

YONA

YONA OPENS ITS DOORS AT IVOR DENT SCHOOL!



Our new YONA site at Ivor Dent School is officially open! The YONA team has been working hard over the past couple of months to get the site set up and ready to welcome students for their first day on February 2nd.

The site currently has one brass class with 15 students in grades 3-5, and plans are in place to add a woodwinds class at the school in the fall.



The new students will be playing the trumpet or trombone and are getting ready to graduate to their real instruments in a couple of weeks. Right now, they are practicing with mouthpieces and learning to care for their future instruments with a plastic version they helped create themselves.

"My favourite thing so far has been seeing how excited all the kids are about instruments - they are so eager to learn, and their faces light up when they get to try them. It's been such a thrill!"

- Kevin Yue, YONA Teaching Artist

The students were also invited to visit the Winspear Centre YONA site, where they watched a rehearsal for YONA's Winter Concert and had the opportunity to hang out with our senior level brass students.



Our new Ivor Dent students will make their debut on the Winspear Centre stage at our annual fundraising concert, Road to Joy, coming up on June 2nd. Be sure to mark this date off in your calendars; you won't want to miss it!

Thank you to everyone who has helped make this site a reality, from donors, volunteers, advocates, and staff. We're grateful for your support and your heart for this program, where more students are now experiencing the joy of learning music together.

MOMENTS FROM OUR WINTER CONCERT



Congratulations to all our students on a job well done at this year's Winter Concert! On February 10th, students from all YONA sites took to the Winspear stage to perform for family and friends.



The concert included a ceremonial baton passing to YONA's new Artistic Director, Shah Sadikov, who conducted the last performance of the evening.



The piece was *Triple Concerto in D Major* for trumpet, violin, and cello, composed by G. P. Telemann. It featured solos from YONA teaching artists Viktoria Grynenko, Nava Yamach, and Kevin Yue playing alongside the La Bruyère Orchestra.

HELPING STUDENTS THRIVE, ONE SNACK AT A TIME



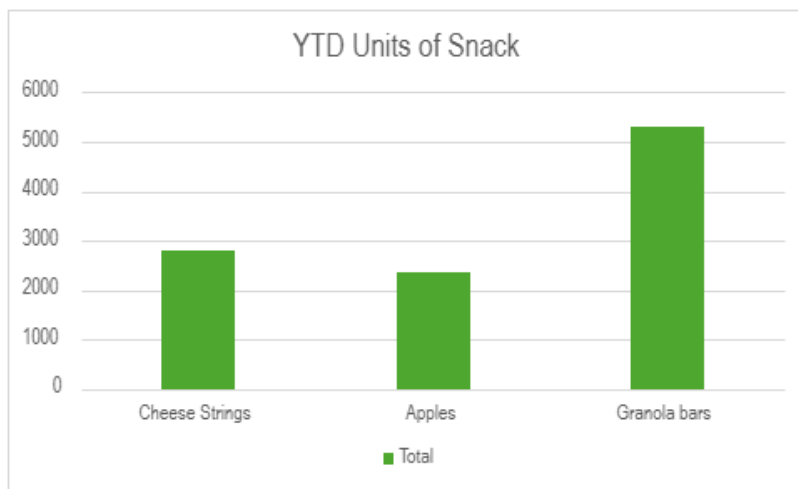
YONA students at St. Catherine school, alongside Site Coordinator Matthew Ketchum, enjoying "Fro-Yo Friday."

When students arrive at YONA after a full school day, it's time to reset and refuel before the music starts. Every day they get a balanced snack that includes a grain, fruit, and dairy item to give them the energy they need to learn and play their instruments.

Matthew Ketchum, YONA Site Coordinator at St. Catherine's School, sees firsthand how valuable this time is for students, "The snack program is about more than just food; it's about providing a sense of security and care. My goal is when a student walks into YONA and sees a healthy snack waiting for them, they know they are cared for and valued."

Yogurt tubes are one of the snack options offered to the kids, so last year Ketchum got the idea to put a few boxes in the freezer at the end of the week, and "Fro-Yo Fridays" was born!

"The kids love it! It is a very small action that orients the whole site towards finishing the week strong. Everyone looks forward to Friday and in a tiny way let's each child start their weekend with something good."



YONA’s snack program is made possible thanks to the generous support of Cameron Corporation, who continues to come alongside the program to help our students succeed.

“Cameron Corporation is proud to continue our support of YONA and its mission to build an inclusive community where every child can thrive. We are especially honored to sponsor the nutrition program, as we believe that fueling young musicians with healthy food is essential for their creativity and focus. By ensuring no student practices on an empty stomach, we help empower them to reach their full potential.”



Cameron Corporation volunteers help to prepare cardboard instruments alongside YONA staff.

Volunteers with Cameron Corporation also took time this past summer to help our YONA team build cardboard instruments for new students.

When a student begins YONA, they first learn about their instrument and how to care for it with a cardboard or plastic version before graduating onto their real

instruments. This year, we had new bass and violin students – so there was a lot of cardboard to cut and glue!

Thank you, Cameron Corporation, YONA is so grateful for all your help!

YONA PARTNERS WITH THE U OF A TO TRAIN FUTURE MUSIC EDUCATORS



The String Pedagogy Students (Stringterns) with their professor Guillaume Tardif and YONA Interim Manager Olivia Menard, at the final debrief meeting at the end of the semester.

This year, a pilot program for string pedagogy was formed in partnership between the University of Alberta and YONA. Over two months, several U of A students studying under Professor Guillaume Tardif joined YONA classrooms as “Stringterns,” gaining hands-on experience teaching strings in a group-based, community-focused setting. For YONA, the program was an exciting way to strengthen our connection to Edmonton’s music community and support the next generation of musicians and educators.

The Stringterns began with three weeks of observation in our string and woodwind classes, orchestra rehearsals, and choir sessions to gain a full picture of how YONA programs run. Each Stringtern was then paired with an experienced YONA Teaching Artist. Over the following three weeks, they taught once a week in YONA classrooms with ongoing mentorship and feedback.

It was an experience many of the interns say they were grateful for. Regis, a viola Stringtern, shared:

“I found the program very helpful for me as a student who was interested in learning more about teaching. The hands-on experience in this setting is way different from

the usual one-on-one format, and it definitely helped me think of different ways of teaching I wouldn't have thought of before.”

All of us at YONA are excited to watch these Stringterns continue to grow in their music and teaching careers. We also look forward to building off this partnership and offering the program again in the future.

YONA SPOTLIGHT: NAOMI, VIOLIN STUDENT



Naomi, 5th year YONA student at Winspear site

How long have you been in YONA?

This is my 5th year. I used to go to YONA at St. Catherine school. This is my 1st year moving up to the Winspear site.

What instrument do you play?

Violin

What are your favourite songs to play and why?

I think it's Concerto because it's a really nice piece and it's really energetic.

How did it feel to come to the Winspear Centre site this year?

It felt great, it's a new year! It's fun to be in the La Bruyère Orchestra.

How would you describe YONA?

It's a really great site at the Winspear, and other kids should join. It's an after-school program where you can learn instruments.

What is your favourite YONA memory?

At the end of the year when we get slurpees and ice cream.

Piece of advice to a first-year student in YONA?

Practice a lot!

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

