

Serving our Communities – Y's in Minnesota

I recently spent a day at the state capital with my YMCA peers from across the state. We shared legislative priorities that nurture the potential of your youth through childcare, afterschool programs, and summer camps. Demonstrated our leadership in the field of healthy living, through programs like the Diabetes Prevention Program, LiveStrong, Enhance Fitness, and the Childhood Obesity Prevention. And renewed our support of charitable giving which allows us to continue to help individuals, families and communities to learn grow and thrive.

As a state we have about 40 facility Y's, 10 resident camps and a large number of secondary childcare and afterschool sites. We are scattered from Albert Lea and Worthington in the South to Virginia and Grand Marais in the North. Marshall and Fergus Falls on the Western edge to Hudson, WI in the East which is a part of the metro association. Facility, budget and membership size also run the gamut. From Grand Marais with a small budget and number of members to the Y of the Greater Twin Cities which is currently the 3rd largest Y association in the country with 19 facilities, 7 camps and a \$140 million budget.

It is the collective impact which is interesting to me. Over 483,000 members served along with hundreds of thousands of additional participants who utilize their Y for programs, meetings, voting, events, etc. As an organization we are extremely proud to bring together young and old, men and women, people of all faiths, backgrounds, and incomes. We also live our non-profit mission by providing over \$10 million in scholarships and subsidies to provide critical access to low-income families. An additional \$200,000 in value is provided through community events, free or reduced rental space to non-profit peers, and a large variety of happenings like health fairs, legislative town hall meetings, blood drives, and school retreats.

Our federated system allows MN Y's the ability to work together for the common good through YUSA and a State Alliance of MN Y's but each Y remains locally driven, controlled by community volunteers who serve on a board and make decisions based on community needs and assets. Minnesota Y's have over 6,000 volunteers giving more than 125,000 hours and raising \$16 million to support and serve their communities. Y's also partner with hundreds of organizations with the understanding that by working together our communities are better for all.

Lastly, our Y's play a significant role in relieving the burden of government. By definition; Non-profits serve a purpose of public or mutual benefit other than the pursuit or accumulation of profits. Essentially providing an array of health and social services that long ago were required of the government and today are funded through community support. Visit mn-y.org for more information or locations of all Minnesota YMCA's.