

# History of the Rogue Valley Family YMCA

- June 19, 1944 The Young Mens Christian Association of Medford, Oregon becomes incorporated in what was the Federal building on North Riverside Avenue. Dr. Bert Elliott was the first YMCA President. During the war years this had been used as the USO headquarters.
- 1944-49 Hired Executive Director, Ben Schmidt (then called a General Secretary). Under his leadership the programs for youth flourished and plans were undertaken for a building campaign.
- 1945-49 The YMCA used the Masonic Hall and space over the old Acme Hardware Store on Sixth Street before moving to the present building.
- 1947 The ground was broken and Bessonette and Graff Construction Company proceeded with construction. The building was valued at \$206,000 but cost the community in actual dollars less than \$120,000 due to volunteer labor and donated materials.
- 1948-59 The YMCA procured the lease of a large tract at Diamond Lake for a camp development site to be known as Camp Elliott. D. Ford McCormick and Archie C. Pierce were the key drivers in planning the camp and procuring needed materials. The YMCA terminated the contract February 17, 1959. Some records show the YMCA terminated the lease in August of 1971.
- 1948-49 The YMCA building at 522 West Sixth Street in Medford is constructed as an activity center for youth, adults, and families. Archie C. Pierce was first Chairman of the building.
- May 22, 1949 The building was dedicated in a ceremony with the Governor present. Some records show the dedication was on June 17, 1949.
- 1949-63 Hired Executive Director, Robert L. Jones.
- 1963-71 Hired Executive Director, Don Muhlig.
- 1968-69 Capital campaign for facility improvements. Added the single-story "L" shaped portion.
- 1971-97 Hired Executive Director, Mike Murphy. He served from July 1971 to October 1997. Mike came from the LA Metro YMCA serving the Crenshaw-Watts area.
- 1970s Strategic planning focused programs on health & fitness, camping, and alternative education. YMCA Indian Guides program comes to an end out of respect to local tribes. Camping program expanded to caravanning road trips taking children border to border, Canada to Mexico. *Emphasized charitable benefit due to IHRSA and Superior Athletic Club tax challenge.*

- 1980s Partnered with Eagle Point School District to operate the swimming pool in White City. Medford School District 549C was in a financial crunch and could not continue to provide the Elementary Youth Sports program. They partnered with the YMCA to continue providing youth sports programs, afterschool programs, and alternative education. The YMCA provided the direct program service and 549C provided the facilities.
- 1990s The swimming pool in White City was deeded to the YMCA on the condition that it be returned to the Eagle Point School District upon the YMCA discontinuing the pool operation. The City of Medford had funding cut backs thus the YMCA was asked to take over their child care programs. Sid DeBoer leased and maintained twelve 15-person passenger vans for the YMCA programs.
- 1990-94 The YMCA conducted a capital campaign to construct a new aquatic center, wet locker rooms, and a child development center. The goal was 3.2 million although 4.2 million was need when finally completed.
- 1992-2006 The YMCA partnered with Jackson County to lease Camp Apserkaha at Howard Prairie Lake and managed the property for 13 years providing camping programs until 2006.
- 1997 *A YMCA employee was indicted for a theft ring that stole from YMCA members while they were in the facility. Bad publicity.*
- 1998-2006 Hired Executive Director, Mike Cronin. Mike came from the Roseburg YMCA.
- 1998 The swimming pool in White City was closed and the property returned to the Eagle Point School District.
- 2000 *A YMCA employee was suspected of embezzling. Bad publicity.*
- 2002 A youth center established at the YMCA to serve the children and teens of West Medford.
- 2003-04 Bundled YMCA fee-based programs into the membership fee.
- 2005 Partnered with the Howard Foundation to help develop a sports park and potentially a new YMCA on 68 acres in West Medford.
- 2006 Hired Executive Director, Brad Russell. Brad came from the Central Coast YMCA Association in California. Asante Health Systems loans \$150,000 to the YMCA for financial stability and in 2010 converts the loan into a scholarship fund.
- 2007 Completed a comprehensive strategic plan facilitated by the YMCA of the USA. Complimenting the plan are the SEER Primary Market Analysis Study and Membership Satisfaction Survey. The Board decides to become a program partner with the Howard

Foundation providing programs on fields that are built, and thus the YMCA will not be an operational partner and not build a new YMCA facility on that land.

- 2008 Basic facility repairs begin on the roof, climbing gym, and child development center.
- 2009 Completed an \$80,000 aquatic center remodeling project with new ultraviolet water sanitizing system (first in Southern Oregon), improved air flow system, automatic handicapped entrance, and new starting blocks. Swim meets are held again at the YMCA.
- 2010 Completed a \$30,000 youth center remodeling project. Central Point Parks & Recreation asks the YMCA to manage the afterschool child care programs at three elementary schools. Both fitness areas are remodeled with \$120,000 worth of new strength equipment donated by Gold's Gym. The YMCA of the USA releases a new logo and branding strategy with the following focus areas: youth development, healthy living, social responsibility.
- 2012 YMCA starts to organize the entire Pear Blossom Run thus becoming the YMCA's signature event. Facility improvements continue: new aquatic center roof, racquetball court is improved, new circuit & stretching room, new aquatic center handicap lift, new cardio fitness equipment, new phone system, and new outdoor YMCA signs. *There is a sexual assault between minors at the Y facility. Bad publicity.*
- 2013 Completed a comprehensive strategic action plan facilitated by the YMCA of the USA. Complimenting the plan are SEER Studies with feedback from existing members, new members, childcare parents, youth sports parents, swim lesson parents, and local Y staff.
- 2014 Raised \$600,000 for capital improvements called the "remodeling campaign" to improve the lobby, gymnasium, youth center, roof, climbing gym, natural playground, heating and air conditioning units, bathrooms, locker rooms, and child watch area. A new fire monitoring system is installed.
- 2016 The remodeling effort continues exceeding a million dollars invested in the facility. The YMCA reserves fund goes over \$200,000 due to Floyd Hayner's bequest and a gift from Sherm and Wanda Olsrud. A pipe bursts flooding the aquatic center mechanical room but thanks to insurance a new mechanical room compliments all of the remodeling that was done over the past few years.
- 2018 Many partnerships are strengthened especially with Jackson Care Connect. In addition, conversations about expansion happen with the City of Eagle Point and the Eagle Point School District plus the Housing Authority of Jackson County. A professional research study provides results so the board of directors can set the next strategic plan.
- 2019 Board approves the next three year strategic plan. The Housing Authority of Jackson County donates a 2 acre property and 6,500 square foot facility at 2200 Roberts Road near North Medford High School. Shockingly and oddly in-between Superintendents, the Medford School District dismisses the YMCA afterschool program

replacing us with an out-of-state, for-profit company even though we've had a 40-year partnership and a 92% approval rating for no cost to the district. With only a few weeks notice, this decision causes the YMCA extreme financial hardship but manages to end the year positive.

- 2020 A new Challenge Course is installed in the gymnasium. The Eagle Point School District donates a 9 acre property with buildings and water rights that used to be the Trail Elementary School. In March, the Covid-19 pandemic strikes so the Y deploys Emergency Child Care in partnership with the four school districts, two hospitals, two health clinics, and Kid Time children's museum. The Y facility closes mid-March to the end of May then again mid-November to the end of January 2021.
- 2021 Technology upgrades of software, hardware, and website are completed due to the on-going pandemic.