

In 10,000 communities throughout the nation, YMCAs serve more than 20 million children, teens and adults with health and well-being programs, job training, immigrant education, parenting classes, transitional housing, afterschool enrichment and many other services designed to meet community needs. For more than 150 years, YMCAs have excelled in bringing together diverse communities and people to provide resources so that families can thrive. “The programs of the YMCA may differ from neighborhood to neighborhood, but our goals remain consistent nationwide—to ensure that every family builds stronger bonds, achieves greater work/life balance, and becomes more engaged with their communities,” says Neil Nicoll, President and CEO of YMCA of the USA, the national resource office for the nation’s 2,663 YMCAs. “The comprehensive support offered by YMCAs helps to inspire families as they strive for success.”



YMCA OF CENTRAL MARYLAND

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Award-winning program: Family Strengthening Philosophy
Chris Ader-Soto, Vice President of Child Care and Family Services

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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2007 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

WHOLE FAMILY CARE

For the past 30 years, the YMCA of Central Maryland has served the Baltimore area's most disadvantaged neighborhoods with affordable child care, pre-school and Head Start programs. In working with children, the YMCA has recognized many challenges faced by the children's families—poverty, homelessness, single mothers, teen parents, domestic violence and limited education. That is why the YMCA deliberately began focusing on supporting parents and strengthening families of the 4,500 children in its child care programs. "Families have issues and obstacles that must be addressed for the children to be successful academically, socially and emotionally," says Chris Ader-Soto, Vice President of Child Care and Family Services. "Quality child care depends on quality care for the entire family."

The YMCA works extensively with parents who have young children in its child care programs and also single mothers who live with their children in YMCA's transitional housing program, the Geraldine Young Family Life Center. With support in education, job readiness and accessing community resources, the YMCA helps parents achieve greater stability for their families.



BEYOND CHILD CARE, WE REALIZE THE NECESSITY OF CARING FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY TO ENSURE CHILDREN'S FUTURE SUCCESS. THAT IS WHY WE SUPPORT PARENTS AS THEY STRIVE FOR GREATER ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND BRIGHTER FUTURES.

—John Hoey, President and CEO of the YMCA of Central Maryland

HEAD START FOR CHILDREN, JUMP START FOR MOM

The Geraldine Young Family Life Center is making a significant difference in the lives of formerly homeless families. Since opening five years ago, all 19 graduates of the 18-month residential program have remained employed and obtained steady housing. While living at the center, mothers earn their GEDs, receive counseling and substance abuse treatment, take financial literacy classes and learn job skills with support from YMCA partners like the Baltimore City and County health departments, the House of Ruth and Family Tree. "With more than 150 partners throughout central Maryland, we can effectively connect families to services they so desperately need," Ader-Soto says. "Partners are crucial to making a difference for these families. No one agency can do it alone."

When families register for one of the YMCA's 18 Head Start programs, they are assigned a family service worker who assesses needs and helps parents develop a Family Partnership Agreement outlining their goals and plans. The family service worker also helps parents access resources such as food stamps, immunizations and housing referrals. For parents seeking work in child care, the YMCA offers a tuition-free, 90-hour child care certification course. More than half of the YMCA's Head Start staff members are Head Start mothers who completed the program.

"When parents are working on their own development, receiving the support they need and partnering with us to inspire their children, the children are more likely to be successful," says President and CEO John Hoey.

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and YMCA of the USA, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize local YMCAs with outstanding programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.