

# Y Developments

SPRING 2008

## Empowered Youth Practice Leadership

### YMCA Teens Travel to Sacramento

This past February, a delegation of 20 high school students from the Santa Anita Family YMCA's Youth and Government Program got some hands-on experience as legislators, judges, and lobbyists as participants in the 60th annual YMCA Model Legislature and Model Court in Sacramento.

The students were among more than 2,000 teenagers from throughout California who took over the historic halls, chambers and offices of the State Capitol, Supreme Court, and Governor's Office while the "real" legislators were out of town over the long President's Day weekend.

For six months leading up to the Model Legislature and Model Court, students work under the guidance of YMCA staff and volunteers, meeting weekly to learn how laws get made, how to write bills, and how to prepare briefs. They role-play governmental positions, attend state-wide training conferences, and run for various elected offices.

Once in Sacramento the delegates play out their roles, lobbying, attending meetings, presenting and passing bills, and arguing cases in the State Supreme Court. Other participants produce a daily newspaper and closed-circuit television news programs reporting on the day's events.

The motto of the YMCA Model Legislature and Model Court is "Democracy must be learned by each generation". The YMCA encourages and supports the development of youth citizen leaders who will build and sustain our communities in the future.



## Did you know?

*More than one-third of participants at the Santa Anita Family YMCA are under the age of 18.*



## Wanna be a Champion?

To become an Asset Champion email us at [assetchampions@safymca.org](mailto:assetchampions@safymca.org).

You'll get free newsletters, training events, and resources to help all our kids grow to be the adults they dream of being.

At the YMCA, we have always ascribed to the saying, "It's better to build children than repair adults." In the wake of recent tragic events, it is more important than ever that we do everything we can to make sure that no child falls through the cracks.

For every kid that walks through the doors of the Santa Anita Family YMCA for swimming, day camp, youth sports, or educational programs such as Youth and Government, there are many more in our community that are in need of the programs, activities and positive guidance that will help them develop into healthy, confident and productive adults. As a natural evolution of our mission we have stepped out beyond our walls.

For over a year we have been engaged with over 100 at-risk middle school and high school age youth and their families through our Y-Outreach programs, including the YMCA Youth Alliance, 24-hour Teen Support Talk Line, Homework Heroes, Bible Boot Camp, and Teen Wellness.

YMCA staff and volunteers are an active presence in the neighborhoods, parks and school campuses throughout our community. Everyday we reach out and create relationships with kids right where they live.

An example of our efforts is the YMCA Youth Alliance. This free program focuses on personal development and helps kids develop the tools and skills required to make good choices in their lives. This unique program supports participants with a team of caring adults that includes; the youth's parents, YMCA staff, school counselors, behavioral specialists and church pastors. All dedicated to helping each youth become the person that they're meant to be. This program not only provides support and positive values, but also provides meals and transportation for all participants.

For more than 50 years the Santa Anita Family YMCA has actively developed the character of our community's youth with programs and activities that build healthy spirit, mind and body. We will continue our efforts and will look for new ways to connect with kids and families.

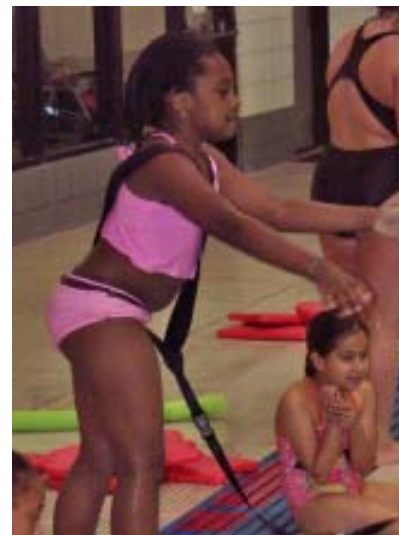
We encourage you to share in this vitally important mission and support our youth with your time, talents and resources. It's an investment that's sure to create dividends for everyone.

Damon Colaluca  
Chief Executive Officer

Donna Baker  
President

## Younsters Learn Water Safety at the YMCA

### Y-Splash Builds Water Skills for Youth



During Spring Break, nearly 350 second through fourth grade children learned how to be safe in and around the water this summer thanks to a partnership with the Rotary Club of Monrovia. For the second year, the Rotary Club sponsored YSplash, a program to teach children basic swimming skills, water safety and fitness, free of charge.

"This could help save lives. That's why the Monrovia Rotary is partnering with the YMCA in offering this program to local children," said Monrovia Rotary President, Dennis Franklin. "Children are at risk if they haven't been taught how to stay safe at the beach, pool or water park. YSplash is important because it teaches kids basic swimming skills and safety practices so that they can have fun and be confident in the water," he said.

YSplash instructors offered swim lessons, games for the swimming pool, contests and parent education sessions that included written information on how to keep children safe and injury-free in the water this summer. Many families continue in YMCA swimming programs through the YMCA financial assistance program. In 2007, YMCA donors made it possible for 1100 families to participate in YMCA programs. These families would not have been able to participate without the generosity of donors to the annual Community Support Campaign.

## Y-Kids Excel in School

### YMCA Volunteers Help Kids Succeed in School

"Over the past year, we noticed that many of the kids involved with the YMCA needed help with their school work. For various reasons they were not experiencing success with the current resources available at school or in the community. For some, it's that they have no quiet place to work or lack basic school supplies. For others there are language barriers or the lack of organizing or study skills. They were falling through the cracks," said YMCA President, Donna Baker.

The YMCA answered this need by creating the Homework Heroes program. The Y partnered with Clifton Middle School to provide space and the YMCA provides staff, snacks, school supplies and transportation home to all participants at no cost. The program is designed to meet each student "where they are" and build the skills they need to be successful. At the start of the program each child and his or her parents meets with a Y staff member to determine the student's needs. Parents are given assistance and guidance in helping their child succeed. Y staff also meet with the student's teachers and counselors to complete the assessment of the child. Then the student is matched with a caring adult who motivates and assists the child in the completion of their homework. The program runs three days a week for two hours a day.

The Homework Heroes program has seen some outstanding early success in academic performance for most of the students. "We are always looking for caring adults who can help kids be successful in school and life. You don't need to be a genius to help. You just have to care about kids," said Baker.

To volunteer, or to learn more about the Homework Heroes program, call the YMCA at (626) 359-9244.

## Did you know?

Adults 55 and older are one of the fastest growing membership categories of YMCA membership.



## Did you know?

The YMCA held the first summer camp at Orange Lake, New Jersey in 1885. Y-Campers still enjoy camp on that site today.



## Did you know?

The YMCA uses 100% of every contributed dollar to provide financial assistance or subsidized programs.



## Y-Campers Need Your Help!



Can you feel it getting warmer? Summer is fast approaching. For several hundred kids that means Y-Summer Camp. However, for many young

people in our community, attending summer camp is just not financially possible.

### ***That's where you come in.***

By making a donation to the YMCA you can ensure that every youngster can experience the once-in-a-lifetime adventures, character growth, and life-long friendships that only Y-Camp can offer.

Last year, YMCA donors made it possible for 450 kids to attend Y-Camp, who otherwise would not have been able to participate. ***Please donate today.***

# Spirit Mind Body

You can empower young people to make a difference in the world

One of these days, the young people in your home, school, neighborhood, and workplace will be in charge - in charge of their own lives and in charge of the world. You can help young people get ready for their future roles by empowering them now.

Just what is empowerment? Young people are empowered when they feel valued, valuable, and safe. They need to believe that adults like them and respect them. Finally, they need plenty of opportunities to contribute to their community through volunteering, working in paid jobs, and sharing their ideas, knowledge, and creativity.

It's not always easy to know what it takes for young people to be empowered. Here are some keys for really helping youth in your community, neighborhood, family, or school feel valued and valuable:



Find safe, appropriate opportunities for young people to be leaders, decision makers, helpers and role models for children, other youth, and adults.



Don't always do things *for* youth. It might seem easier or faster at the time. Or maybe you think you can do things better yourself. But in the long run, young people will learn and contribute more if adults do things *with* them.



Young people don't always have the opportunities or the skills to defend themselves against negative stereotypes, assumptions, or rumors. Speak up for youth when individuals or the media say negative or judgemental things about them.

**For more ideas on ways that you can make this an asset-rich community where all young people thrive, contact the YMCA and become an Asset Champion today!**

## YMCA Calendar



-YMCA Open House

May 3, 2008



-Rubber Duck Dunk

July 26, 2008



-Don Montgomery Memorial Golf Tournament

May 16, 2008



-Locked Into Christ Youth Overnighter

Aug. 23, 2008



-Y-Partner Wellness Event

June 7, 2008



-Monrovia Food, Wine & Jazz Festival

Sept. 7, 2008