

Parents Night Out

Friday, February 20 • 6:15–10:00 p.m.
Friday, March 20 • 6:15–10:00 p.m.
Friday, April 24 • 6:15–10:00 p.m.
\$25 per child for members

Enjoy a night out! Kids ages 2–10 get pizza and enjoy sports, games and swimming with our childcare staff. Spaces are limited. Pre-registration is required. Visit our membership desk for details.



SAVE THE DATE:

Youth Futsal League (Ages 5-12)

Registration is January 19-February 20

Futsal® (Five-a-Side Soccer) was founded in Uruguay in 1930 when Juan Carlos Ceriani devised a five-a-side version of soccer for youth competition in YMCAs. Played on basketball-sized courts, without the use of sidewalls, the game helps children develop better skills because of the smaller field and reduced number of players.

Practices and games for this 8-week league start the week of Monday March 2nd. Games will be held on Friday evenings between 5:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. beginning Friday, March 6th.

For more information, or to register your child, please visit www.annarborymca.org or call Steve Petty, Sports Director, at 661-8018.



Day Camp Registration starts February 11

Since 1920, the Ann Arbor YMCA has provided quality summer camps for children. Our staff is dedicated to giving your child the best camping experience possible. Our programs build your child's self-confidence, encourage character development and increase their physical activity. With more than 25 different camps available, there is something to suit every child.

Check out our new camps, including: An Amazing Race, Dance: Making a Musical, Fishing Camp, Mad Scientist Camp, and You Go Girl! Please read our 2009 Day Camps brochure, or visit the Summer Day Camps section of our website, for more information on these exciting new additions.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

You know from personal experience that there are almost as many reasons to join the YMCA as there are Y members. Whether a member is trying to live a little healthier or train for a triathlon, the Y has the expertise, facilities and equipment that help members achieve their goals.

Many Y members don't realize, however, the extent of the YMCA's philanthropic impact on our community. Just as we provide a variety of services and opportunities to our fitness members, we are doing the same for our broader community, often helping adults and children in the greatest need.

This month, we decided to share with you the stories of just some of our members who benefit from YMCA programs and scholarships.

Cathi Dubeau

Today

WINTER 2009

Youth in Government

This fall, the Ann Arbor YMCA took 65 middle school students to Lansing for the State YMCA's Youth in Government program. But the students did more than see the Capitol: They lived the life of real legislators. "Somehow it's more fun than school," says Mariaida Pando Girard, 13, who served as a committee clerk. "Everybody there cares about what they're doing."

The program started in September. At West Middle School in Ypsilanti, YIG meetings were incorporated as part of the daily class schedule for a group of 30 high-achieving students. Participants from other area schools as well as homeschooled students had club meetings once a week. In preparation, these young legislators first discussed Michigan issues and wrote bills on topics of their choice. As the trip got closer, they learned parliamentary procedure and how to make a good argument.

Just before Thanksgiving, the students arrived at the Capitol. They were assigned a senator or representative's real seat in the chambers and held mock sessions on the bills they had written. As they met other delegates, students learned the diverse beliefs from across the state. "It forced me to take into account other people's perspectives," Mariaida says. "The kids are normal, just like us, but they have completely different opinions."

Lesley Blackwell, an eighth grader at Ann Arbor Open, was a delegate to last year's conference. This year, she studied parliamentary procedure to become a committee chairperson and lead other students in the first step in the bill process. Lesley's mom, Kelsey Hargesheimer, says her daughter "gained a lot more self confidence and self awareness" through the program.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)





Congratulations to Frances Kai-Hwa Wang, winner of our “Share Your Y Story” contest

Swimming it Away at the YMCA

My husband, the cyclist, looks at me like I am crazy as I ask him how to shift gears on our teenager’s roadbike. In seventeen years of marriage, I have never (happily) gotten on a bicycle with him or for him, and here on the eve of horrible divorce, I am going on a bike ride, by myself. I have decided to bike from our house in the northeast corner of Ann Arbor to the YMCA downtown, go swimming (which I have also not done in seventeen years as he always said it was a stupid sport compared to biking), and then bike all the way home again before he brings the kids back. I can do this.

An old college pal tells me that sports are the way to get through this terrible time. She runs, swims, and bikes; her stories of divorce are colored by clear blue lakes, the soft tread of the trail under her feet, the pulsing crowds at the Paris Marathon. I have to laugh. Me? Do sports?

It may be a stereotype that Asian Americans do not do sports, but I was a pretty straight and studious model minority nerd—who got her high school letter competing on the speech and debate team. Before my children started taking swim lessons at the YMCA ten years ago, I had never before swum in a public pool, had never before been inside a locker room, had never before changed clothes in front of strangers. I automatically walk into the girls’ locker room, out of habit.

Now I am drawn to the pool at the Y every morning. I only know how to swim breaststroke, so I cruise slowly with eyes just above the water, watching the ladies in water aerobics and trying not to get run over by the serious swimmers in Speedos. I find it takes about twenty minutes for the tears to stop falling and a wet Zen-like calm to descend, allowing me to finally think, write, plan how to get through this day. The doctor says I need to lower my blood pressure, but now that I no longer have health insurance, I decide that I will simply swim it away, too. Then I shower all the gritty hurt off of me.

My children and I have always found such safety here. We love hearing all the different languages and being part of the rainbow of faces around us. All the parents help each other out, especially if someone (me) is awkwardly juggling three little girls and one fat baby. We run into all the children’s friends, and we make new friends whenever a new session starts.

It feels odd to be at the YMCA without the children, but I feel like I am becoming a part of the Y—while coming into my own life now—as an adult, as an individual, and on my own terms.

Frances Kai-Hwa Wang is a writer and an editor at IMDiversity.com Asian American Village. She has been a member of the Ann Arbor YMCA since 1998; she joined because her friend Tami said that the Y had the warmest baby pool in town (she measured).



Youth in Government

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

“YIG also teaches communication and respect for others’ beliefs, and provides positive role models,” says Josh Humbel, the Ann Arbor YMCA’s youth and teen director. “The government part is just one piece of it.”

A grant from Rotary Club of Ann Arbor, as well as funds from the Strong Kids Campaign, allowed the Ann Arbor YMCA to grant \$3,500 in financial assistance. More than 40 percent of our middle school participants were awarded at least partial scholarships. “Our main goal is to eliminate barriers for kids to be able to participate,” Humbel says.

Bills proposed by the Ann Arbor YMCA delegation students at the Middle School YIG Conference in November 2008 include:

- A bill to mandate that all children enrolled in Michigan Public Schools wear uniforms to school (Tahar Khan, West MS)
- A bill to allow dogs to be off leash in state parks (Eli Cohen, Ann Arbor Homeschool)
- A bill to mandate that the State of Michigan build a state-funded air and space museum (Ivan Lara, West MS)
- A bill to mandate internet safety workshops for third grade students attending public schools (Austin Lee and Jeeva Muhil, Ann Arbor Open)
- A bill to mandate that if you have a car, gas would be five cents cheaper, and if you have a sport utility vehicle, gas would be five cents more expensive (Sydney Gander, West MS)

L I V E S T R O N G™ *at the* YMCA



When Kim Landis first got on a treadmill, the slowest setting was too fast. She had finished her last breast cancer treatment almost a year before, but remained fatigued and weakened.

“My muscles always felt like I’d walked up 1,000 stairs,” she says. But now, one month later, 53-year-old Landis can complete one mile on the treadmill and walk for more than 20 minutes – thanks to her hard work and the LIVESTRONG™ at the YMCA Cancer Survivorship Program.

Funded with a grant from the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF), a group of cancer survivors meets twice a week on the fitness floor. Led by program coordinator

Linda Briggs as well as instructors Mary Beth Sheehan and Maureen Harding, participants work on personalized fitness plans and end the day with a group session. There is no charge to participate, and group members are given a free YMCA membership for the three months of their program.

Although the main goals of LIVESTRONG™ are to improve strength, flexibility, balance and endurance, program participant Ed Chacon-Lontin says “mental strengthening” was another important benefit. For many people, making the commitment to exercise is one of the most difficult steps. “It was hard for quite a while (to get to the gym), but here in the end it’s gotten easier,” he says.

Briggs and the other staff, as well as Fitness Director Dave Morris, attended various training sessions through the LAF, including one at Stanford University, and launched the first program here at the Ann Arbor YMCA at the end of August. “I feel really committed to the program because of my own diagnosis,” says Briggs, who is a cancer survivor herself. “When I was feeling really horrible and was wondering what it would take to get back, I had a ton of questions but didn’t really know

(how to start).” She now is able to help others who are in the same situation she faced.

YMCA member Jane Anderson has been cancer-free for four years, but had not regained the strength lost when she fought breast cancer. She completed twelve weeks in LIVESTRONG™ in mid-November, and continues to exercise. “I improved on all the tested parameters and I had a cheering section in the process, helping me to realize higher goals than I normally would have gone for,” she says. Anderson plans to sign up for classes she otherwise would not have considered and continue to improve her level of fitness. “It’s not an endpoint – you need to define [LIVESTRONG] as a beginning or a midpoint in your continuing progress,” she says.

For more information about the LIVESTRONG™ at the YMCA program, please contact Linda Briggs at (734) 661-8022 or livestrong@annarborymca.org.

