

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 due to direct health care costs, as well as the indirect economic costs of lost productivity.

Activate America in Progress

For the last few years, the YMCA has incorporated the vision reflected in **Activate America** into more and more aspects of our work. For example, we're transforming YMCA child care sites into environments where physical activity, healthy eating and improved interpersonal connections are the norm. And nearly 400 YMCAs across the country have committed to a capacity building process to better meet the needs of health seekers.

Here are some other ways in which the vision reflected in Activate America is becoming increasingly inseparable from the broader work of the YMCA:

- **In September 2007**, more than 1,500 YMCAs participated in *America On the Move Week with the YMCA*. Nationwide community events inspired 1.3 million Americans to take 8 billion steps as part of our annual drive to motivate people to take small, daily steps to increase their level of activity and improve their overall well-being.
- **Each spring**, nearly 1,700 YMCAs host a *YMCA Healthy Kids® Day*—a free interactive special event that employs fun, engaging and creative activities to encourage children and families to adopt behaviors that support healthy lifestyles.
- **Through Pioneering Healthier Communities**, YMCAs in 64 selected communities across the country have engaged teams represented by key community stakeholders (including hospitals, schools, local businesses and foundations) to develop strategies, including policy and environmental change approaches, that reduce barriers and increase support for healthy living in local communities.
- **The CDC Steps program** has funded YMCA of the USA and 40 local YMCAs to increase the capacity of Steps communities to identify and implement health and wellness programs targeted to meet unique local needs.

YMCA of the USA acknowledges the generous support of the following Activate America donors:

- Disney Channel
- Eli Lilly and Company
- Entertainment Industry Foundation
- JCPenney Afterschool Fund
- Just One More Campaign by Del Monte
- Kellogg Company
- Kimberly-Clark Corporation
- Lance Armstrong Foundation
- Nautilus, Inc.
- Northwestern Mutual Foundation
- PepsiCo and the Smart Spot™ Program
- PepsiCo Foundation
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
- YMCAs—Mission Impact Partners and Capacity Building YMCAs

Expert Advisors:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Stanford University School of Medicine

For more information about **Activate America**, please visit: www.ymca.net.

America's 2,663 YMCAs serve more than 20.2 million people each year, uniting men, women, and children of all ages, races, faiths, backgrounds, abilities and income levels.

