

NO PLACE



Like This Place

2026 CAMPAIGNER HANDBOOK

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Introduction

THANK YOU

Thank you for your time and effort in supporting the YMCA of Greater Des Moines' 2026 Annual Campaign. Together, we can work side-by-side to strengthen the foundation of our community through the Y's focus on youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

THE ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The Annual Campaign provides critical funding to the YMCA of Greater Des Moines, supporting our programs, services, and financial assistance through scholarships. Dedicated staff and campaign volunteers work collaboratively on the campaign to secure charitable donations from individuals, companies, foundations, and other community organizations. Last year, our Annual Campaign provided support to thousands of families across our community. With the generous support of volunteers and staff like you, we are creating opportunities FOR ALL.

CAMPAIGN IMPACT

Your support of the Annual Campaign is what makes it possible for the Y to ensure that no one is turned away due to the inability to afford our services. Annually, the campaign supports thousands of Central Iowa youth, families and individuals through essential Y programs and membership that help them learn, grow, and thrive. More importantly, by sharing the Y story you are amplifying the cause and mission of our organization throughout the community.

CAMPAIGN HANDBOOK & RESOURCES

We hope that the materials in this manual and the support that you receive from Y staff will give you the tools necessary to be successful in meeting or exceeding your goals. Find more resources at dymca.org/campaign-toolkit or scan the code below.

- Annual Campaign Brochure
- Annual Campaign Pledge Card
- Impact Stories
- How to utilize your Campaigner Link
- Additional Resources



Annual Campaign Overview

ABOUT THE Y

The Y is More Than a Place, We're a Purpose. The Y is the leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community by connecting people to their potential, purpose, and each other. With four locations and two specialty campuses, the YMCA of Greater Des Moines provides spaces to play, to learn, to be healthy, to eat well, and to give back. Everything the Y does is in service of making sure people and communities thrive.

OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice by promoting youth, adult, and family activities that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body FOR ALL.

ROLE OF THE ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

At the Y, we believe everyone should have access to a place to belong along with the programs, membership, and services that help us reach our full potential. While we strive to keep our value-based programs and associated fees affordable, we know that during difficult times some individuals and families need assistance. Each year, through the Annual Campaign, generous donors provide the financial resources that make it possible for the Y to ensure no one is turned away based on income or inability to pay. Building a strong community FOR ALL takes more than just a few of us – it takes all of us.

WHO IT HELPS

100% of Annual Campaign contributions go back into the community. The campaign makes it possible for children, families, seniors, neighbors, and others to benefit from Y programs and memberships, regardless of their financial circumstances.

Campaign Information

2026 YMCA of Greater Des Moines Overall Campaign Goal \$1,200,000

Board of Directors - Mission Programs	\$420,000
Wellmark YMCA	\$85,000
Grubb YMCA	\$35,000
Walnut Creek YMCA	\$100,000
Waukee YMCA	\$145,000
Girls on the Run	\$30,000
Y Camp	\$235,000
Y Supportive Housing Campus	\$200,000

Campaign Contacts

Campaign Leadership

Contact Information

Julia Mason, Vice President of Philanthropy
Julia.Mason@dmyymca.org or 515.471.8534

Lauren Luerkens, Donor Relations Administrator
Lauren.Luerkens@dmyymca.org or 515.471.8517

Cameron Nicholson, President & CEO
Cameron.Nicholson@dmyymca.org or 515.471.8506

Brenna Finnerty, Volunteer, 2026 Annual Campaign Chair
BEFinnerty@gmail.com or 515.577.5471

YMCA Branch Staff Leadership

Julie Trausch, Senior Executive Director, Wellmark YMCA

Rodney Filer, Associate Executive Director, John R. Grubb YMCA

Jen Damge, Executive Director, Walnut Creek YMCA

Zach Elsbecker, Executive Director, Waukee Family YMCA

Alex Kretzinger, Executive Director, Des Moines Y CAMP

Katie Kamienski, Executive Director, YMCA Supportive Housing Campus

Joelle Kleihauer, Executive Director, Child Care Services

Jordan McCormick, Program Executive, Girls on the Run

Keys to Success

KNOW (AND UNDERSTAND) WHY WE RAISE FUNDS

Do you know what your Y is involved in? Can you convey the Y is more than a gym and swim? Think about the Y's impact, its values, and the community needs it fills. What is it about the Y that motivates YOU to help?

MEET PROSPECTIVE DONORS FACE-TO FACE, WHEN POSSIBLE

People give to people. It takes time to ask face-to-face, but it is a far more effective way to secure a donor's best gift. By making time for a personal visit, you demonstrate a genuine interest in a prospective donor. It's also important to discover what motivates each donor to give. By appealing to their particular interest, you are more likely to secure a favorable response and a larger gift. When face-to-face is not an option, then asking by phone, text, email, or social media are all other options to continue the conversation.

SHARE THE YMCA STORY, SHARE YOUR STORY

Communicate the story and the case with enthusiasm and passion! Share your Y story or stories of others to demonstrate community needs and what benefits their gift will provide. Utilize YMCA staff and materials provided to help you tell the story.

AIM HIGH, BE SPECIFIC

When the time is right, ask for a specific amount and focus on services - "Will you provide one child a scholarship to a week at Y Camp where they will have the opportunity to grow?" If the person has donated in the past, encourage an increase in this year's gift. "Thank you for last year's gift of \$600. Would you consider sending a child to a week of summer camp for \$750 this year?" The #1 reason people don't give? They are not asked!

ASK ABOUT MATCHING GIFTS

Ask the donor if their employer has a matching gifts program. If so, be sure to have them fill out the pledge form, and for you share to with your YMCA as follow up. In order for a gift to be matched, payment must be made out to the YMCA of Greater Des Moines. Organizations have to prove their gift is going to a 501(c)(3) charity for their audits.

Your Role as a Volunteer

● MAKE YOUR OWN PLEDGE FIRST

After making a personal gift, it is much easier to ask someone else to join you to do the same. A campaigner's pledge demonstrates commitment and belief in the YMCA.

● BE ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATE

Be active in campaign training sessions, read communications and respond to requests, and attend the campaign celebration. You'll meet other campaigners, learn more about Y programs, receive important campaign tools and information, and celebrate success and your impact with a community of volunteers.

● VISIT YMCA PROGRAMS

Witness firsthand the Y's mission and programs funded by the Annual Campaign. Talk to staff and ask questions. It will be easier to tell others about the programs when you can share a personal experience.

● KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING & WHY

A positive, confident attitude is the first and most important step. The scripts are simply a jumping off point. Be clear about your own commitment, be yourself, and talk from the heart.

● ONLY ASK PEOPLE IF YOU HAVE THEIR PLEDGE CARD

Assigning campaigners to donors ensures that an individual is only contacted by one volunteer. Contact your Donor Relations Specialist Lauren Luerkens or Amy Joanning (Y Camp, 515.432.7558) if you would like to add someone to your list.

● PERSONALLY VISIT YOUR PROSPECTS

People give to people. It takes time to ask face-to-face, but it is far more effective and rewarding than asking by phone, email or social media. By making time for a personal visit, you demonstrate a genuine interest in the donor. It's also important to discover what motivates each donor to give. By appealing to their particular interest, you are more likely to secure a favorable response and larger gift.

● ASK YOUR BEST PROSPECT & LAST YEAR'S DONORS FIRST

You'll gain momentum and confidence with an early yes!

● ONCE A PLEDGE IS MADE

Confirm the pledge, verify contact information and thank the donor. Turn in pledge cards promptly and communicate any obstacles to your Campaign Chair(s), Branch Executive, or Development team.

● MAKE FRIENDS FOR THE YMCA

Not everyone will choose to give, but you shared the great work the Y does in our community. Thank the prospect or previous donors for their time and considerations.

● PERSONALLY THANK YOUR DONORS

Always follow up with a personal thank you note. Donors feel very passionate about their charitable giving, and often have a personal connection to the Y. In your note, try to recreate the feeling the donor had when making the gift.

Solicitation Guide

Relationship-based fundraising is the best way to raise funds for any cause. Personal contact allows you to present, express your need, your passions and invite them to participate in the campaign to make a difference in their community.

1. OPEN

This is a great opportunity to ask how they're doing. Ask questions about their family, career or anything to get the conversation flowing. It is important to show that you care about them as a person to strengthen the relationship.

2. PRESENT

Transition the conversation by explaining your reason for reaching out. Present the campaign by using the materials. Highlight areas that you may think are important to the potential donor. This is also a great opportunity to discuss what the Y means to you.

3. REQUEST

After reviewing campaign materials, discussing the needs of the campaign and, answering questions, invite the person to financially support the campaign through a pledge (commitment over the course of a year), or one time donation. This should be presented as an invitation and opportunity to join you in supporting the vision of the campaign. Make sure to verbalize their specific ask amount. Here is an example request, but make it your own!

"Jack and Jill, your gift to the Y's Annual Campaign can make life-changing differences for kids and families right here in our community. Would you consider making a gift of \$ _____ to provide opportunities for those who need them the most?"

4. WAIT

After making the request pause and wait for the person to respond. It is important to let them digest the request and then for the donor to speak first.

5. RESPOND

Tailor your response based on the person's answer. Below are a few examples:

"Yes, I would like to make a gift at the requested amount, thank you for the opportunity."

→ Thank the donor, have them complete the pledge card, and return the pledge card.

"I would like to think about this request and get back to you."

→ First, don't make assumptions as to why they need to think about it. Reasons are varied and across the board. Give them time to decide, ask to touch base again in one week.

"We would like to make a gift. But not at the requested amount."

→ Be respectful, as there may be a reason they cannot give as much this year. Ask if there is an amount they would be more comfortable giving.

"We are not interested in giving to this campaign."

→ "Thank you for letting me know that you are unable to contribute to the campaign. If things change in the future, please let us know. Thank you for your time and consideration."

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The Pledge Card

Donor Pledge Form

The donor pledge form is critical to the campaign operation. Every effort is made to ensure that there is only one pledge card per prospect. Volunteer Ambassadors may request a certain donor's pledge form, but should not make any solicitations until getting approval from staff. This is done to ensure the potential donor only gets contacted once.

Donor Information

Verify the donor's name, address, phone numbers and email address. If the donor's preferred recognition name is different from the donor information, please make a note of that here.

Gift Information

Verify and record the donor's gift/pledge amount. Verify the branch to which the donor is allocating their gift.

Fullfilment Options

Please confirm and record the donor's preferred payment method, schedule and or when they would like to receive an invoice. Payments can be made by mail, phone, or through online login to their account in Daxko.

For credit card charges donors will need to make their gift online, or they can be contacted by a staff member to obtain payment information. Please note there is a 3% fee to credit card charges. There is no fee for debit card payments or ACH transactions.

Verify if the donor's employer matches gifts, and if they would like more information regarding matched giving.

Authorization

Please obtain the donor's signature to record their commitment.

The image shows a sample of the YMCA Annual Giving Pledge Card. At the top left is the YMCA logo with the text "the Y" and "YMCA". To the right is the tagline "FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT® FOR HEALTHY LIVING FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY". The title "YMCA ANNUAL GIVING PLEDGE CARD" is prominently displayed. The form includes fields for Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Primary Phone, Best Email, and My birth month and year. Below this is a section for "Please accept my Total Gift of: \$" followed by a line for the amount. The "This gift is my:" section has checkboxes for Individual Gift, Donor Advised Fund, Corporate Gift, and Foundation. There are also checkboxes for company match eligibility and amount. The "Remittance of Gift" section includes checkboxes for payment frequency (monthly, quarterly, one-time), payment method (payroll deduction, United Way), and membership status. A "My Recognition Preference" section has checkboxes for acknowledgment and recognition. The form concludes with fields for Donor's Signature, Date, and Name of the Y Volunteer/Staff who called on me. At the bottom, there is contact information for the Greater Des Moines Financial Development office and a "THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!" message.

Both paper and electronic versions available!

Ways to Give

Donation Methods

- An outright gift of cash, check, or credit
- A pledge to be paid at a later date and/or schedule of their choosing within the calendar year
- A pledge to be paid through installments at the same time as your YMCA membership draft
- YMCA of Greater Des Moines EIN: 42-0680438

Cash or Check

Attached to pledge card and turn in to the branch within 48 hours if possible. Checks should be made payable to the YMCA of Greater Des Moines.

Credit Card/EFT

Y members have the option to draft their pledge along with their Y memberships using the payment method on file. You are able to divide your overall gift into monthly or quarterly installments or select a specific month to draft the full amount.

Making a Pledge

A pledge is a promise to the Y. Most Supporters will give more over a period of time if they are able to make a pledge.

Matching Gifts

The Y is eligible to receive matching gifts which can double or even triple contributions made by an individual donor. Please instruct the donor to obtain the appropriate forms from the Human Resources department of their place of employment.

Donations of Stock

We accept gifts of stock, mutual funds, bonds, annuities, securities and more which often provide tax benefits to the donor. We also offer the option to impact generations through planned giving including wills, trusts, annuities and property. To make a gift of this kind, please contact our Vice President of Philanthropy, Julia Mason.

Sample Letter/ Email

Dear [NAME],

First and foremost, thank you for your previous support of the [YMCA BRANCH NAME] Annual Campaign. We are extremely grateful for friends like you who give so generously so that the Y is able to fulfill its mission of building a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

Having the opportunity to play even a small role in helping the Y meet the ever-changing needs of our community is personally very fulfilling, and I'm honored to be a part of this fundraising effort again this year. We have an extraordinary opportunity to ensure a brighter future for deserving youth, families, and individuals right here in central Iowa, and I feel very strongly about the Y's ability to deliver change like no other organization can.

This year, the [YMCA BRANCH NAME] is striving to raise \$[BRANCH CAMPAIGN GOAL] for our Annual Campaign. Every dollar donated to this important cause is used to meet the greatest needs of our community and our Y. We are so fortunate that year after year, the Y's impact has been significant, but the reality is that the needs of our community are vast, and continue to grow.

In [2025 or YEAR OF DONOR'S LAST GIFT], you generously gave \$[PREVIOUS GIFT AMOUNT] and we would be so honored if you would consider a gift again this year. With your help, the Y will be able to continue meeting the greatest needs of our community.

You can make a contribution online at dymca.org/give, or checks can be sent to:

**YMCA OF Greater Des Moines
C/O Donor Relations
501 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309**

Additionally, if you wish to make a pledge that you can fulfill later on in the year, please let me know. As always, thank you for your faithful support of the Y's mission.

With gratitude,

[NAME]

Sample Letter/ Email

Dear [NAME],

[LEAD WITH A SENTENCE OF SALUTATION OR PERSONAL MESSAGE]

On behalf of our YMCA, I would like to invite you to consider supporting our efforts in bringing the YMCA to all in our community regardless of their ability to afford a membership. As a volunteer of the Y, I have seen how the Y is making a difference in the lives of youth and families in our community.

[ADD A COUPLE OF SENTENCES ABOUT YOUR WHY/ YOUR OWN PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE YMCA]

The Y strives to ensure everyone can benefit from YMCA programs and services regardless of their ability to afford or access those services. The Y's Annual Campaign unites YMCA staff, volunteers, members, and our generous community of supporters in sharing Y stories and raising donations to provide opportunities to those who need the YMCA most.

Please consider supporting our efforts in strengthening the community through the YMCA. As our community continues to grow, so does the need for youth and families that require assistance to participate in programs. Your consideration of financial support will make it possible for us to continue our mission of providing services FOR ALL in the community. In addition, 100% of your donation is used for direct support and all the funds raised stay in our community to support local kids and families.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration of making a commitment to join our efforts to meet the need of all in our community.

Sincerely,
[NAME]

Sample Letter/ Email

Dear [NAME],

As you know, in [INSERT COUNTDOWN, I.E. 14 DAYS] the YMCA of Greater Des Moines' Annual Campaign will reach its last day of the official campaign! While you can still give year-round, giving before [CAMPAIGN END DATE] is especially important to help us reach our goal by the campaign deadline. The YMCA is an important resource to so many individuals and families who benefit from access to before and after school care, early learning, senior health and fitness activities, supportive housing, safety around water education, and so much more.

Financial assistance is important because it makes the Y accessible FOR ALL. When you give to the Y's Annual Campaign, you're helping your neighbors and community thrive. I choose to support the Y because it makes such a big difference in our area, and I hope you will too.

Please consider giving to support this cause by filling out the attached pledge form {don't forget the attachment!} or making a one time donation at dmymca.org/give. 100% of your contribution will be used to meet the greatest needs of our community; and no donation is too small - every dollar truly makes a difference.

Thank you in advance!

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Phone Call Script

Good morning/afternoon/evening [DONOR NAME]

This is [NAME] with the [NAME OF YMCA BRANCH]. I am calling you as a Y volunteer/staff member, advocating for support of the 2026 Annual Campaign.

Our Annual Campaign helps thousands of community members by providing financial assistance to those in need. Many young children, families, and adults benefit from the financial assistance that they receive to be able to participate in youth sports, healthy living programs, out-of-school time care, water safety and many other programs. Would you be willing to [renew your support/or make a gift] to the Y this year?

(Many will ask what they gave last year - you will have that information on the call list you receive).

If they say "YES"

"Thank you so much! Your support is so meaningful to the families we serve and we are so grateful. Would you like for the Y to send you a pledge reminder with details about how you can fulfill your pledge?"

Many will say 'Yes' and wrap up the conversation. Please make sure to record their response and gift amount on the donor pledge form. If they request a pledge reminder to be sent in a particular month or quarter of the year, please include that information as well.

Checks can be made out to 'YMCA of Greater Des Moines' and sent to:
501 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309

If they prefer to give now, the giving website is: dmymca.org/give

If they say "NO"

"I understand. Thank you so much for your consideration and for your support in the past! I hope you have a great day!"

Other ways to Engage Donors

● MAKE 1:1 A PRIORITY

Sometimes a face-to-face ask is not in the cards for a particular donor or their schedule does not align with the campaign timeline. Still try to make the connection as personal as possible, whether by phone, email, or text.

● SET UP A SOCIAL MEDIA FUNDRAISER

If you have a large or active base of followers, social media is a great way to get the word out to potential donors and additionally to supplement the 1:1 work you are doing to keep your campaign efforts top of mind.

● APPEAL TO YOUR CIRCLES

Whether it is a book club, a scrapbook retreat, your group exercise class, the basketball team or dance studio parents, your weekly watercolor class or a workplace affinity group - there are plenty of opportunities around you to share the Y's impact and request support.

● SPEAK UP!

Are you part of a networking group, giving circle, PEO, professional network, or church group that invites individuals to speak to a larger group on behalf of their nonprofit organizations? Sign up to speak about why you support the Y and enlist some help from your advisory boards and Y staff members.

● SHARE POSTS OR EMAILS FROM YOUR Y BRANCH

No need to recreate the wheel, share posts about Annual Campaign from your branch or the association. Share impact stories and emails with your friends and followers. Like and engage with the content the Y is creating so you can amplify the message across all channels.

● HAVE A PARTY!

Host a cheers party benefiting the YMCA. Guests can be asked to bring a donation up front and leave it at the door when coming to the party, or while guests are mingling and settling in, you as the host can share your Y story with the group and invite them to donate.

● UTILIZE YOUR CAMPAIGNER LINK

As a campaigner, you will have a personalized giving link to share with your donors. You can find instructions in your Campaign Toolkit by scanning the QR code below.



Additional Ways to Support the YMCA

Heritage Club – Endowment

The YMCA of Greater Des Moines' Heritage Club members are friends of the Y who are committed to preserving the legacy of the Y for years to come. Through their generous contributions, these members have given the Y the means to maintain long-term financial stability, which ensures that our programs, traditions and mission will continue for future generations.

Becoming a member of the Heritage Club involves a commitment, which now, or in the future, will add to the Y's Endowment Fund. A good estate plan can ensure that your philanthropy continues in your absence and that what is important to you today carries on into the future.

Ways to Give

If you would like to extend your support to the YMCA of Greater Des Moines and leave a legacy, you can choose from several options

- A gift of money
- Remember the Y in your will
- Contribute appreciated assets, such as stock, real estate, or personal property
- Name the Y as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy
- Establish a Charitable Remainder Trust

A planned gift enables donors to maximize the impact of their assets while supporting the mission of the Y. Gifts may be unrestricted or designated to support endowment or specific programmatic priorities of the Y.

Some gifts may be fully tax deductible or offer other tax advantages. Donors are encouraged to discuss their options with legal or financial advisors.

For more information contact Julia Mason at 515.471.8534 or julia.mason@dmymca.org

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Y?

The YMCA is a private nonprofit, human service organization funded only partially membership and program fees, while the remaining funding comes from generous contributions given by individuals, corporations, foundations, and grants. The Y operates a Supportive Housing Campus, Des Moines Y Camp in Boone, four membership locations, family programs, youth programs, senior programs, childcare, before and after-school sites and so much more.

Is the YMCA a charitable organization?

Yes. The YMCA of Greater Des Moines is a nonprofit organization classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c) (3). Based on that designation, all contributions to the YMCA are considered tax-deductible. The YMCA of Greater Des Moines is reviewed annually and maintains an accredited charity designation. EIN: 42-0680438.

What is the Annual Campaign?

As a nonprofit dedicated to strengthening the community, the Y needs to raise charitable funds to deliver its critical, enriching programs. The Annual Campaign is the primary fundraising vehicle for unrestricted annual funds, which ensures all community members have access to the Y. Volunteers and staff are committed to this cause because of their shared belief that, for the community to succeed, everyone must be given the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

I already pay membership dues; why should I give to the Y?

Membership dues cover operating costs such as staff wages, building maintenance and repair, new equipment and much more. Your dues do not support additional costs for outreach programs and financial assistance for the less advantaged. The Y needs your support to provide safe, high-quality, character-building programs for all. By contributing to the campaign, vital programs we offer to meet our mission are available at no or reduced costs to those who need them the most.

Does the money raised through the Annual Campaign stay local?

Yes. When you give to the Y, your gift has a meaningful, lasting impact in the Greater Des Moines area. All donations directly support our local communities.

Why should I give to the Y? I'm not a member.

As a member of the community, you benefit by having a strong YMCA in your neighborhood. Everything the Y does helps make individuals and the community stronger. Generous donors like you who give to the Annual Campaign are why thousands of local kids have the support they need to stay on track in school, grow as leaders, and learn how to contribute to create a thriving community FOR ALL.