

YONA



YONA HOSTS EL SISTEMA GUESTS FROM ACROSS CANADA

By Jacquie McNulty

In November 2024, YONA welcomed guests from other Canadian El Sistema inspired programs to connect in person and visit YONA. Alysha Armanious from Phil Kids and the Calgary Philharmonic, Jeffrey Acosta from Sistema Winnipeg and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, and Chelsey Hiebert of the Sistema Canada Network congregated in Edmonton for this special visit, financed by the Sistema Canada Network, after years of connecting virtually through the national network.

Our guests visited 3 out of our 5 sites and saw a variety of classes including choir, small group instrument class, and orchestra. The visit ended with our guests attending a donor tour of our YONA at the Winspear Site, where members from all 4 institutions spoke to the value of coming together as a larger network to support all programs and their students.



A particular element that makes YONA unique among Sistema inspired programs is our site that operates at the Winspear Centre, a major concert venue where the highest caliber of artistry is showcased daily, to inspire our students.

YONA is grateful for our friendships within the EI Sistema inspired community and looks forward to our continued collaboration within the Sistema Canada Network.

JOIN US FOR MUSIC AND INSPIRATION – A NIGHT TO SUPPORT YONA!



Some of our talented musicians are set to perform on the Winspear Stage, in front of an intimate audience of guests on March 12, as a part of a fundraising event for the program.

The evening will see guests seated on the stage itself, for a unique perspective of the beautiful Winspear Centre hall, and will feature multiple performances from YONA students. We're also pleased to announce that Pacho Flores, an El Sistema alumnus set to make his ESO debut, will also be featured in the program!

If you would like to enjoy an inspirational evening filled with music and joy, please consider joining us. Doors will open at 5:30, with the program running from 6-7 pm. While this is a free event, everyone will be asked to consider making a contribution to YONA.

To RSVP, please email Mahima Sood at msood@winspearcentre.com before March 5th. Space is limited, so book your spot today!

FUELING YOUNG MUSICIANS: HOW YONA'S SNACK PROGRAM MAKES A DIFFERENCE



A glimpse at snack time at the YONA Winspear Site.

By Trena Taralson

At YONA, snack time is more than just a break—it's an essential part of our program. Every day after school, students begin their YONA experience with a nutritious snack, ensuring they have the energy and focus needed to learn and play music until 6 PM. Each snack includes a grain (granola bars or crackers), a fruit (apples, bananas, oranges, or applesauce), and a dairy item (yogurt or cheese). This balanced nutrition helps students stay engaged, energized, and ready to tackle the challenges of the day.

This year, we made an exciting improvement to how we provide these essential snacks. Previously, individual sites were responsible for purchasing and picking up snacks from retail grocery stores. Now, our ordering process is centralized to one site, and volunteers then deliver the snacks to all our sites across the city.

Thanks to the sponsorship of the Cameron Corporation, our students always have access to these healthy and delicious snacks. Starting YONA with an after-school snack ensures every student has the nutrients they need to succeed, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

A heartfelt thank you to Cameron Corporation for your incredible support of the YONA nutrition program. Your contribution is making a meaningful difference in the lives of our students every day!

YONA SPOTLIGHT: NARDOS, VIOLIN STUDENT



How long have you been in YONA?
3 years.

What are your favourite songs?
Minuet I and Farmyard Adventure (a commission for students in El Sistema inspired programs made by the Sistema Canada Network).

What is your favourite YONA memory?
Fun days at YONA with all of the students together making pancakes!

How would you describe YONA?
YONA is a free program where you can learn instruments. It's very fun because you meet new people.

You can keep up to date on all of the happenings at YONA, learn more about our amazing students and staff, and what they're working on.

Instagram: [@yonasistema](https://www.instagram.com/yonasistema)

Facebook: [YONA-Sistema](https://www.facebook.com/YONA-Sistema)

THANK YOU



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