

The Kelowna Yacht Club – An active and involved member of our community

For most people, the Kelowna Yacht Club is the downtown marina sheltering six hundred boats. But there's a lot more going on that isn't quite as visible. Unlike many other non-profit organizations, the Kelowna Yacht Club (KYC) and our members are very involved in a broad range of community activities that few ever hear of, although these activities affect many thousands of non-members throughout the year.

Our community involvement encompasses three areas of activity:

[Helping people to learn and grow](#) through delivering training and providing learning opportunities

[Contributing to our community](#) through active participation in events and activities that benefit others as well as involving our members in Club functions

[Taking responsibility as a good citizen and neighbour](#) is a value all residents, both individuals and organizations, should strive for

The Kelowna Yacht Club has been a fixture on the Kelowna waterfront since 1945 and its continued presence has been confirmed under the Simpson Covenant and by many City Councils. The residents of Kelowna recognize our presence but often are unaware of the significant benefit we bring to the whole community.

We are much, much more than simply a group of like-minded individuals focused on their own sport or pastime!

Helping people learn and grow...

- Water safety begins at an early age, so the KYC works with local elementary and secondary schools to provide safe boating and water safety instruction to an average of 1000 students every year. Since the program began, well over 10,000 children have participated, all provided at no cost by KYC.
- Following up on the classroom training, close to 600 children and young adults have learned to sail in the last three years. These lessons are open to the public and priced to be as inclusive as possible. Those who show the interest are encouraged to join our racing program, and over the past five years almost 60 young people, many non-members, have successfully competed throughout the province.
- Many people enjoy the sight of colourful sails on the lake and wonder what it would be like to learn to sail. The lucky ones may have a friend who owns one of these beautiful keelboats, but if not, there's KYC! Each year, about 60 adults complete our learn-to-sail courses, where the classroom training is put to practice on the water by members who donate both their boats and their time in support of the program.

Contributing to our community...

- Blindness and sight impairment can strike suddenly, robbing many Central Okanagan residents of some of their most favourite activities. For more than two decades, KYC members have volunteered their boats, fuel, time and cheerful attitudes to stage the KYC Blind Fishing Derby, providing a day on the water, fishing gear, prizes, trophies and even meals to our communities' visually impaired. Each year, about 30 people enjoy the opportunity to fish and spend time on the water, all provided free of charge by KYC.
- Now in its third year, KYC members have enthusiastically supported the Boat for Hope event, working with the Okanagan Boys and Girls Club and Variety to give kids with physical and developmental challenges – *and their families* – a delightful day of pirates and booty on the water and land. Members transform themselves, their crew and their boats into pirate schooners and sloops, raiders and pirates. The kids, with their wheelchairs, medical equipment, pirate hats and swords, along with their siblings and parents or caregivers, board members' powerboats and head out to attack the pirates with swords, water cannon and fierce attitudes. Each pirate ship eventually succumbs and surrenders their booty, and after a triumphant return to shore, the kids and their families enjoy a barbeque lunch and a slew of land activities. KYC members not only supply their own costumes, boats and fuel, they cheerfully support Variety and their children's causes at the evening banquet and silent auction.
- Thousands of people enjoy boating each year on Okanagan Lake, but not all know how to anchor off a lovely shore, much less stay safe and secure during the Okanagan's infamous sudden storms. In the past three years, the Kelowna Yacht Club has spent almost \$40,000 maintaining 23 public mooring buoys between the bridge and Caesar's Landing and is adding another ten buoys in 2009. Maintenance and annual inspections cost the Club an average of almost \$700/buoy each year.
- As well as the members' boats harboured in our boat basin, KYC also provides free access and moorage for the fire, rescue and patrol boats of the RCMP, City of Kelowna Fire Department, Canadian Coast Guard and Department of Fisheries.
- KYC provides the facilities for the many internationally recognized professional boating courses offered by the Kelowna Canadian Power and Sail Squadron (CPSS) courses to the general public. In the past three years, almost 250 people have participated in a CPSS course at the Kelowna Yacht Club.
- The Disabled Sailing Association maintains a small fleet of specially equipped craft so that people with severe physical challenges can still enjoy the freedom and delight of sailing. KYC hosts an annual regatta to raise funds for this worthwhile organization and in the past three years, our members have raised and donated more than \$18,000 to the Association.
- Now approaching its 17th year, the annual KYC Boat and Leisure Show is a free community event that involves over two-hundred KYC volunteers and provides an opportunity to both the public and merchants to meet and learn about boating and leisure products. With attendance as high as 15,000 over the two days, all of the profits that are generated by exhibitor's entry fees

are returned to the community through the provision and on-going maintenance of the public mooring buoys on Okanagan Lake.

A good citizen and responsible neighbour...

- As a non-profit organization, membership in the Kelowna Yacht Club is open to the public. Costs are kept to a minimum and a family can enjoy the Club and its facilities for less than the cost of keeping one child in a hockey program. While some Club activities are restricted to members only, non-members from the Okanagan and around the world are gladly welcomed to many of our courses, events and other activities.
- Our members are actively involved in their Club as well as the community. Our Board has consistently maintained a focus on good long-range planning and our financial situation is excellent. We do not rely on government grants and have never asked any level of government for capital, emergency or operating funds. While our clubhouse sits on land specifically donated under the Simpson Covenant, we pay a nominal lease to the City for it and are one of the few, if not the only, non-profit organization in Kelowna which has always paid its full share of property taxes. Our moorage basin is built on a water lot leased from the City, which in turn leases it from the BC Government and we pay the full annual lease costs to the City.
- While most non-profit organizations in Kelowna enjoy the use of publicly-funded and -maintained facilities as well as relief from City taxes, KYC pays the leases for the land and water we occupy, builds and maintains our own facilities and pays all of our City taxes like any other contributing citizen. Our total lease costs and property taxes for 2008 came to over \$61,000.
- Okanagan Lake is the crown jewel of our beautiful valley and KYC and our members take significant care to protect it. This commitment lead us to add, in partnership with the City of Kelowna, a public pump-out station to our docks so all boaters could pump their effluent into the sewage treatment system instead of the lake. The Club made a significant investment in equipment and shares in the ongoing maintenance costs and absorbs the cost for the loss of the much-needed moorage required to provide this free service to all boaters, whether they are members or not.
- Each spring, people strolling along the waterfront will see KYC and CPSS members cleaning debris, garbage and flotsam from the lakeshore and in the water between City Park and the Water Street boat launch. This annual event has even been recognized with a national award from the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron.
- The Club has invested over \$4 million in dockage, breakwaters, piers and its on-the-water facilities and this takes a consistent, focused approach to planning, organization and good management to maintain these resources. We've been around and looking after ourselves and others – with no help from the public purse – significantly longer than the majority of other Kelowna non-profit organizations.

Ken Smith, Kelowna Yacht Club, July 27, 2009