



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## MEETING COMMUNITY NEED: THE Y OFFERS EMERGENCY CHILD CARE SERVICES

For nearly 170 years, the Y has remained committed to helping people and communities – especially in times of crisis. Right now, while adhering to local health and safety guidelines, many Ys nationwide are providing critical emergency services such as child care for health care workers and first responders, food for children and teens and shelter for individuals without a home. As one of the nation's largest nonprofits focused on strengthening communities, helping people in need is foundational to the Y's mission. And when this crisis is over, the Y will continue to be there to help our communities recover.

### Serving families with Emergency Child Care Needs

Right now, with COVID-19 (coronavirus)-related school closures and the urgency for essential workers to report to work, there is a critical need for safe child care options across the country. In response, the Y – one of the nation's largest and most trusted providers of child care services – is offering emergency child care at more than 940 locations for families of medical personnel, essential employees and first responders. Below are a few examples of how the Y is responding to families and communities in need. For more information including emergency child care locations, visit [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net).

#### YMCA of Greater Cincinnati Partners to Serve First Responders

In partnership with United Way, KnowledgeWorks and Crossroads Church, the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati has transitioned their facilities to serve as emergency child care centers for first responders and hospital staff. Starting in mid-March, YMCA branches began anticipating the needs of the community and creating protocols to care for essential workers' children who had nowhere else to go. The sites can provide care for up to 1,100 children.

"We're at a moment in time where we are all impacted," said YMCA of Greater Cincinnati President and CEO Jorge Perez. "It's why we must lean in together. Our recovery will depend on I becoming we."



The YMCA of Greater Cincinnati has rigorous cleaning schedules, requires staff and children's temperatures to be taken before entering, and maintains a ratio of one staffer to six children. "For 175 years, the YMCA has always responded in times like these," Perez said. "During the World Wars, we supported the men and women who fought for our freedom and their families back home. Right now, this is how we're responding. We are more than a gym!"

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### **YMCA of Greater Seattle Offers Free Child Care for Health Care Workers**

The YMCA of Greater Seattle is offering free child care to medical professionals and first responders, with an option for other families to participate for a fee. No child will be turned away for a family's inability to pay and financial assistance is available.

"The vision of the Y is all programs that we offer must be accessible to all people, meaning we always make financial assistance available," said Loria Yeadon, president and CEO of the YMCA of Greater Seattle. The YMCA of Greater Seattle's child care centers have a total capacity for 400 kids and feature the Y's fun and enrichment-based programming, lunch, and snacks twice daily.

"We are grateful to those who are working to serve our community during these unprecedented times, so we are stepping up to support those working on behalf of all of us," said Yeadon. "Showing up for our community is what we do best. We're honored to do what we do best to help families across our region."

### **YMCA of Greater Birmingham Converts Facilities to Child Care for Front-Line Workers**

The YMCA of Greater Birmingham is opening their doors and hearts to provide care for up to 200 children of health care workers, first responders, and all vital and essential workers. "We're greatly concerned about the availability of staff at the hospitals to take care of the people, and we don't want child care to be one of those burdens," says Dan Pile with the YMCA of Birmingham.

"We recognize the Y is uniquely able to provide school age child care throughout Birmingham. While their facilities have been closed, they are still in business. The Y has transformed their facilities to provide school age child care services using strict social distancing, cleaning guidelines and safety protocols developed by top epidemiologists at UAB," said Dr. Irfan M. Asif, Professor and Chair of the Department of Family and Community at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB).

"Despite our doors being temporarily closed, the YMCA continues to serve and have tremendous impact. The Y is meeting the unprecedented challenges the pandemic presents to provide basic needs, address gaps in service and strengthen our community through efforts that promote connection and caring for one another," said Pile in a letter to members.

### **YMCA of Buffalo Niagara Moves Quickly to Meet Needs of Community**

The YMCA of Buffalo Niagara has opened eight locations as emergency child care facilities for health care workers and first responders. "Right now, we are working with more than 20 school districts to provide emergency child care to essential workers and first responders, so that they can help take care of our community and stop the spread of the virus," says Penny Snell, Vice President, Program Quality & Innovation for the YMCA of Buffalo Niagara.

The child care program serves children ages 4 to 12. It is an extension of the YMCA's Vacation Club, a service offered when school is not in session. Emergency Vacation Club provides academic enrichment with activities focusing on STEM learning, literacy, college and career exploration, global studies and arts. Students can also bring their schoolwork for additional assistance.



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## **The Y in Central Maryland Opens All Facilities to Serve First Responders and Health Care Workers**

The Y in Central Maryland is opening all 11 facilities as emergency child care facilities to serve first responders and health care workers in partnership with the state education and health departments. The Y will care for up to 700 children ages 4 to 12 at no cost to families. Programming will be modeled after existing day camp and after school curriculum.

The Y in Central Maryland's President & CEO, John Hoey, stated that "as challenging as this time is, the Y will continue to adapt to serve our community now and into the future as we always have. We are woven into the fabric of many of this region's communities, and we take seriously our role as a vital lifeline for so many. By providing critically needed resources to our most vulnerable children and families, supporting the response of our frontline health care workers by caring for their children, and keeping contact with isolated seniors, we are doing our best to serve the community in a time of crisis, despite the significant financial challenges we are facing.

## **Valley of the Sun YMCA Partners with State to Offer Emergency Care and More**

The Valley of the Sun YMCA, in a united effort with the YMCA of Southern Arizona, the Prescott YMCA of Yavapai County and the State of Arizona and Arizona Department of Health Services, recently led the charge in securing funding to provide emergency child care for youth and families impacted by school closures due to COVID-19. The partnership will allow YMCAs across the state to provide expanded services to care for children of frontline COVID-19 workers throughout the Phoenix Metropolitan area, Flagstaff, Yuma, Tucson and Prescott, Ariz. through May 29.

"The work that our Ys do in our community every day is extremely important. But the work that we are doing now – it's absolutely crucial," says Jenna Cooper, emergency operations coordinator for Valley of the Sun YMCA. "Over the last three weeks, we've served 1,500 kids across all three organizations, and with our new ability to provide additional subsidies to families, we anticipate the demand to grow quickly over the next two weeks."

The Y's emergency child care program prioritizes frontline COVID-19 workers but is open to all families that need child care services. Through the Valley of the Sun YMCA, financial assistance is available and an automatic 50 percent scholarship is offered to frontline COVID-19 workers. Tiered pricing and scholarship opportunities are also offered in Prescott and Tucson.

One such Phoenix resident and long-time member of the Valley of the Sun YMCA is Michael Eshliman, whose family relies on the Y for partially subsidized child care. He says, "My wife and I are full-time working grandparents who have custody of three of our grandchildren. We need a place we trust to leave the kids in good hands. We need the YMCA for their wellness and the added security it gives our minds. They've never turned us away."

All three Arizona YMCA associations have expanded their emergency child care food programs, increasing the number of meals per day available to participants to make sure that children who come from food insecure families get the nutrition they need each day. Cooper estimates that across the state, the Y has provided over 20,800 meals to children in their emergency child care programs. Additionally, all branches are accommodating online learning needs for each child that many school districts have deployed during school closures.

**For more information on the Y's emergency child care efforts** including locations, visit [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net).

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