



BUILDING the future

COLORADO YMCAs...Building an Active Colorado

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

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INVESTING IN KIDS EARLY WITH YMCA CASASTART IN DENVER

We all hear and see first hand the bad news about the well-being of our kids.

For example, Colorado, ranks 41st out of 50 states for worst high school dropout rate; Colorado ranks 32nd in teen birth rates. Taking care of children in the YMCA – all children – is a valued, core program. Why does this matter? Because the costs to both kids and society are huge. For example, the approximate difference in income over a lifetime for a high school dropout versus a high school graduate is \$350,000. The difference in lifetime earnings is more than \$1 million for someone who earns a college degree instead of dropping out of high school. It costs more than \$48,000 per year for a sentenced youth in a Colorado Department of Youth Corrections secure facility, while the expense is \$28,000 annually to incarcerate an adult in a Colorado state prison. These costs could be dramatically reduced by meaningful social investment in the early-childhood years. In the YMCA, we know that results – based programs with proven long – term outcomes focused on pre-school education, school age educational assistance, and home stability have demonstrated ability to reduce crime, lower substance abuse, improve graduation rates, decrease teen pregnancy rates, reduce teen suicide rates, lower child abuse and neglect, and reduce domestic violence in the long term.

YMCA CASASTART is one example of how the Denver YMCA is trying to provide life-changing, up-front social investment. YMCA CASASTART is a community based, school-centered program designed to keep high risk children free of drugs and crime involvement, engaged in school, and hopeful about their future. The YMCA of Metropolitan Denver has successfully provided CASASTART services to Northeast Denver

for the past five years. YMCA case managers work closely with teachers and other school personnel, police officers, social service agencies and neighborhood residents to provide needed services to prevent the familial and social factors that make children vulnerable to substance abuse, academic failure, school dropout and juvenile crime.

In Denver, CASASTART costs \$3,857 per student each year. This is substantial, although a significant savings in the dollars retained by society when children are successfully diverted from expulsion and/or dropout by participating in the program. CASASTART evaluation results in Denver for 2006 - 2007 resulted in the following statistics:

- 98% of participants continued on to the next grade.
- 75% of participants improved their grades.
- 77% of participants demonstrated increased academic motivation.
- 73% of participants decreased their suspension rate.
- 70% of participants reported increased hopefulness about their future.
- 50% of participants' parents increased their involvement in school.

You can see the life benefits and economic impact of investing significantly in a program such as CASASTART. Yet, our YMCA is in a constant challenge to find funding to continue this important program that has significant impact. Instead of relying on the uncertain merry-go-round of grant funding for CASASTART, we are looking to shift our budgets slightly to find a way to invest here on an annual basis.

Even though these are tough, unknown economic times, there's no time like the present to make the YMCA investment early in the lives of our kids an even higher priority.

YMCA of Boulder Valley "Refueling Stations"

In 2004 when the results of the Boulder

Valley Youth Risk Behavior Survey, administered to 1,900 high school youth in Boulder County, were published it became very apparent to the community that our youth were not as healthy as we thought.

Rates of binge drinking, marijuana use, suicide and sexual activity were all much higher than the national average. Of even greater concern was that the health disparities for youth of color and LGBTQ youth were almost twice as high as those of their white, heterosexual peers. Members of the community – parents, educators, government and elected officials and youth providers – began to take a hard look at why our youth were not thriving.

In this very physically fit community, with its wealth of hiking trails, bike paths and opportunities for outdoor recreation, it became clear that the health crisis facing our youth had to be the focus of our work. The YMCA of Boulder Valley decided to take on the challenge of finding a way to become, "The best place in America to be young".

The Activate Boulder County vision team, comprised of leaders from all sectors of the community, took on this challenge with a deep commitment and enthusiasm. As they looked at how to support youth and keep them safe the concept of the "Refueling Station" was born. Refueling Stations are programs, places, and activities that offer youth a safe place to "refuel" emotionally, socially, physically and mentally. They are staffed by caring adults and are grounded in the 40 Developmental Assets. Refueling Stations are youth centered and adult directed programs that encourage creativity, promote responsibility and reward positive risk taking. They see youth not as problems but as treasures.

Refueling Stations have been created in middle schools – each one tailored to the needs of the school. Homework help, cycling clubs, skateboard teams, art, dance, indoor soccer, Karaoke and lacrosse were just some of the activities being offered to middle school youth on a regular basis throughout the school year. As Robbyn Fernandez, the



assistant principal at Manhattan Middle School told us, "We thought that it was great – the Y would provide some child care so the staff could meet on Wednesday mornings. The kids would be safe, the teachers could get some work done and everyone would be happy. It turned out to be so much more. The Y is now such an important part of the fabric of our school. I know kids who get to school early and have a better day because they start it at Period Zero."

In addition to our work with youth, Activate Boulder County started to reach out to other school employees who have daily interactions with youth. We meet with all Boulder Valley School District bus drivers and food service employees at the beginning of each school year to say thank you and remind them of the tremendous impact they have on the youth that ride their buses and eat in their cafeterias. Because they see the same kids every day they have the opportunity to create positive, lasting relationships that can go a long way in making kids feel safe at their schools and in their communities.

Activate Boulder County also wanted to reward the people who were working with youth on a daily basis, often quietly, supporting and encouraging them. On May 14, 2008, the first group of Official Refuelers was honored. A teacher, a secretary, a paraprofessional, a parent and the Y skateboard program coordinator were recognized for the work that they do with middle school youth on a daily basis.

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Leaving Gang Rivalries Behind to Play Hard on the Court

A new community partnership between the City of Longmont and the Ed & Ruth Lehman YMCA leads to Anti-Gang League

In January of 2008, the City of Longmont's Children and Youth Resources ventured out with a bold new program aimed at reducing the level of gang involvement among some

Longmont youth. The City named the program the "All-Out League", and designed it to bring teens from different gangs together in a formal supervised athletic setting. First they set some strict guidelines: youth were not permitted to indicate any gang affiliation, and outside disagreements were set aside. The All-Out League was created to bridge gaps between youth who might otherwise clash. "What we're after is sportsmanship," said Ben Ready, a children and youth specialist for the City of Longmont. What the All-Out League also needed was a place to play. So Ready went to the Ed & Ruth Lehman YMCA in Longmont, a community partnership was formed and weekly games of basketball and indoor soccer began in the YMCA gym.



"What I immediately appreciated about their program was that it put the kids in charge," said John Yeast, Senior Program Director at the Longmont YMCA. "Kids administer it, they set the rules and do the planning. The only thing they don't do is referee." The first season enrolled 24 gang-involved youth playing on four different teams. The season ran eight weeks. Notably after each game, Ready calls the players together to debrief emotions and compliment each other on good sportsmanship.

The second season in the spring of 2008 increased to 34 athletes representing an even larger cross-section of races, neighborhoods and gang affiliations. Tony Ortiz, 18, and a founder of the All-Out League was amazed by the response. He told the Times-Call, "It was a lot more work than I expected," but with Ready's help and other teens, he organized the teams, arranged for sponsors and found equipment. "It was well worth it."

The fall season saw the momentum carry forward unabated. The culmination was a game in mid-November: youth teams versus police and probation officers, city and YMCA staff. The game is open to the public and

held at the Y. A vigorous game of basketball gives the players a chance to see adults in a different light, noted Yeast.

"But it works the other way too," said Yeast. "The police and resource officers and other adults saw the kids in a different light as well. They saw kids as being respectful and as kids, not as juveniles or problems." "The participation by the community and education leaders means the world to these kids and gives them something to look forward to and work toward all season long," said Ready. "It's also designed to force kids from rival gangs onto the same teams. As they work together to win games, they unknowingly befriend each other and leave ridiculous gang rivalries behind," Ready said. Tip-off for the All-Out League Challenge Game took place at the YMCA on Friday, November 14. Unfortunately the score was not available at press time.

'Y' on Wheels: Pueblo YMCA

The Pueblo YMCA piloted a new program this summer, targeting middle school youth, the most underserved youth population in Pueblo.

Obesity among American children has become a national health crisis. In the 20 years between 1980 and 2000, the number of children and adolescents who were overweight or at risk of being overweight more than doubled. The program is called 'Y' on Wheels; it has a serious purpose in a fun wrapper. Our fully equipped vehicle pulls up, sets up and serves middle school youth in the neediest parts of town. The summer program is running Monday through Friday in two neighborhood parks in the City of Pueblo, the program is free to all participants. The curriculum is focused on the need for youth to play, explore, create, and learn new skills with a special emphasis on physical activity, eating healthy and improved interpersonal connections. The programming includes opportunities for youth to participate in group projects, outdoor sports/recreation, and a community service project.

The YMCA collaborated with the Pueblo City/County Library District and Pueblo Parks and Recreation to expand programming for youth in their neighborhoods; the Library and Parks & Rec. program for youth ages 2-11. However, this summer they are programming from 12 noon to 1:00 pm for



middle school youth at YMCA's request. The 'Y' on Wheels operates from 10 am-12 noon after participants finish with 'Y' on Wheels program we promote their participation in Books and Crafts in the Park, from 12 noon to 1:00 pm. At 1:00 we encourage them to utilize the city pool in the park from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Consequently, youth are provided with a programming from 10:00 am through 5:00 pm on Monday through Friday throughout the summer. For more information please contact Angela Giron, Director of Membership and Community Outreach, 719-543-5151 ext. 186 or agiron@puebloymca.org

YMCA of the Rockies Offers Active Duty Military Getaway,

Free Membership as Part of a National YMCA Movement

Estes Park, CO – In nationwide partnership with the Armed Services YMCA the and Department of Defense Outreach Initiative, the YMCA of the Rockies will provide military families with free memberships to encourage youth and family strengthening and unity.

In addition, the YMCA of the Rockies Estes Park Center and Snow Mountain Ranch are offering a military getaway where for \$80 they receive two nights in a lodge room and meals for 2 adults and 2 children. Additional adults or children can be included for a minimal cost per day.

"The YMCA of the Rockies is happy to help meet the critical needs facing families of deployed military service members," said Kent Meyer, President and CEO of the YMCA of the Rockies. "Families are the most affected when a loved one gets deployed, so we are deeply committed to providing them with the support they need."

The YMCA of the Rockies has two locations: the Estes Park Center and Snow Mountain Ranch near Winter Park, Colorado. Both locations offer the specials to:

- All interested families of joint deployed National Guard and Reserves of all military branches;
- Families living in newly established Joint Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) bases;
- Active Duty Independent Duty station personnel and their families; and

- Relocated spouses and family members of deployed Active Duty personnel.

Hundreds of families have taken advantage of the getaway. "The YMCA has a long history of supporting military service members and their families – since the Civil War – so it was natural for us to join this initiative," said Meyer. "During this time of conflict, it is more important than ever that we continue to provide services and support to these families in the absence of a deployed spouse."

For information or to register for the getaway, please call 1-800-777-YMCA (9622). Visit ymcarockies.org for more information about the YMCA of the Rockies.

Pikes Peak Region

Last year the YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region celebrated its 130th year of serving the Colorado Springs area. Although many things have changed, one thing remains the same—the commitment to mission. Since 1878 when local citizens organized the Colorado Springs YMCA, we have remained committed to putting Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

At the dedication of the Colorado Springs YMCA building in 1901, Teddy Roosevelt said the YMCA "promotes industry, temperance, and self-reliance...It is a taxpayers best friend." These words are another example of how early on the YMCA added valuable resources to the community.

The Great Depression brought challenges for the region, and the YMCA steps forward to provide hope for the unemployed, programs offering medical assistance, physical fitness, school classes, and recreation. The YMCA was the place to go for a break from everyday life—just as we are today.



World War II brought military training camps, airfields, and jobs to the area. After the war, the military and defense related industries helped stimulate the economy in the area. These installations and the creation of the USO began our YMCA's commitment to local soldiers, airmen and their families. In 1948 the YMCA purchased the 140 acre Day Dude Ranch and opened YMCA Camp Shady Brook. The 1950's brought rapid growth for Camp. Service organizations such as Rotary, Sertoma, Lions and Kiwanis, came together to build cabins, lodges and the lake where children fish, canoe and swim today.

Over the next 20 years as the community grew the YMCA grew with it. During this time the YMCA developed into a multi-faceted organization. In the late 60's the YMCA and YWCA merged to create YW-YMCA. Later the USO and Girls Club came under the umbrella and then Big Brothers and Big Sisters, and the Pikes Peak YMCA became a national model for collaborative services. The YMCA continued to partner with other organizations. During the 70's to meet the health needs of the growing population the YMCA collaborated with Junior Achievement and the City of Colorado Springs to build the Garden Ranch YMCA. On January 16, 1984 the Garden Ranch Center opened. It was the first of many occasions the City and the YMCA would work together. In 2009, the Garden Ranch Family Center will celebrate 25th anniversary.

During the 80's childcare, an extension of what the YMCA had done informally for years, became more necessary. Today our childcare services offer before- and after-school programs and summer day camp throughout the region. These services provide support to thousands of families. In the 1990's the population of Colorado Springs continued to grow north and east. Continuing to partner with others the Briargate Family Center opened in 1998 with the help of the City and Centura Health Systems.

Although the YMCA had served the Fountain community through childcare, sports and aquatics, in 2000 the YMCA collaborated with Fountain-Fort Carson School District to create the Fountain Valley YMCA in the Lorraine Center. The Lorraine Center includes the YMCA and other social service agencies that meet a diverse range of needs. In 2002 the YMCA, once again in partnership with the City built the Southeast Family Center Armed Services YMCA. Although the



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YMCA had been serving military personnel and their families for years, this new family center located between Fort Carson and Peterson Air Force Base increased our services. Located on city park property, the closeness of this YMCA to military bases has allowed for increased opportunities to meet their needs.

The Tri-Lakes Family Center was completed

in April of 2008 and everyday its pools are filled with families spending time together, its classes are filled with senior staying healthy, and its fields are filled with kids learning new skills.

For 130 years the YMCA has been an agency of impact serving the Pikes Peak Region. Even in this tough economy, the YMCA will continue to find new and creative ways to

meet the needs of families and children, including a new income-based membership rate to ensure that the YMCA's is available to all. The YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region will continue its long history of partnerships to best serve those within the Pikes Peak community and to advance our mission of putting Christian principles into practice through programs that help build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

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. Ys 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 133 years of community service**

The year 2008 marks the 133rd 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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