

YMCAs at a Glance

Collectively, YMCAs are the largest not-for-profit community service organizations in America. YMCAs are at the heart of community life in neighborhoods and towns across the nation. They work to meet the health and social service needs of 18.9 million men, women and children.

Ys help people develop values and behavior that are consistent with Christian principles. Ys are for people of all faiths, races, abilities, ages and incomes. No one is turned away for inability to pay. YMCAs' strength is in the people they bring together.

In the average YMCA, a volunteer board sets policy for its executive, who manages the operation with staff and volunteer leaders. Ys meet local community needs through organized activities called programs. In its own way, every Y nurtures the healthy development of children and teens; strengthens families; and makes its community a healthier, safer, better place to live.

YMCA programs are tools for building the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. Longtime leaders in community-based health and fitness and aquatics, Ys teach kids to swim, offer exercise classes for people with disabilities and lead adult aerobics. They also offer hundreds of other programs in response to community needs, including camping, child care (the Y movement is the nation's largest provider), teen clubs, environmental programs, substance abuse prevention, youth sports, family nights, many more.

2003 statistics: A total of 974 member YMCAs (also called corporate Ys) operated 1,601 branches, units and camps. These 2,575 Ys were run by 56,114 volunteer policymakers serving on Y boards and committees, plus 536,744 volunteer program leaders and uncounted other volunteers, all of whom worked with paid professional staff members. These volunteers and staff members worked not only out of YMCA buildings and resident camps but also out of rented quarters, parks and playgrounds. Some Ys have no building at all.

YMCAs had total revenue of \$4.6 billion from these sources: 30% fees paid to take part in Y programs; 33% membership dues; 15% charitable contributions; 5% fees paid for resident camping and for staying in Y rooms and other living quarters; 12% government contracts and foundation grants; 5% miscellaneous.

Organization: Each YMCA is a charitable not-for-profit, qualifying under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Tax Code. Each is independent. YMCAs are required by the national

constitution to pay annual dues, to refrain from discrimination and to support the YMCA mission. All other decisions are local choices, including programs offered, staffing and style of operation. The national office, called YMCA of the USA, is headquartered in Chicago with more than 327 employees who serve member associations.

International: YMCAs are at work in more than 120 countries around the world, serving more than 45 million people. Some 230 local U.S. Ys maintain more than 370 relationships with Ys in other countries, operate international programs and/or contribute to YMCA work worldwide through the YMCA World Service campaign. Like other national YMCA movements, the YMCA of the USA is a member of the World Alliance of YMCAs, headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Firsts and foremost: YMCAs have played a significant role in the history of America. YMCAs invented basketball, volleyball and racquetball, and pioneered camping, physical fitness and swimming lessons. YMCAs helped found the USO, Boy Scouts of America and Camp Fire Girls. YMCA volunteers provided support and services to millions of soldiers in many major wars, including the Civil War, World War I and World War II. In 2001, YMCAs celebrated their first 150 years in America.

History: The YMCA was founded in London, England, in 1844 by George Williams and some friends who lived and worked as clerks in a drapery, a forerunner of dry-goods and department stores. Their goal was to help young men like themselves find God. The first members were evangelical Protestants who prayed and studied the Bible as an alternative to vice.

The first U.S. YMCA was started in Boston in 1851, the work of Thomas Sullivan, a retired sea captain and lay missionary. From Boston, YMCAs spread rapidly across America, many of which started opening their doors to boys and men of all ages. Some YMCAs were started to serve specific groups such as railroad and factory workers, as well as African Americans, Native Americans and recent immigrants. After World War II, women and girls were admitted to full membership and participation. Today, half of all YMCA members are female, and half are under age 18.



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.