

The Historical Summary of the Carlisle Family YMCA

George Williams founded the first Young Men's Christian Association on June 6, 1844. By 1851, sixteen cities in the British Isles had formed branches of this type of association. Later that year an American correspondent in England researched these establishments and wrote a feature article about them in a Bostonian publication. Shortly thereafter a YMCA of Boston emerged. Branches then began cropping up in major American cities.

On the local front, Carlisle, PA was in the midst of a period of extreme growth and development. By 1860 the number of inhabitants here had reached 5,417. Around this time, Carlisle's boundaries were marked; today these town limits are referred to as North, South, East, and West Streets.

On March 14, 1859 the *Volunteer*, Carlisle's local weekly newspaper reported that a town meeting was going to be called at Marian Hall, "for the purpose of forming a Young Men's Christian Association in Carlisle." A week after the announcement a group of twenty adopted a constitution for this new organization.

Throughout the following years, the Y in Carlisle was influenced significantly by numerous outside events. During the early 1860's America became engaged in civil war; thus, the Carlisle Y put aside its local work and focussed on serving the fighting troops. In 1872 the Y in Carlisle played host to the Pennsylvania State YMCA Convention. This meeting, in turn, helped increase community morale for the organization. A year later the Dickinson Mission Chapel was purchased for \$900 for the purpose of housing the association.

During the latter portion of the nineteenth century the Carlisle YMCA continued to expand. In 1881 the Y became incorporated; in 1883 its first professional staff leader emerged, Mr. J. A. McKnight. That same year the YMCA moved its home to Marian Hall; ten years later the YMCA relocated once more to the Neff Building. This became the Carlisle YMCA's first permanent site. This building was purchased for \$10,500.

YMCA camp programs also made their debut at the century's end.

The Twentieth Century History of the Carlisle Family YMCA can best be summarized in a timeline form:

- 1906: The YMCA initiates its first campaign for the purpose of building a new structure at its present location. The monetary goal is \$35,000; this is reached in a mere twelve days.
- 1909: The new building opens its doors and includes two rooms for rentals, a game room, a lecture hall, a bowling alley, a gymnasium with 100 available lockers, and twelve residential rooms.
- 1913: The YMCA expands its camping program; a boys camp at Laurel Lake is established and it runs for two sessions that summer.
- 1914: Adult sports leagues develop; the first organized is the Industrial Basketball League. Teams in this inaugural event include the Bedford Shoe Company, Linder Shoe Company, Frog and Switch Manufacturing Company, and Carlisle Carpet Mills.
- 1915: The YMCA begins a cooperative relationship with the Carlisle High School; students are allowed use of the gym.
- 1918: The YMCA Hut develops for military personnel. The Carlisle Barracks Convalescent Hospital assists with this operation.
- 1922: New programs implemented include: High Y, Junior High Y, and Gray Y.
- 1924: A camp planning committee meets for the purpose of establishing a permanent YMCA camp at Laurel Lake, late to be named Camp Thompson.
- 1926: Crews construct open side shelters at the YMCA campsite for resident campers. Later to be named Camp Thompson.
- 1926: A Safety Patrol program directed by the Y in the local schools begins.
- 1927: The camp at Laurel Lake receives its namesake: Camp Thompson.
- 1928: A mess hall opens at Camp Thompson.
- 1931: Additions to camp this year include two shelters and an extension on the mess hall.
- 1931: The Boy Scouts emerge out of the current YMCA Boys Work Committee; this troop is the first scout group in the community.

- 1932: YMCA aquatics come ashore with the “Learn to Swim” program offered in conjunction with Dickinson College’s pool.
- 1934: Camp Thompson is supplemented with a new chapel.
- 1943: Carlisle’s branch of the Y’s Men’s Club, an international YMCA service club, establishes itself.
- 1945-1946: Camp residential accommodations expand, the shower house is built, and plans are made for a new mess hall.
- 1954: Members of the Y and Carlisle community form an Industrial Management Club that represents thirty-one local industries.
- 1955: The YMCA prepares for another Capital Campaign for building expansion purposes. The monies raised total \$500,000; Frank E. Masland, III serves as campaign chairman while Urie Lutz is Big Gift Chairman.
- 1958 - 60 Construction occurs at the Franklin School Building for the new YMCA. A pool, gymnasium and locker rooms are added to the existing building and an elevator is added to the older portion during renovations.
- 1962 A “finish the job” campaign occurs to complete the third floor renovations.
- 1972: Camp Thompson re-opens after closing for numerous years due to decreased enrollment.
- 1973-1974: Another addition is added to the Franklin Building for racquetball and squash courts. The YMCA and the YWCA are both housed in the structure but each has its own focus. The YMCA provides physical and youth programs while the YWCA’s goal is to present community educational programs.
- 1978: Youth Sports come to the Y in the form of Fall Soccer.
- 1981: Cam II equipment is purchased for a new YMCA fitness center located on the second floor..
- 1982-1983: Frank Frey is named director of the Carlisle YMCA. The building itself undergoes changes in order to include a Woman’s Center, a co-ed weight room, a business office, another meeting room, a hot water holding tank, some pool filters, and youth lobby equipment.
- 1985: A latch key program emerges for children in grades K-5. This provides youngsters with a structured program during the afterschool hours. This program ends three years later.

- 1987: A new dining hall is built at Camp Thompson, donated by Mike and Marie Masland..
- 1987: The largest Capital Campaign in the community is planned for the Y. Plans include the addition of a second pool, larger fitness center, adult locker rooms, and remodeling of the courtesy desk area. F.E. "Mike" Masland heads this drive.
- 1988: The first Tree of Lights ceremony is held.
- 1989: In April ground breaks for the renovations on the Arch Street side of the building.
- 1989: In August McDonald's restaurant organizes a breakfast for members and friends of the Y in effort to raise funds; this "Bricks for Breakfast" building project alone raises \$1053.
- 1989: The YMCA Child Development Center first opens its doors in the fall of this year.
- 1990: A new executive director, Eric Melder heads the YMCA. At this time, the building's interior reorganization is finalized. The YMCA has its new pool and locker rooms, an updated fitness area, and a new hallway. The Y's Men's Club constructs and donates the reception desk.
- 1991: The YWCA moves out of the Franklin Building; this in turn allows the YMCA to expand child care services.
- 1992: The YMCA implements its first corporate membership agreement; a discounted rate is offered to the Carlisle Police.
- 1992: The Y's four-lane pool is forced to close due to financial distress.
- 1992: The Y has its inaugural running of the "Downtown Mile".
- 1992-1995: A Strategic Planning company for the YMCA's future is devised, chaired by John Smith of Carlisle Tire and Rubber Company and Dr. Hank Aberman of Shippensburg University.
A change in the mission statement is approved and reads, "The mission of the Carlisle Family YMCA is to promote personal growth, enhance family values, and provide community service through programs available to all."
- 1993: The YMCA receives an approval for its 1995 Capital Campaign.
- 1994: In October Marcia Drozdowski is named Executive Director of the Carlisle Family YMCA. She is the first female to achieve this position.

- 1994: A Campaign Feasibility Study is performed. Based on its results, the goal amount to be raised in the upcoming drive is set at \$1,000,000. Planning committees form to devise strategies for the upcoming Capital Campaign and Building Project.
- 1995: F.E. "Mike" Masland, III is honored for a Lifetime of Service at the YMCA Annual Dinner.
- 1996: The YMCA holds its first annual Golf Tournament at the Army War College.
- 1996: The YMCA Child Development Center starts its full day Kindergarten program.
- 1996: The Capital Campaign proves to be extremely successful. Representative Albert Masland chairs the campaign and its pledges total \$1,076,000. Over five hundred participants contribute to the effort. Actual construction begins on the building in the fall; the pool is the first target area. Lee Castles chairs the Building Committee for the construction project.
- 1997: New YMCA fundraisers originate. The spring International Dinner and the Pittsburgh Steelers vs. the Carlisle Family YMCA All-Stars in a community basketball game become part of the fundraising itinerary.
- 1997: The year itself is devoted to construction and change. By the summer's end all renovations are nearly achieved. Most of the first floor of the building is reconstructed and modernized. The YMCA now has a state-of-art Cybex Fitness Center, a youth lobby, new Adult locker rooms, renovated youth locker rooms, an updated reception area and lobby, and air-conditioned racquetball courts. September 27, 1997 is the YMCA's Grand Re-Opening celebration for the entire community.
- 1998: The new Steigelman Pavilion is constructed at Camp Thompson. A flagpole honoring Credin Gitt is also installed. Camping programs experience positive growth; Camp Thompson resident camp extends its season and the on-site Day Camp population exceeds initial planned capacity. Youth and Camping Director, Nathan Brant, is honored by the United Way as its agency staff person of the year.
- 1999: The first Carlisle YMCA Mini Indy is held downtown. Thirty-eight cars participated in the race. Bob Unger was the chairman.
- 1999: A second day camp program was added for 10-14 year olds at the Y's Men's Farm near Opossum Lake. The in-town day camp continued at the Y for 6-9 year olds.
- 1999: The final phase of the 1996 Capital Campaign was completed with renovations to the third floor Prescott Room. A new floor, mirrors, HVAC, stereo and blinds were added to enhance the aerobics programming.

- 1999: Spinning® arrived at the YMCA. It is an instructor led, group workout on stationary bikes and is accompanied by stereo music.
- 1999: A new roof was installed on the gymnasium, following severe leaks.
- 2000: The first capital campaign for Camp Thompson is held, chaired by Trish Carlucci and Hubert Gilroy. The campaign raised \$681,492 in pledges plus in-kind contributions. Tuckey's is the project manager and Lee Castles is the chair of the Building committee.
- 2000: A 60' Alpine Climbing Tower was built at Camp Thompson utilizing the Davis Initiative Course. This was the first project of the Capital Campaign.
- 2001: 10 new cabins designed in four villages, a health center and office, new bathhouse, and Miller Field and chapel are added to Camp Thompson. The camp entrance is moved to Ice House Road.
- 2001: A new building-wide fire alarm system was installed. Other facility projects included a new HVAC system for the women's locker room and new showers in the boys' locker room.
- 2001: A new youth sports program – lacrosse – made its debut.
- 2003 A new event “The Sprint Turkey Trot” is held on Thanksgiving Day and draws over 200 participants.
- 2004: Fit for Life – a program begins to fight childhood obesity if funded through a grant from the Carlisle Area Health and Wellness Foundation.
- 2005: The YMCA Child Care Center achieves 3 star status in the Keystone Stars program.
- 2005: All offices are lined to the main server. Computers are upgraded with the same hardware and software.
- 2005: 20 new spin bikes and 5 new treadmills are purchased.
- 2006: A standing stone fire place is added to Masland Hall at Camp Thompson. Masland Hall is enclosed with windows, receives a new ceiling and the kitchen is remodeled.
- 2006: The Church of God Home donates the use of 28 acres of land at 1213 Rockledge Drive for the development of athletic fields for YMCA programs. Projected playing time is fall, 2007.

- 2006: The YMCA opens the community's first youth fitness center which is funded through a grant from CAHWF.
- 2006: Ground is broken on the George B. Stuart Athletic Fields project.
- 2006 Through the hard work of many volunteers and the generous support of many local businesses the YMCA brings "Holiday Lights at Carlisle" to the community.
- 2007: New strength training circuit and free weight equipment is purchased for the fitness center (Hammer Strength/Life Fitness.)
- 2007 Pine Grove Furnace sewer project gets underway at Camp Thompson leading to a modified camp program for that season. Over two acres of trees are removed for the installation of the system and drainage ponds.
- 2007: New Frontiers Camp receives a donation from Dr.& Mrs. David Masland to construct a new pavilion. The pavilion is dedicated in June of 2008 in time for the summer camp season.
- 2007 "Holiday Lights of Carlisle" returns through a lead sponsorship from Cumberland Design and Building Inc.
- 2008 The Annual Support Campaign or Strong Kids Campaign reaches a milestone by raising over \$102,000.
- 2008: In August a new basketball court was donated at Camp Thompson through Finish Line Youth Foundation grant.
- 2008: On September 6 the George B. Stuart Athletic fields were dedicated with a special ceremony to honor donors and community partners.
- 2008 The Embarq Turkey Trot, held on Thanksgiving morning draws over 1,200 participants.

