



March 22, 2020

A message from our CEO regarding membership and the mission at work at the YMCA

In light of the uncertainty created by the increased impact of the coronavirus, closure of schools and businesses, and the on-going need to provide essential services for the most vulnerable in our community, we are confronted with a moment of truth. How best can the Knox County YMCA serve our community and maximize our collective efforts to keep children, adults, and families as healthy and safe as possible?

For over 154 years, our local Y has walked in the direction of challenge. We have re-evaluated what it means to be Americans, to be human beings, and to be a YMCA. As we have since 1866, this Y will utilize our time-tested mission as an anchor for an entire community's crucial response to this global challenge. We will follow the path of the generations before us who were ready to meet their challenges. Volunteers at this very YMCA once suspended services so they could literally walk onto the battlefield in the Civil War, carrying Bibles and medical supplies to soldiers in pain; as well as when our grandfathers and great-grandfathers were called to make great sacrifices overseas in World Wars, and grandmothers and great-grandmothers were called to the industrial factory lines. To serve the needs of that time, our Y developed the first-ever child care programs that have continued to be a stalwart in our growing and thriving community. Historically, our YMCA has been a catalyst to distill and put into action the truly incredible Human Spirit. Together, we have activated the capabilities we possess when we join together in our collective efforts to achieve common goals.

Today, we are humbled to be in this position once again. We must focus our resources on those who need us most during this unprecedented time. In the near term, we are pivoting our resources to best support the most-pressing needs in our community. We are aligning with our community partners - our schools, agencies and businesses. Some of the most vulnerable are the kids who have had schools cancelled and whose families are food insecure. We are feeding hundreds of families by providing a "Meals on Wheels" type of program to ensure a healthy meal for them. We also must ensure that healthcare workers, first responders and "essential" service providers are able to perform their duties to keep us safe. We will support the efforts of those called to provide the necessary food, products and services to weather this challenge. We will use phone calls, texts and social media to engage, empathize and demonstrate their importance in comprising the greater soul of our society.

Thus, as of March 17, we suspended operations of our health and well-being centers, our pool, camps and program locations. This will continue until at least March 30th, although we work to stay as fluid and dynamic as our children, families and community partners will need us to be. We

will take advantage of social media to not only share updates, opportunities and information that will be essential to those we serve, but to also find the God-given opportunities to further our mission. Together we must be diligent to the science of disease, but to also find ways to celebrate our spirits, minds and bodies and to find comfort and relief through emotional connection.

To support your health and well-being goals, we are offering Y360, an exciting new YMCA on-demand fitness program for adults and kids to do at home. You and your family can exercise together and have some fitness fun! You can access Y360 On-Demand today at <https://ymca360.org/>. Les Mills On-Demand can also be utilized for at-home workouts at <https://www.lesmills.com/us/ondemand/>. We will also look at safe and effective opportunities to engage people in their homes with the superior fitness leadership that is the hallmark of our healthy living operations. Watch for this on Facebook or other on-line platforms. Please use our website at www.knoxyymca.org.

As you can see through these various programs and services, your Y is committed to being there for those who need us most. We ask that you join us in the effort. We ask that you continue to invest in your membership so that we can maintain vital, life-changing, and life-saving programs at the Y. If necessary, we will certainly put your membership on hold. We will also maintain staff at our Welcome Center at 309.344.1324 who can assist changing memberships over the phone from 8am to 4pm Monday through Friday.

We know your membership is meaningful to you and that meaning lies in the relationships we have built at the Y. These relationships are based upon how much you care about our community, and your desire for everyone to have the opportunity to thrive – no matter what our world is facing. Thank you for joining us. We are stronger together. We are working closely with community leaders, often on an hourly basis, and we will continue to communicate with you on the opportunity to return to full services.

In the meantime, we hope that you will join us in our efforts to serve those in our community who need us most. Thank you for your support as we work diligently to ensure the health and safety of our community. We work together in the spirit of those who have come before us, and with faithful regard to the children we are serving today who will continue this tradition for generations to come.

Please stay safe. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adam Sampson".

Adam Sampson

CEO, Knox County YMCA