



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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YMCA of Southwest Florida Joins National Celebration of 175 Years of Strengthening Communities

VENICE, FL — YMCA of Southwest Florida is proud to join YMCAs across the country in celebrating the 175th anniversary of the YMCA in the United States, marking more than a century and a half of strengthening communities and improving lives. This milestone commemorates the founding of the first U.S. YMCA in Boston in 1851 and recognizes the organization's enduring commitment to youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

As part of this national celebration led by YMCA of the USA, YMCA of Southwest Florida reflects on its own legacy of impact since its founding in 1967. For nearly six decades, the Y has served as a cornerstone of the region, providing programs and services that support children, families, and individuals across Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, DeSoto, Hendry and Glades counties.

"While we celebrate 175 years of the YMCA movement in the United States, we are equally proud of the impact YMCA of Southwest Florida has made locally for nearly 60 years," said Gene T. Jones, YMCA of Southwest Florida's President and CEO. "The Y has always been more than a gym—it's a place where children gain confidence, families find support, and individuals build connections that strengthen the fabric of our community."

Throughout its history, the YMCA has responded to the evolving needs of communities—from supporting soldiers during wartime and welcoming newcomers at Ellis Island to pioneering education programs and introducing sports like basketball and volleyball. Today, the YMCA continues that tradition through initiatives that address some of the most pressing issues facing communities.

In Southwest Florida, the YMCA provides vital programs including early learning and childcare, before and afterschool enrichment, summer camp, water safety education, youth sports, wellness programs, and efforts that address food insecurity and chronic disease prevention. These programs ensure that individuals of all ages and backgrounds have access to opportunities that help them reach their full potential.

During this anniversary year, YMCA of Southwest Florida will join YMCAs nationwide in celebrating the organization's legacy while highlighting the important work happening locally every day. Special events, community partnerships, and storytelling initiatives will shine a light on the people and programs that continue to make the Y a vital part of the community.

"Across generations, the YMCA has been a place where people come together, build relationships, and find a sense of belonging," Jones added. "As we celebrate this historic milestone, we are also looking ahead to the future—continuing to adapt, innovate, and serve our community for the next 175 years."

YMCA BRANCHES

Bonita Springs YMCA
Bradenton YMCA
Englewood YMCA
Fort Myers YMCA
Franz Ross YMCA
Lakewood Ranch YMCA
Palmer Ranch YMCA
Punta Gorda YMCA
Sarasota City YMCA
Venice YMCA

SKY ACADEMIES

SKY Academy Englewood
SKY Academy Venice

EARLY LEARNING

ACADEMIES

Charlotte Harbor YMCA
Early Learning Academy

Bonita Springs YMCA
The Suwyn Early Learning Academy

Venice YMCA
Early Learning Academy

YMCA Early Learning Academy
at PGT Innovations

OFFSITE LOCATIONS

Cooper Street Recreation Center
YMCA Camp Estero

ALSO SERVING

Cape Coral
Clewiston
DeSoto
Estero
Labelle
Lehigh Acres
Moore Haven
North Port

WWW.YMCASWFL.ORG

The Mission of the YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

To learn more about YMCA of Southwest Florida's mission and programs, please visit www.ymcaswfl.org.

For more information on YMCA of Southwest Florida, community members are encouraged to contact Jamie Browning, Vice President of Development, YMCA of Southwest Florida, at (941) 492-9622 or JBrowning@ymcaswfl.org.

About YMCA of Southwest Florida

YMCA of Southwest Florida is a leading non-profit strengthening southwest Florida communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Driven by its founding mission, the Y has served as a leading non-profit committed to strengthening community for more than 175 years. The Y empowers everyone, no matter who they are or where they're from, by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives and generations, the Y aims to improve overall health and well-being, ignite youth empowerment and demonstrate the importance of connections in and across Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Desoto, Hendry and Glades Counties.