

YMCA Adapts and Reinvents Its Priorities

Published by admin on Fri, 03/12/2021 - 11:16am

[Helping People in Unparalleled Times](#)

By: Katherine Clements



CAMP ACADEMY CHILDREN in the Lakewood Family YMCA Gymnasium doing a pool noodle exercise activity.

The YMCA of Greater Long Beach promotes engagement in the community and working together to create a healthy living, social responsibilities and youth development, all goals that became difficult with the restrictions caused by COVID-19.

Alfredo Velasco, CEO of the YMCA of Greater Long Beach told Long Beach Rotarians on Feb. 10 how the YMCA has not only been able to maintain their involvement with the community during COVID-19 but also how they have had to reinvent their services.

“We decided right from the get-go that we were not going to retreat; we were not going to close our doors,” says Velasco. “We didn’t feel that sustainability was going to be achieved by closing our door and furloughing all our staff.”

With only having to make minimal salaries and jobs cut, the YMCA took the stimulus package granted to them and dispersed it among their staff for the first eight weeks of the lockdown until they could seek help on a local level.

With the help of that stimulus package and a waiver granted by California State Governor Gavin Newsom, the YMCA has maintained their involvement by remaining open as childcare facilities for essential workers.

The waiver is categorized as an “emergency camp waiver,” allowing the YMCA to stay open and operate under certain circumstances.

<https://beachcomber.news/content/ymca-adapts-and-reinvents-its-priorities>

Because the YMCA has been a service to the community throughout the entire pandemic, they could create new options for all of their members.

As the YMCA adapted to COVID-19, they created The Y Camp Academy, a program that allows the Y to offer schooling for members at institutions that have not reopened yet.

“Y Camp Academy is a newly innovated YMCA program that began in conjunction with school and support of working parents in the Fall of 2020. It had transitioned from childcare for essential workers, which are pop-up camps, at the beginning of this crisis, to summer camp to Y Camp Academy,” says Velasco.

The camp is an in-person program supporting students who are e-learning through their school district. The camp supports every child’s virtual learning experience and works to keep them active and engaged during the day.

Los Cerritos Middle School and Mark Twain Elementary are two schools in Long Beach that are currently hosting the Y Camp Academy while those institutions continue to operate.

Designated YMCAs have also become distribution centers, distributing food and prescription drugs to the most vulnerable. they are directing their efforts to help those who are vulnerable. “As the pandemic worsened, YMCA responded quickly and decisively, focused on meeting the urgent needs with relative programming,” says Velasco in an informational video.

One YMCA camp became a nursing home for Bear Valley Hospital at Camp Oaks, a center operated by the YMCA in San Bernardino county.

With 40 percent of members still paying their membership and a few new members joining, The YMCA has focused on serving community needs. “We have one goal,” says Velasco. “provide relevant services to youth, families and individuals in a time of need.”

Being an independent structure was an essential factor in the YMCA’s future as they entered the pandemic. Localized branches make their own independent decisions based on the needs of their members and their community. Their ability to conduct local decision-making assisted greatly in helping their Long Beach community.