

2023-2024

# Impact Report

Moving Canada into Action



## About ParticipACTION

ParticipACTION is an iconic Canadian charitable organization and an enduring part of Canada's physical activity history, encouraging people to get healthy by getting active since 1971. Through our award-winning public education campaigns, best-in-class thought leadership and innovative engagement initiatives, we are working to build a more resilient and accessible culture of movement for everyone.



## Reconciliation Action Statement

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ParticipACTION acknowledges that colonialism has harmed Indigenous communities across Canada and that our industry has had adverse impacts on Indigenous health through banning traditional forms of physical activity and using physical activity as an assimilation tool.

ParticipACTION commits to supporting Indigenous communities through measuring and reporting on Indigenous physical activity, supporting Indigenous-led organizations, and sharing Indigenous stories and imagery that honour First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. We will work to advance the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and continue being open to suggestions from and consultations with Indigenous Peoples on how we can build better relations and continue working towards reconciliation.

## Message from the President & CEO

**This year, ParticipACTION was proud to lead initiatives and campaigns that moved people in Canada.**

We felt it was time for Canada to move into action and take our work to the next level through renewed funding from the Government of Canada and the launch of our exciting new [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#) — a blueprint for an active, healthy Canada, and a plan that prioritizes social impact, uses evidence-based research and initiatives, and harnesses strategic partnerships to support people in getting active and realize the incomparable health, social, economic and environmental benefits of physical activity.

Moving Canada into Action requires collective action. This year, our partnerships with a range of organizations and public and private funders allowed us to work closely with leaders in the sport, physical activity and recreation sector to advance a common vision for physical activity supports in Canada. We engaged more than **12 million people across the country**, helping to improve the well-being of Canadians and build connected and more inclusive communities through movement.

As the demands and conveniences associated with our modern lifestyles have accelerated and contributed to physical activity being socially engineered out of our daily lives, ParticipACTION's mission to reduce barriers and create opportunities for more movement where Canadians live, learn, work and play has become even more integral to avoiding the critical consequences of physical inactivity.

Thank you to our partners, stakeholders, funders, Board of Directors and the incredible team at ParticipACTION. We've reached a pivotal moment in time where opportunities to improve physical activity levels in Canada are numerous, and your commitment to getting people active will help make Canada a healthy, progressive country.

**Let's keep moving!**



**Elio Antunes**  
*President and CEO, ParticipACTION*

## Key Impacts



### **ParticipACTION continues to champion physical activity in Canada and remains a valued and respected leader and partner.**

- **92% of people** aware of ParticipACTION agree that we are advancing issues related to physical activity.
- **89% of people** aware of ParticipACTION recognize us as **the leading physical activity organization in Canada.**
- **82% of sport, physical activity and recreation sector organizations** aware of ParticipACTION agree that we play an integral role in promoting physical activity in Canada.
- **90% of ParticipACTION's strategic partnerships** with organizations, government and the private sector are deemed mutually beneficial.



### **ParticipACTION is promoting and working to advance diversity, equity and inclusion through physical activity for people and organizations in Canada.**

- **94% of people** aware of ParticipACTION agree that we promote supportive, inclusive and accessible environments for physical activity.
- **66% of organizations** representing equity-denied groups indicate increased engagement with physical activity because of ParticipACTION.



### **ParticipACTION is improving the capacity of communities to promote and facilitate physical activity in Canada.**

- ParticipACTION provided **over \$1 million to municipalities and organizations** to support communities and equity-denied groups with high-quality physical activity opportunities.
- **78% of organizations** aware of ParticipACTION agree that our resources, tools and supports improve their organization's knowledge and/or skills related to physical activity.
- **98% of organizations** that participated in ParticipACTION's activities and initiatives indicated benefits to their organization, such as seeing increased interest and participation in their programs.



### **ParticipACTION's initiatives are effectively engaging and impacting people living in Canada.**

- **Over 12 million people** in Canada engaged with ParticipACTION initiatives, from participating in the Community Challenge or the Move for your Mood campaign to following us on social media or visiting our website.
- **88% of people** aware of ParticipACTION agree that our activities are impactful in making people in Canada more active.
- **One in four people** in Canada continued to get active because of the ParticipACTION Community Challenge.



## Initiative Highlights

# Fall in with an active crowd

Remember when you were warned about peer pressure? Well, guess what? Not all peer pressure is bad! ParticipACTION's 2024 public education campaign, *Fall in with an active crowd*, demonstrated the health and social benefits that can come from participating in physical activity-based groups.

Driven by a ParticipACTION survey, which revealed that only 16% of respondents believed that those close to them are active enough even though nearly half of adults living in Canada are meeting physical activity guidelines, the campaign was delivered across national media to help change this misperception and broaden examples of what physical activity looks like to help normalize a culture of active living. From mall-walking groups to bocchia clubs, there are active crowds for everyone!



**Fall in with an active crowd.**



**11 million adults in Canada**

took action after seeing the commercial.



**One-third (33%) of Canadians**

were aware of the campaign, and its message of social connectivity was well understood, with **62%** of those aware of it recalling the key message.



Click the image below to see the campaign commercial.



## Initiative Highlights

# The ParticipACTION Community Challenge

presented by Novo Nordisk

The Community Challenge encourages everyone in Canada to get active throughout June in search of Canada's Most Active Community. It mobilizes communities across the country and strengthens their capacity to support people in getting more active and more often.

Since 2019, over **\$6 million in grants** has been provided to organizations across Canada through the Community Challenge grant program, helping to facilitate low-barrier, inclusive opportunities for physical activity and sport participation among equity-denied groups.



Chroma community organization, New Brunswick



Muslim Foundation of Calgary

June 1-30



Everyone  
wins when  
everyone  
moves!



### In 2024:



**Over 591,000 people** participated in the challenge.



**1,250 communities** across every province and territory competed for the title of Canada's Most Active Community.



**1,118 organizations** hosted and recorded more than **6,255 events, activities and programs**, helping their community get active.



“On behalf of the Council of the Town of Hay River, I would like to highlight the tremendous impact the ParticipACTION Community Challenge has had on our community this year. With over 40 organizations tracking events, hundreds of residents participating and thousands of hours of activity, a significant portion of the community came together with a common fitness goal that they knocked out of the park! I thank ParticipACTION, all participants and especially the Town of Hay River’s Recreation Department, who demonstrated outstanding leadership through their encouragement, support and outreach to the community.”

**Mayor Kandis Jameson**  
Hay River, NT



Bike Bus program, Hay River



Special Olympics Rowing, Ottawa Rowing Club



ParticipACTION provided over **\$700,000 in grants to 650 organizations** to increase sport and physical activity participation of equity-denied populations.



**Hay River, Northwest Territories** earned the title of Canada’s Most Active Community!



**Canada’s Most Active Communities:**

- 2024:** Hay River, Northwest Territories
- 2023:** Salisbury, New Brunswick
- 2022:** Red Deer, Alberta
- 2021:** North Grenville, Ontario
- 2019:** Enderby, British Columbia

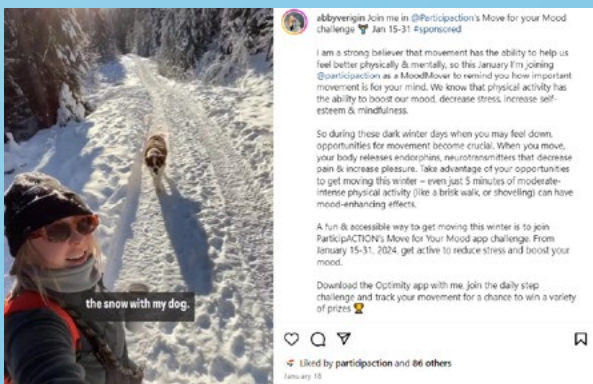
*The ParticipACTION Community Challenge presented by Novo Nordisk is proudly funded by the Government of Canada, Novo Nordisk, and supporting partner, Saputo.*



# Move for your Mood

The Move for your Mood campaign and step challenge inspired people to get active for their mental health. People in Canada report experiencing lower moods or “the winter blues” throughout the colder months, and getting active can have a significant, positive impact on one’s well-being. Helping people move to boost their moods, this timely and topical campaign was delivered nationally across digital media and the Optimity app.

It was also promoted through public relations efforts and ParticipACTION’s MoodMovers — a collective of content creators from across Canada (mental health advocates, practitioners, parent and lifestyle influencers, and movement enthusiasts) who inspired their audiences to join the step challenge and move for their mood.



**18,591 people** across Canada participated in the step challenge hosted on the Optimity app.



**76%** of Move for your Mood step challenge participants indicated that they were more physically active because of the challenge.



**75% of participants** indicated that they learned more about the benefits that physical activity can have on one’s mental health because of the challenge.



# ParticiPARKS

Through **ParticiPARKS**, ParticipACTION is helping create a Canada where communities have free access to inclusive and accessible outdoor spaces designed to offer low-barrier movement opportunities for all, especially those facing health inequities.

In 2024, ParticipACTION completed the design phase for four ParticiPARKS located across Canada in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Brampton, Ontario, and Fredericton, New Brunswick.

The ParticiPARKS were designed by Bienenstock Natural Playgrounds with direct input from each community, prioritizing low-income neighbourhoods with many residents from equity-denied groups. Each ParticiPARK will be a welcoming community hub and address the unique needs and goals of each community.



Fredericton public engagement event



Brampton public engagement event



## How ParticiPARKS will benefit communities

- Physical activity stations and instructional signage will make getting active easier and cost-free.
- Local schools and organizations will be able to use ParticiPARKS as outdoor education and physical activity programming spaces.
- By providing outdoor fitness options for adults and children in the same place, ParticiPARKS will create opportunities for multi-generational activity, reducing barriers across the lifespan.

*ParticiPARKS is a pilot project, and the design phase was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Healthy Canadians and Communities Fund. We anticipate that construction will start in 2025.*

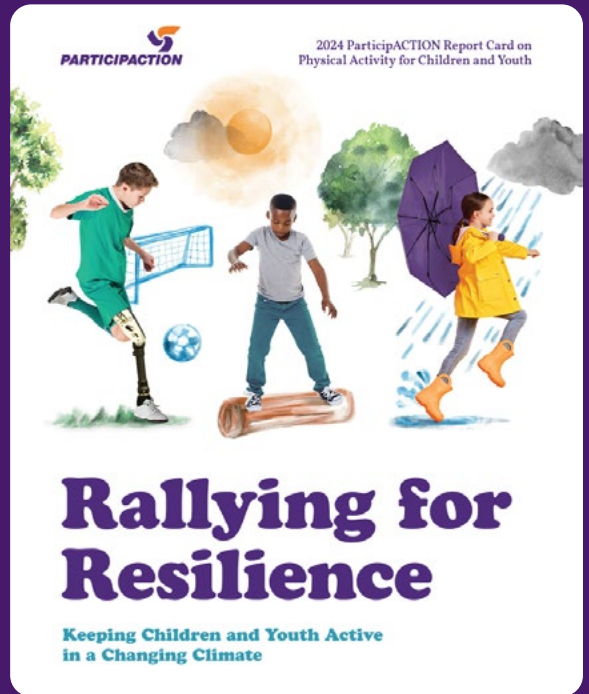
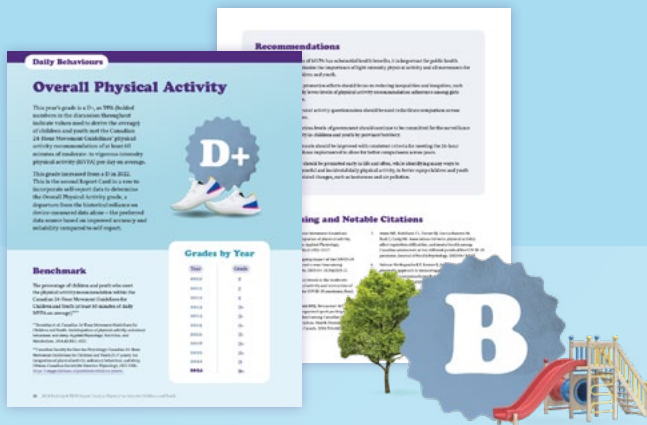


# Children and Youth Report Card



The ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth is the most comprehensive summary and assessment of child and youth physical activity in Canada.

The 2024 edition called on people in Canada to recognize climate change as an added barrier to getting kids active and highlighted the ways in which physical activity can help mitigate the negative health impacts of climate change. It also underscored how a coordinated approach involving multiple sectors is crucial in helping children and youth in Canada get more active.



**77% of parents** aware of the Report Card indicated that they would support and encourage their children to be active more regularly.



**70% of parents** aware of the Report Card indicated that they would participate in more physical activity as a family.



**808 news articles** shared information about the Report Card, garnering over **226 million media impressions**.

“Ever Active Schools is incredibly grateful for ParticipACTION’s work on the Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. Having evidence-based data with clear solutions and recommendations makes the Report Card a tool to positively change behaviour with schools, school jurisdictions and First Nations School Authorities. We often host information sessions and professional learning for Alberta schools based on the information within the Report Card. Lastly, we send the Report Card out to all trustees and superintendents in the province to help inform key decision-makers about the benefits of physical activity.”

**Brian Torrance**  
Executive Director, *Ever Active Schools*

# Moving Canada into Action

**ParticipACTION will continue to advance our advocacy efforts and seek opportunities for policy change and investments that can help create an active, healthier Canada.**

Our [2023-2028 Strategic Plan](#) will guide us in championing the issue and growing and sustaining required funding to support our mission and continue to be a national physical activity leader and a globally influential organization.

We will launch a new brand platform to support Canadians and policy- and decision-makers in making physical activity a priority, thinking beyond the individual and calling on all of Canada to **Make Room to Move**.

ParticipACTION looks forward to continuing to work with funders, sector leaders, researchers, stakeholders, and communities across Canada to realize our vision of a Canada where physical activity is a vital part of everyday life for everyone.



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“ParticipACTION is made up of spirited cross-functional teams that include marketing and communications, research, digital solutions, project and relationship management, and evaluation. We continue to deliver award-winning campaigns and initiatives, produce influential research reports, and set a high standard for physical activity supports in Canada. ParticipACTION would not be able to achieve any of our work without the dedicated support of our partners, Board of Directors, funders, and supporters. Thank you to our champions for moving with us and helping us move Canada into action.”

**Laura Richard**  
*Chair, ParticipACTION Board of Directors*

## Special Thanks to Our Partners

Canada 



Saputo



Newfoundland  
& Labrador

Yukon  
LARGER THAN LIFE