This year, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago proudly celebrates 140 years of empowering women and families across Chicago. Our accomplishments are many, changing how we live today. Starting with a humble mission in 1876 to provide safe housing for women moving to Chicago in search of a better life for themselves we remain at the forefront in the fight for racial equity and the empowerment of women. The YWCA was, and remains innovative and progressive. YWCA Chicago pioneered its work in racial equity in 1930, integrating housing and creating a racially diverse Board of Directors, providing women of color the opportunity to serve in a critical leadership capacity.

Today, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago provides services to more than 200,000 individuals at eight centers in the Chicagoland area helping them achieve freedom from violence, access quality education and training and obtain economic sustainability. Our goal is to expand programming in these areas and explore new initiatives focused on health and wellness to further enhance the lives of our members.

As non-profits across Illinois feel the impact from tenuous state funding, YWCA Chicago is transforming its business model to develop new products and services to meet the needs of the community and attract new partners and funders.

This May, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago partnered with the 100k Opportunities Initiative to support youth ages 16-24 seeking employment to realize their dreams. A common barrier to employment is often a lack of familiarity with computer software that is necessary to assemble an effective resume. As a partner, the YWCA supported the youth in creating or enhancing their resumes prior to their interviews with participating employers.

YWCA Metropolitan Chicago’s Julian Grace Innovation & Technology Institute in North Lawndale provides a variety of digital literacy and career services for youth and adults from the surrounding communities.

Young adults receive hands-on assistance with resumes at the YWCA’s Julian Grace ITI.

Save the Date! YWCA Leader Luncheon “Hometown Heroes”
November 17, 2016
Reshaping Early Childhood Education

As data continues to demonstrate how critical early childhood learning is to a child’s overall academic success, YWCA has taken the lead to foster collaborations between officials in DuPage and Kane Counties school districts and early childcare educators, to reshape early childcare curriculum. This innovative, strategic approach is bringing early childcare educators to the forefront of the education system.

Using findings from these conversations, YWCA Chicago is supporting providers on their path to improving the quality and educational programs for their students. Through YWCA Metropolitan Chicago’s Myrtle’s Club, childcare providers have access to evidence-based trainings and business support services, specifically designed to support early childhood professionals to help them provide the highest quality of care for children in our communities. YWCA has, and strongly believes, that investing in quality in early learning and development programs prepares children for success in school and life.

Prevention is Possible

In the United States, April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM). The goal of SAAM is to raise public awareness about sexual violence and to educate communities on how to prevent it. This year’s theme was Prevention is Possible.

Sexual violence is a major public health, human rights and social justice issue. As the largest provider of sexual assault support services in the state of Illinois, YWCA Chicago provides age-appropriate sexual violence prevention education services for pre-K through 12th grade students in area schools. The YWCA also works directly with parents, school administrators and faculty to provide training around prevention and response. Working with local college campuses, the YWCA offers campus safety services developed to reduce the rate of sexual violence on campus. YWCA staff are also experienced at providing workplace trainings surrounding a variety of sexual assault awareness and prevention topics.

Accelerating the response in case of an emergency, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago has partnered with Guard Llama to market a personal safety device and smartphone application that provides users the ability to discreetly call for help with the press of a button. The keychain-sized remote is linked to a professional dispatch service that notifies the authorities of the user’s real-time GPS location, picture, and physical description to get help dispatched as soon as possible. To purchase Guard Llama, visit yshop.org.

New Small Business Training Cohort Launches on West Side

In April, as part of the YWCA’s Business & Entrepreneurship Services, entrepreneurs began a 14-week training to assist with strategic business plan development and provide the tools needed to successfully market and pursue financing for their businesses.

The program is delivered in partnership with People’s Gas and the Women’s Business Development Center.

For more information about future sessions, please contact Brandon Evans at brandon.evans@ywcachicago.org.

Support these initiatives and more of the YWCA’s critical work with a tax-deductible gift. Contribute online at www.ywcachicago.org/donate.