age, they are more likely to pursue their academic dreams upon high school graduation.



**Steve Thomson**  
Former MLA for Kelowna-Mission

"I look back fondly at my time in post-secondary education, and participating in athletics was a critical part of my experience. Mental health, intramural sports, fitness, and recreation are a key part of student success, and building a proper facility will fill a current gap in the student experience.

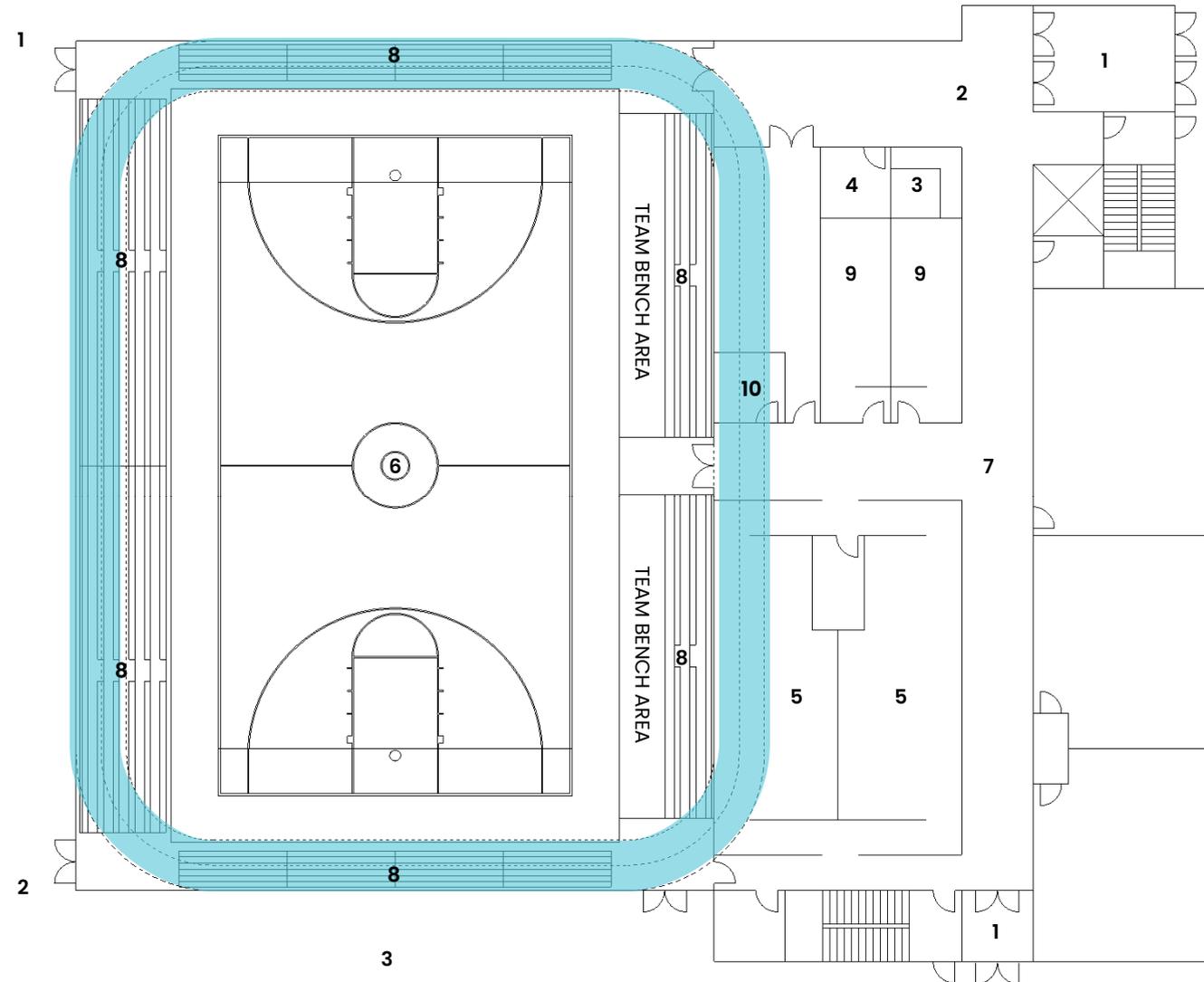
**The Recreation and Wellness Centre will not only support student experience, it will also be a positive connection to our community. "**

# KEY FEATURES AND AMENITIES

The Recreation and Wellness Centre at OC is a modern facility for sports, recreation and wellness activities for all students, intramural and collegiate teams, staff and the community.

## Specific amenities include:

- A multipurpose gymnasium with a competition size court, used flexibly for a range of sport and recreation activities and community events.
- Fitness suite with state-of-the-art equipment
- 2 lane suspended indoor running track
- Retractable spectator seating for 800+
- Potential future phase with multipurpose rooms for programming



## Level 1:

1. Entry
2. Lobby
3. Canteen
4. Gym Office
5. Locker Room
6. Gymnasium
7. Corridor
8. Retractable Spectator Seating (+800 Seats)
9. Washroom
10. Referee Room

## Level 2:

Fitness Suite and Multipurpose Classroom

 Suspended Running Track

# DONOR RECOGNITION



DONATION	NAME/LOGO PLACEMENT
\$1M	Gym Floor - Centre Court
\$500K	Gym Floor - End Court or Running Track
\$250K	Name above set of bleachers
\$100K	Name on 1 of 15 unique spaces in the centre with photo and a quote
\$50K	Name on Main Interior Donor wall
\$1,000 - \$25K	Recognition on Outdoor Donor display

# TEAM OC FOUNDATION



From left to right: Stephen Atherton; Samantha Blandon; Helen Jackman; Sasha Carter and Pam Prentice

Contact us to transform lives of our students and community.

250.762.5445 ext. 4773  
[foundation@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:foundation@okanagan.bc.ca)

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*Without basketball, I would've quit school early and driven a tractor and been quite happy. If I had done that, then there may not have been a Big White and I certainly wouldn't have been in politics. It was education that enabled me to be able to get involved in a variety of different fields – but it all started as a focus from my activity in sports. ~ Cliff Serwa*

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# TOGETHER LET'S THRIVE



For more stories and project information scan here.



**THRIVEHERE**  
BUILDING RECREATION + WELLNESS

**OC** OKANAGAN COLLEGE  
FOUNDATION