

YWCA Banff Revamps Conference for Boys

In partnership with Calgary Sexual Health, the YWCA is relaunching Strength in Being a Boy, their free conference for boys in Grades 4-6.

April 9, 2018 – Banff, AB – As an organization whose mission surrounds the empowerment of women and girls, the YWCA felt compelled to better engage young men and boys in the Bow Valley in the conversation surrounding healthy relationships and gender stereotypes. Having established two versions of their successful Power of Being a Girl conference, the YWCA is looking forward to delivering on a community-wide request for a similar program for boys with Strength in Being a Boy (SBB) on May 5, 2018.

After piloting SBB in 2016, the YWCA enlisted help from an organization whose experience working with young men would ensure the next edition of the conference best addressed the unique needs of this demographic. “The YWCA has long had a strong partnership with Calgary Sexual Health. We admire their work and were grateful for the opportunity to leverage the expertise of their thriving, evidence-based WiseGuyz program as we refreshed Strength in Being a Boy,” explained Reave MacLeod, Director of Programs at YWCA Banff. “Their program was initially developed for grade nine boys, so we were thrilled when they agreed to partner with us to expand their repertoire and develop a curriculum for our younger group.”

The free, full-day SBB conference at the YWCA will be led by WiseGuyz and YWCA Banff staff, who will educate the boys on consent, emotions, healthy relationships with self and others, and gender stereotypes. Men and boys are an essential part of the solution to ending gender-based violence, and SBB will instill participants with positive ideas of masculinity that combat the toxic stereotypes often portrayed in media and imposed on them through peer pressure.

The WiseGuyz program hopes that, “by challenging stereotypes about masculinity, teaching boys to respect themselves and others, and giving them the skills to have healthy relationships, [they] can change a generation.” Having run their program with great success over the last few years, WiseGuyz facilitators are ideal experts to engage boys from the Bow Valley in conversations surrounding relationships and emotional health, and to help them navigate the pressure to fit into a narrow idea of the masculine role. Parents can expect their children to enjoy a fun-filled day of activities including hip-hop turntables, baking, scavenger hunt and a comic book/mask activity. WiseGuyz facilitators will provide targeted education, skills development and support to the young men participating, in order to provide them with tools to pursue safe, healthy relationships and maintain their long-term mental and physical well-being.

Online registration for Strength in Being a Boy is now available online at <http://ywcabanff.ca/sbb/>. Limited spots are available so register early!

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About Strength in Being a Boy

YWCA Banff recognizes that men and boys are an integral part of the solution to ending gender-based violence. As part of their commitment to engaging this demographic, Strength in Being a Boy (SBB) was developed in conjunction with Calgary Sexual Health's WiseGuyz program. SBB participants enjoy a full-day of fun activities while facilitators educate them on themes such as consent, emotions, healthy relationships and empathy through constructive conversations.

WiseGuyz was developed by Calgary Sexual Health to engage junior high boys in a weekly program focused on four key modules: human rights, sexual healthy, gender, and positive relationships. Their program addresses the issues young men face today and gives them tools to engage in healthy relationships; helps young men understand the connection between masculinity and male norms, sexuality and violence; provides targeted education, skills development, and support to young men to help them achieve sexual well-being and healthy relationships. For more information on WiseGuyz visit;

<https://www.calgarysexualhealth.ca/programs-workshops/wiseguyz/>.

For questions about Strength in Being a Boy, please contact Sophie Clarke, Anti-Violence Counsellor & Educator at YWCA Banff at VPO@ywcabanff.ca, or (403) 760-3200.

About YWCA Banff

YWCA Banff is a community-based, social profit organization with over 100 years of experience in Banff and the Bow Valley. Governed by a volunteer Board of Directors, YWCA shapes a safe, inclusive community that empowers women and girls.

In pursuit of this mission, the YWCA Banff focuses on the following priorities:

- Providing a continuum of services and programs that activate our community to end gender-based violence.
- Establishing a spectrum of sustainable housing solutions with a focus on women.
- Advancing the rights of women and girls through leadership development, community awareness, training and advocacy.
- Building a sustainable organization respected for exceptional people and employment practices; financial stability, ongoing social and community investment and wisest operational practices.

Media Contact

Carla Snow, Manager of Marketing & Communications

YWCA Banff

T: (403) 760-3212

E: carla@ywcabanff.ca