

Youth Wellness Society of
Mackenzie (YWS)
PO Box 1153
Mackenzie, BC
V0J2C0



RE: Request from Youth Wellness Society to use space at Recreation Centre.

April 22, 2025

Dear Mayor and Council,

Thank you for taking the time to consider our request being made below. We want to make Mackenzie a better place for Youth and are open to any other ideas Council may have. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

First, another thank you to the Council. The Youth Wellness Society is extremely grateful for the work the Council has already done to advocate for bringing Foundry BC services to Mackenzie. From writing to the Minister, bringing the topic up at UBCM and writing NCLGA resolutions, your commitment to this cause is outstanding! We hope our request here can help further this mutually shared goal.

Our request is utilization of space at the Mackenzie Recreation Centre. We have met with Director Gilmer and have identified the space upstairs formerly used by the Mackenzie Mountaineers as an ideal location, and we are only proceeding with this request with the Recreation Centre's support, our President and Vice President met with Director Gilmer and Manager Siebert prior to writing this letter to make sure we had their blessing and got their feedback. Our group wants to enhance the Recreation Centre in multiple ways which we will describe below. But before that, we will address the elephant in the room, cost.

We as a Society understand the District is in tough financial times, and do not want to add any further burden onto the Mackenzie taxpayers nor District staff. We view our request as being part of the solution to those two issues and will explain how. First, the burden on taxpayers. We are requesting free use of this space, for now. We are new and have no commitments from Foundry or any other partner. But our vision is to do the work, show that we are a positive force in the community and be ready for when Foundry's next call for expansion comes out. And if that happens, that comes with funding that we would then be able to pay rent to the Rec Centre for. Another scenario is once space is confirmed, is an application to the South Peace Mackenzie Trust to hire a staff person. Should this be successful, that staff person's job would be to seek funding to eventually pay for rent. We would even be happy to sign an agreement that if we reach a certain level of funds the 'free' usage transitions to rent. None of this is ideal, but we view it as an investment to eventually get more, much needed, services to

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Mackenzie. To put it simply, if Council supports this request now and things go well, this could be a potential source of revenue for the District, not a cost.

The second issue is staff time. And again, we view this project as helping with that. Our goal is to create a space for youth. Any time that Recreation Centre staff are currently dealing with young people being in spaces and doing things they are not supposed to, we want to help alleviate that challenge. In our meetings with Director Gilmer, we heard about the struggle with this, and our organization wants to take part of that struggle off District staff's shoulders and put it on ours. And not just the struggles but also take what is normally a problem of youth loitering and turning that into something positive and giving Youth more outlets.

Now that we talked about the challenges, let's talk about the vision! We want to create a space for youth to feel welcomed and supported. We have two visions for this. Part of it is a youth 'drop in' space. This would be a space in the Rec Centre that is open for youth to be youth. We as the TWS would purchase things like foosball, ping pong tables, couches and other such amenities. And to emphasize the point, we as the Society would be procuring these things and allowing their free use at the Recreation Centre. Furthermore, the YWS would host youth activities hosted by different volunteers in space. We would start slow, but once a paid staff person is able to be hired, they would be responsible for organizing and soliciting ideas for youth drop in ideas. Second, we would create a private safe room where Youth would have direct access to Foundry Virtual Services. This would provide youth with private, safe and professional support currently not available in Mackenzie. Members of our Board have already utilized Foundry Virtual Services with Youth in Mackenzie and have seen how incredibly impactful it can be. The issue has been finding space and the technology to do this in a discrete and safe place where Youth do not need another support to access, which this proposal hopes to solve. This is the only part of our request where we would request a space exclusively for the use of the Youth Wellness Society and not open to the general public. We would design this room by splitting it in half, half being an office space for a paid staff person, and the second being this private 'support' room for youth where the Foundry Virtual technology would be available. Because of the confidentiality of this, we would request exclusive access to this one specific space. And we are aware of Union processes and are committed to working with them should renovations of the space be needed (at YWS' costs of course).

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To conclude, we want to mention our big picture vision for our organization. For Foundry BC to work, which is the ultimate goal for all of this, you need the whole community to buy in. The entire vision is to bring organizations and services together and make it easy for Youth to navigate bureaucracy and systems to get support. With this in mind, the Youth Wellness Society views bringing together the community as intrinsic to its purpose. Once a paid staff person is on board, working with other organizations to build connections would be their number 1 job (apart from supporting the youth themselves). We are already demonstrating this desire with the space we are requesting. It was told to us by the Rec Centre that the space is already used for gymnastics, figure skating and martial arts at times. We view that as a huge positive for the space, not a negative. The fact some youth already know the space for their recreation is amazing and we only hope to increase that. We hope to facilitate other organizations being able to host youth activities and events as well.

We are extremely excited by this project, and hope the District shares our enthusiasm to increase support for Youth in Mackenzie! We are a new non-profit, and have attached our Mission Statement, Vision and Values to an appendix to this letter to give the Mayor and Council a better sense of who we are. We are happy to discuss any of this further.

Thanks,

Jesse Wright

Jesse Wright – President of Youth Wellness Society of Mackenzie

On Behalf of the Board of Directors

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Appendix:

MISSION STATEMENT

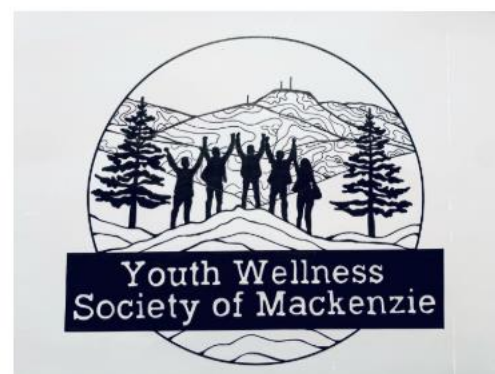
A non-profit that works with the youth of Mackenzie to lead full, well and social lives, while supporting them in finding their full potential.



VISION

The MYWS strives to improve the wellbeing of youth (12-29) in Mackenzie through 3 areas of activity:

1. Providing low barrier space for youth to feel belonging/safety/support.
2. Advocating on behalf of youth to improve support available to them locally, regionally, provincially and nationally.
3. Providing leadership opportunities for youth.



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VALUES

1. Youth Centered: Every choice/decision will be made on the basis of whether it is helping Youth live their best lives.
2. Being led by youth themselves. Not adults talking down but walking beside youth on their journey.
3. Actions need to consider both physical and emotional well-being.
4. Ethics and Professionalism: Society needs to be trusted by the community, as youth will be spending time with us. High standards of accountability.
5. The organization will work with youth regardless of racial, social economic, sexuality, religion, cultural, all abilities.
6. The organization understands the unique challenges, circumstances and history of generational trauma and situations of First Nations, Metis and Inuit youth. And all staff and volunteers are committed to ongoing learning to better assist and support youth.
7. An Integrated Youth Services (IYS) Approach

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Jesse Wright

Vice President: Cassandra Carter

Secretary/Treasurer: Mahgen Pledge

Director(s) at Large: Tianna Klein, Michaela Wright

Non-Voting Members: Carmen Schalles, Heather Moore, Jamie Hill

Formerly: Alyssha Turnbull (moved away but was part of original board and YWS wants to recognize her amazing support getting the group off the ground!)

***The Board has a seat reserved for somebody from the Recreation Centre to sit on it. Alyssha filled that role in the beginning, and are hoping to find someone else to eventually fill the role.