

# YMCA Activate America™ Fact Sheet

## What is YMCA Activate America?

**YMCA Activate America is a national initiative** that is rallying YMCAs across the country to further enhance their service and support to kids, adults and families who want to lead a healthy lifestyle, but struggle to do so. In addition to enhancing their direct service to these health seekers, YMCAs are deepening their commitment to community-wide efforts to promote healthy living and are intensifying collaborations with other community partners to magnify their impact.

**YMCA Activate America was created because**—as the nation’s oldest and largest community based organization with 2,617 YMCAs, 20.2 million members, 72 million households located within three miles of a YMCA and a mission dedicated to health and wellness—the YMCA movement is uniquely qualified and positioned to impact our country’s growing obesity, chronic disease and health care crisis.

**Activate America YMCAs are committed** to supporting kids, adults and families in their journey to create and sustain a healthy lifestyle, to being an integral part of their community’s efforts to make long-lasting changes that support healthy living and to collaborating with community partners to magnify their impact.

## How is YMCA Activate America being implemented?

- Over 1,100 YMCAs joined September’s America On the Move Week at the YMCA. Nationwide community events inspired 850,000 Americans to take 9.3 billion steps. During this week, YMCAs host events and activities to motivate people to take small steps to get active and increase the number of daily steps they take.
- Annually each spring, more than 1,400 YMCAs host a YMCA Healthy Kids® Day—an interactive special event that, through fun, engaging and creative activities, encourages children and families to adopt behaviors that support a healthy lifestyle.
- More than 100 YMCAs are participating in a pilot organizational transformation project that aims to enhance the YMCA’s capacity to serve and support people who want to lead a healthy lifestyle, but struggle to do so. In addition, the project is transforming YMCA child care sites into environments where physical activity, healthy eating and connectedness are the norm. Harvard School of Public Health is evaluating the health benefits to children of this groundbreaking project. In 2007, results will be shared with hundreds of additional YMCAs.
- YMCAs in nearly 50 states are a part of Pioneering Healthier Communities, a project that engages key community stakeholders to develop strategies that reduce barriers and increase support for healthy living in local communities. Key community stakeholders involved in the project include hospitals, schools, local businesses and foundations.
- The Steps to a HealthierUS program funded YMCA of the USA and 40 local YMCAs to help increase the capacity of Steps Community grantees to identify and implement health and wellness programs targeted to meet unique local needs, such as: disseminating proven curriculum in the school and afterschool settings, offering free nutrition classes, bringing mobile physical activity equipment to underserved communities, influencing policy changes to increase PE, establishing walkable communities that promote physical activity, expanding aquatic programs for those with physical disabilities and designing healthy lunch hours at schools.

**For more information** on YMCA Activate America, please visit [www.ymca.net](http://www.ymca.net).

In the last 10 years, obesity rates in the United States have increased **60%**.

According to the New England Journal of Medicine, the current generation of American children could be the first to lead shorter lives than their parents.

**80%** of health potential is in a person’s control, yet 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.

## YMCA Activate America Strategic Partnerships:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Steps to a HealthierUS initiative, Harvard School of Public Health, Stanford University School of Medicine, Disney Channel, Kellogg Company, JCPenney Afterschool Fund, Kimberly-Clark Corporation and PepsiCo

