



BUILDING the future

COLORADO YMCAs...Building an Active Colorado

We build strong **kids**, strong **families**, strong **communities**.

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YMCA of Pueblo – A Teen Haven



Once a month the YMCA of Pueblo is transformed into a teen meca. Hundreds of teens come from the local middle schools to enjoy a night of dancing, climbing, swimming, basketball, and simply spending time with their friends. A DJ plays the latest music, along with some classic songs, the lobby is full of teens hanging out. In the background, teens slowly make their way up the 44 foot rockwall. Of course the more traditional options of open gym and swimming are also popular with the teens.

Friday nights haven't always been this way. There was a time when teen nights would attract just a handful of teens, who had to be bribed with pizza to come, or we'd have to go and pick them up in our busses to make it easier for them! So what changed a small struggling program into a success story?

First – space. It seems obvious, but teens need their own space. Pushing teens into empty aerobics studios or racquet ball courts is always a struggle! Last September we opened a dedicated teen room. The room is equipped with fooseball, air hockey, ping pong, and 2 Wii's. Throw in a traffic light donated by the city, and some funky rope lights, and you have a space that any teen would want to hang out in.

Second – partnerships. Everyone in the community is always worried about teens. Whether they are worried about drugs, alcohol, vandalism, or teen pregnancy rates, if you give them the opportunity to do something about it, they usually jump at the chance. We've had

Little Ceasars donate pizza. We've had healthy relationship programs, college leadership programs, parents and sports groups donate their time to help chaperone events, and several bands donate their time – all in the name of giving teens healthy opportunities on a Friday night. We've also been collaborating with the local Boys and Girls Club, who have started bringing their teens to our events. Of course our biggest partner is the school district. Every month we promote our Friday night events in different schools – working our way through the school districts. That way we have returning kids from previous months, but we hit new audiences every month. Of course the key is having great relationships with staff at the schools. We have one teacher who had his students make their own posters for the event and plaster them all over the school. Now that's advertising that money can't buy.

Last, but not least, is our staff. We made the decision to employ a full time teen coordinator to enable us to promote and run quality programs. Only a short year earlier we would not have considered the position financially viable, but when you see 200 teens lining up to get in on a Friday night – you have to ask, can we afford not to invest in teen programming? ■



Operation Kid Comfort

The Southeast Family Center/Armed Services YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region has teamed up with Ft. Carson and the National Armed Services YMCA to bring Operation Kid Comfort to the children of deployed parents who experi-

ence grief from missing their mom or dad. All the children who receive quilts or pillows are from the Pikes Peak community.

This national program began in 2004, at Ft. Bragg / Pope Air Force Base in Fayetteville, NC. The program was designed to help with the emotional distress that children of military personnel suffer during a parent's absence from home. Colorado Springs began Operation Comfort just two years ago, with only one volunteer quilter. A local NBC reporter, Andy Koen, began to take a special interest in this program. A live remote on the morning show helped draw the attention of the community, and local quilters began to contact the YMCA with donations of fabric as well as their talent. In the Pikes Peak region, Operation Kid Comfort now has over 25 volunteer quilters, with two volunteer coordinators. Many of the volunteers like to quilt in their own groups, and have formed small quilting bees throughout the community. One of the popular places to gather is at a local quilting shop, High Country Quilts. They have generously donated space for the quilters to socialize, conduct meetings, and quilt.



This program eases the stress of a parent's absence from the home by providing a free photo quilt for children six years and younger, and pillows for children seven years and older. Photographs of the deployed parent and family are scanned into a computer, and then printed onto fabric. The photos are incorporated into a quilt or pillow, then given to the child to play with, sleep with, or use to comfort them with the memory of their deployed parent. Annette King, Executive Director of the Southeast Family Center/Armed Services YMCA said "The immediate reaction from the kids is the excitement of the pictures. They hug the quilt or pillow."



Although the quilts and pillows are put together by volunteers, and given to families free of charge, there is still a need for monetary donations to cover the cost of transferring photos, thread, quilt batting and new pillow inserts. Each piece takes an experienced quilter about five hours to complete, and is truly a labor of love. "The quilts are stitched on machines so they are durable and can be washed over and over. They are made to be cuddled," said Annette King.

With over 12,000 soldiers expected to deploy from the Pikes Peak community this summer the need for Operation Kid Comfort will grow. As a result, so will donations of quilting fabric and monetary donations.

The YMCA receives many thank you cards from parents. In a recent note Robyn, parent of a Kid Comfort recipient said, "Our daughter has been going through a tough time with daddy away. He was injured and came home, but now he has to go back again. It seems to be even harder for her. The love and care that went into making her this quilt means more than you'll ever know." ■

Longmont Y is Fit at 40

By Scott Rochat

Longmont Times-Call

When a YMCA has been operating for 40 years, it's something to dance about.

"Arms out!" dance teacher Sol Benson called out as a circle of smiling kids mimicked her every move. "Now we switch feet — good! OK, here we go! Heel, heel, heel, heel!"

That sort of energy was infectious Saturday at the Ed & Ruth Lehman YMCA. Over here, a four-on-four basketball game. Over there, a small army of families dunking in the pool. There seemed to be a dozen different ways to celebrate the occasion, all of them fun.

"I think it's neat that they do this for the community, and have a free open house," said Rachel Parrinello, who brought her 6-year-old son over to hit the pool and the "bounce house" erected in the gym. "Everyone can give it a try on a cold, gray day."

The party also was a chance to show how far the Y has come since it hired its' first director in December 1969. For many years, it was part of the Boulder YMCA ... and sometimes the years were lean indeed.

Jim Hiner, the Y's director in the late '80s and early '90s, remembered one phone call he got from the bank shortly after coming aboard.

"Jim, the Y's checking account just went below zero."

"What do you mean?"

"From that moment on," Hiner continued, "when I signed checks, I kept them locked in my desk and took them out as the cash came in."



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Cheryl Johnson, our Membership Relations Director, is shown with the cake.

Things have changed a lot since then. The Y became independent in 1990 and took on the Lehman name after a renovation in 2002. These days, the Y doesn't have to worry as much about passing the hat — it gave out \$183,053 in financial aid to 2,653 members, roughly a quarter of its total membership.

Some of those members can be pretty dedicated. Wynda Velarde said she and her daughters often go to the YMCA for three or four hours a day.

"It's worth a lot to us," she said.

Dance classes are the latest draw for the Velarde family. Seven-year-old Faith even joins in Mom's classes for as long as she can keep up.

"Sometimes, though, some of the steps get a little harder and she says 'Mom, can I go do basketball?'" Wynda Velarde said with a smile. "I say 'sure.'"



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Eric Bergeson, Chair of our Board of Directors, at the podium addressing the crowd.

Public safety chief Mike Butler noted that the Y is a favorite spot for the city's police officers and firefighters to work out.

"At any given minute, this may be the safest place in Longmont," he joked.

Well, except maybe on the basketball court. Butler remembered playing in some long-ago games that got a little ... intense.

"We called it Felony Assault Basketball," he said. "If you could get up off the ground, it was not a foul!"

These days, the Y isn't the only game in town. There's the city's rec center, the youth center and other outlets for physical activity. But that's OK, said John Yeast, the Y's senior director for program services.

"Our philosophy is 'Let's all work together so the kids all benefit,'" Yeast said.

Times-Call editor-in-chief Dean Lehman, whose parents the center is named for, took a moment during the celebration to remember his mother. Ruth Lehman, who died in 2000, helped raise the money to start the Y and served as president.

"She really believed in the Y in Longmont," he said. "She would have been so happy to see how everything turned out." ■

YMCA of the Rockies Awarded LEED® Green Building Certification

YMCA of the Rockies' new Longs Peak Lodge has been awarded LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). LEED is the USGBC's leading rating system for designing and constructing the world's greenest, most energy efficient, and high performing buildings.

Completed in June, 2009, Longs Peak Lodge is a 100-room lodge built to enhance YMCA of the Rockies, an 860-acre family vacation destination in Estes Park, Colorado. LEED certification was based on a number of green designs and construction features that positively impact the project itself, and the broader community. These features include:

- Achieving significant energy savings through the installation of a new, high-efficiency central boiler, which produces hot water and heat for Longs Peak Lodge and two additional new lodges scheduled to open in January.
- Installing carpet in the new lodges and Assembly Hall that is made with recycled products, and is engineered in a process that uses 25 percent less yarn than the industry average. This translates into the savings of thousands of pounds of virgin yarn.



- Placing recycling dumpsters on site so scrap building materials were recycled rather than dumped. The Y was able to recycle 75 percent of the project's construction waste.
- Using low emitting construction materials as much as possible (adhesives, sealants, paints, carpets, wood, and agrifiber products).
- Ordering new furniture made from fast-growing hickory wood, a renewable resource.
- Using Thinveneer for exterior walls. This rock is thinner than it appears as a finished product, which means it is lighter to ship. This saved fuel, and the impact on the earth was less because quarry areas for Thinveneer are smaller.
- Recycling five buildings by moving them, rather than bulldozing them.
- Building on already developed land in order to preserve undisturbed land.
- Connecting the lodges and other buildings with a walkway system so guests don't need their motor vehicles to get around.
- Providing designated hybrid vehicle parking spaces near the lodges.
- Providing a bicycle rack near the lodge.
- Building retention ponds to provide storm water quantity and quality control, which prevents erosion and filters sediment from the water.
- Installing water efficient landscaping, thus reducing water use by 50 percent.
- Choosing low flow fixtures and toilets in the lodge rooms, resulting in a 30 percent reduction in water use.
- Reducing the building's potential energy consumption by 25 percent by considering site orientation, using florescent lighting, using high rated insulation, and having 90 percent of the rooms be "daylight infused" (relying on windows to provide some light).
- Thirty percent of the construction materials used were of recycled content.
- Twenty percent of the construction materials used were locally manufactured.

YMCA of the Rockies serves conferences, retreats, recreational and educational groups, reunions, families, individuals, and youth, by

providing lodging, meeting space, dining, programming, and recreation. Lodging discounts are offered to all YMCA members. ■

Boulder Valley

Every day for more than 50 years, the YMCA of Boulder Valley has played a transformational role in the lives of thousands of people. Each year, more than 30,000 youth, adults, families, and seniors are impacted by YMCA outreach and wellness services located at more than 60 locations throughout our community in Boulder County.

As the needs of our community grow and become more diverse, the YMCA of Boulder Valley is committed to collaborating and expanding our program and facilities to ensure that the critical needs of our youth and families are met. With this in mind, collaborating with organizations that have a similar mission, values, and goals – to build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities, is of the utmost importance.

Our most recent partnership includes the St. Vrain Family Center SAFE exchange program. The St. Vrain Family Center is a not-for profit agency with a vision to promote healthy parenting in the St. Vrain area. The YMCA of Boulder Valley is the host site for their SAFE exchange program. Children are exchanged between separated/divorced parents, or other adults who are allowed to have time with them. The "drop off" parent arrives and signs in, leaving the children with staff. The "pick up" parent arrives 15 minutes later and signs in to take the children with them, or, have supervised parenting time with them. Staff supervises and interacts with children during the transition from one adult to the other. Parents do not meet face-to-face. This is valuable transition time for the children. Children see calm, caring adults. Anxiety and stress are minimized for both adults and children.

A second new partnership is with the Boulder County Human Housing and Services with their Foster Family program. The foster family services in Boulder County had budget cuts that severely impacted them. The YMCA of Boulder Valley partnered with them to create a training location for the families that wish to become foster parents. This partnership saved their organization almost \$40K annually, which could now be put back into their program. In addition to a place to hold trainings, the YMCA wanted to help strengthen their bond with their new foster children. The families have access to the YMCA facilities and programs for a reduced rate.

Another new partnership is The Boulder Judo Training Center, a non-profit organization, recognized as 1 of 6 national training sites for USA Judo. For the last eight years BJTC has been making a positive impact in the community.

All members of the staff are USA Judo certified coaches and hold high level black belts, with years of teaching experience. The YMCA of Boulder Valley collaborated with them as they struggled to make ends meet in their current program site. With over 100 members, mostly children, on their roster, they needed a new home. Not only is the YMCA of Boulder Valley their new program site, but their membership became Y members, and 60 new kids also joined the program. Their program strives to instill focus, respect, confidence, and discipline.

The YMCA of Boulder Valley believes we all need a place to belong -- a place where we genuinely care about one another, share in decisions, treat each other with respect, and pull together for a common cause. Y's bring together people from different walks of life, in an environment where all can feel comfortable. They are natural incubators for ideas to help solve community problems, and can solve much by working with other neighborhood groups and organizations. ■

YMCA of Metropolitan Denver – Parks & Rec Partnership

A Win-Win-Win

Among those hardest hit in the recent economic downturn were municipalities. Facing significant reductions in sales tax revenues, coupled with the need to continue basic services, local governments faced the challenge of reducing budgets by millions of dollars. Parks and Recreation Departments were among the hardest hit within city governments.

In 2009, the YMCA of Metropolitan Denver stepped in to offer a summer day camp at the Scheitler Recreation Center after Denver Parks and Recreation was forced to cut their program. Serving forty children a day, ages 5 – 12, the program filled what was going to be a large void in the community.

"The YMCA was able to step in, thus reducing the burden of government, which has long been the role of not for profits in the community," said President and CEO of the YMCA, Jim Hiner.

Over the course of eleven weeks, the YMCA provided theme based camps for the children, including field trips and swimming. More important, the Y was able to provide financial assistance to those families in need, and who would have been hard pressed to find other positive outlets for their children during the long days of summer.

"Everybody won in this scenario," said Steve Tammaro, the YMCA's Chief Operating Officer. "The Y was able to expand its' programming into a community we previously didn't serve. We were able to pay some rent to Denver



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Parks and Recreation, while staying true to the Y's charitable mission by providing financial assistance to families in need...it was the ultimate win-win-win."

These types of collaborations are not new to the YMCA, which manages over a dozen Home Owner Association (HOA) pools and recreation centers, as well as the new City of Glendale's state of the art Sports Center.

The camp partnership with Denver Parks & Recreation proved so successful that it has been expanded to a second center for the summer of 2010. The program at the Rude Recreation Center will likely serve 45 children, ages 5 - 12, each day.

In total, the YMCA will operate 19 camp locations throughout Metropolitan Denver, and serve over 1,300 children per day. ■



Did You Know? Colorado YMCAs...

- **serve people of all incomes, all ages, all races, and all abilities**

Colorado YMCAs serve more than 280,476 people in diverse communities statewide. Ys bring together young and old, men and women, and people of all faiths, backgrounds, and incomes. In 2006, more than \$2.2 million was raised for scholarships, subsidies, and other community services.

- **serve nearly 165,000 youth in nonschool hours**

Colorado YMCAs give children and their parents the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities, including teen clubs, sports leagues, family nights, community service projects, and gang prevention programs. All youth activities incorporate the YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

- **provide child care statewide**

Colorado YMCAs are the largest provider of child care in the state, serving more than 7,900 children per day. Y's offer affordable, high-quality child care to working families, regardless of ability to pay. Scholarships, subsidies, and outreach provide critical assistance to low-income families.

- **encourages volunteerism**

Colorado YMCAs are volunteer-founded, volunteer-based, and volunteer-led. A little over 9,000 Y volunteers give their time to help meet the needs of the Colorado community.

- **partner with neighborhood organizations**

Colorado YMCAs work with local and county governments, including police and fire departments, public housing developments and children's services; schools; churches; and other community and civic organizations.

- **promote health and wellness for the entire community**

Since their founding, Colorado YMCAs have provided health and fitness programs as an integral part of their mission. Y programs emphasize preventive health care, encourage healthy lifestyles, offer rehabilitative services, and are accessible to everyone in the community, regardless of ability to pay.

- **lives its mission every day**

The Colorado YMCAs join over 2,600 other independent YMCAs that are guided by the common mission: "To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all."

- **Celebrate more than 134 years of community service**

The year 2010 marks the 134th anniversary of the YMCA movement in Colorado. YMCAs have touched the lives of virtually all our States residents through value-based programs in camping, aquatics, child care, fitness, youth sports, teen leadership, and volunteerism.

Activate America®



Activate America is the YMCA's response to our nation's growing health crisis. The YMCA is redefining itself, and engaging communities across the country to better support Americans of all ages who are struggling to achieve, and maintain, well-being of spirit, mind, and body.

We are shifting how we focus all aspects of our work, both inside and outside the YMCA, to better engage health seekers. We define "health seekers" as all children, youth, teens, adults, and families whose successful pursuit of health and well-being requires continuously supportive relationships and environments.

Inside the YMCA, we are influencing and motivating health seekers to

make positive changes in their pursuit of well-being. And, outside the YMCA, we are helping create and sustain healthier communities.

- In the last 10 years, obesity rates in the United States have increased 60%.
- * The current generation of American children could be the first to lead shorter lives than their parents, according to the New England Journal of Medicine.
- * More than 50% of U.S. adults do not get enough physical activity to make a difference in their health.
- * Health problems related to obesity cost our country an estimated \$117 billion a year, as well as the indirect economic costs of lost productivity.

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