



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **YMCA Exceeds Expectations**

*Alexandria Area YMCA exceeds expectations in first 12 months of operation*

[ALEXANDRIA, MN] – Build it and they will come. It's often an over used phrase.

But in the case of the Alexandria Area YMCA, it is a more than accurate description of how popular the facility has been in the first 12 months of operation.

Thousands of greater Alexandria community residents have taken advantage of the Y's programming and facilities.

When the YMCA opened its doors in June 2010, officials had expected about 5,000 people would sign on as members within the first year of operation.

Their projections were dramatically wrong. The community of Alexandria has flocked to the new facility in Alexandria by the thousands. To date, the Y has attracted over 2100 family units, for a total membership service base of 5900 members. In addition, the Y has improved the quality of life for hundreds of individuals on a non-member, and program participant basis.

"We had very high expectations. We were confident in our facility design and the planning that went into program and membership development, but you never really know how the community will react until you open your doors," said Jeff Bartholomew, Alexandria Area YMCA Executive Director.

"Whenever a new YMCA opens, there's always a honeymoon period. But the response to the Y has been overwhelming," said Bartholomew.

Figures released by the Alexandria Area YMCA, show the privately funded facility was built under the \$9 million budget.

The facility has been so successful that parking spots can be hard to find.

"The community is asking how we accomplished this," said Jon Ballou, YMCA Board of Director Chairman.

"We did our homework," said Ballou, "we surveyed the community of Alexandria, and built a facility to suit their needs."

Family memberships account for 80 percent of the membership base. In addition, the Y has given over \$115,000 in financial assistance to children and families who might not otherwise be able to afford a Y experience.

In addition to membership, the Y's aquatic program has been a huge success. As of May 1, over 685 children have completed YMCA progressive swim lessons.

The Y attracts both experienced and health-conscious individuals, those returning to health and wellness after a lengthy absence, or individuals and families who are looking at making a lifestyle change. In fact, the Y offers a health and wellness orientation they call Healthy Lifestyles to all its members, to familiarize new members to the Y's health & wellness center.

YMCA Child Care Center currently has 128 children enrolled in part-time and full-time capacities, and is working on the implementation of YMCA Creative Curriculum by September 1, 2011. Under new leadership, YMCA Child Care is striving to be a leader in early childhood development over the course of the next year.

"It's been fun to see how our membership has been increasing over the past few months. That just goes to show how much the community of greater Alexandria was ready for this wonderful facility and all it has to offer," said David Kjos, President, Bremer Bank, and YMCA Capital Campaign Co-Chair.

YMCA Board of Directors say equipment and more space will probably have to be added in the near future to accommodate the growing membership.

The YMCA Board of Directors are currently working on a plan to develop additional facilities, based on a comprehensive membership survey, staff recommendations, and volunteer suggestions. Components for a Phase II will be reviewed in September 2011.

"It's amazing to see how the community has responded to this facility. They have welcomed it with open arms, and we are meeting the needs of the community," said Jeff Bartholomew, Alexandria Area YMCA Executive Director.

The future is endless.

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## *Alexandria Area YMCA Member Appreciation Week*

Member Appreciation Schedule of Events:

### **Monday, June 13**

- 6 am – 9 am Morning Group Run  
Complimentary Light Breakfast (Lobby)

### **Tuesday, June 14**

- 6 am – 9 am Morning Group Run  
Complimentary Light Breakfast (Lobby)
- 3 pm – 7 pm Free Freezies with the Family! (Lobby)

### **Wednesday, June 15**

- 6 am – 9 am Morning Group Run  
Complimentary Light Breakfast (Lobby)
- 3 pm – 7 pm Free Freezies with the Family! (Lobby)
- 6:35 pm – 7:15 pm Family Boot Camp w/ Tamara

### **Thursday, June 16**

- 6 am – 9 am Morning Group Run  
Complimentary Light Breakfast (Lobby)

### **Friday, June 17**

- 6 am – 9 am Morning Group Run  
Complimentary Light Breakfast (Lobby)
- 4 pm – 7 pm Free Member Appreciation Grill Out (Circle Drive)
- 6:35 pm - 7:05 pm Family Zumba w/ Jen

### **Saturday, June 18: Community Day!**

The Y is open to the community and guests for \$1 per person daily guest passes on Saturday, June 18, and aquatic features and slide will be on from 10 am – 4pm. Proceeds from guest passes and member free will donations, will benefit disaster relief efforts in Joplin, Missouri, and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

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The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,687 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.