

**eliminating racism
empowering women**



“y the w makes a difference”

YWCA Bergen County: Y the W Makes a Difference

For **YWCA** Bergen County, the “W” is all about empowering women, girls and their families across all generations, abilities and walks of life. We do this by providing programs and services that improve lives, inspire change and create opportunities. And we’ve been doing it 24/7 since 1920, throughout Bergen County—and beyond.

Our “Y the W Makes a Difference” campaign gives us the chance to talk about what makes our YWCA special. But we know that making a difference is a two-way street. So this campaign is really about starting a conversation. We invite others to share their thoughts or stories about how our YW makes a difference in their life—or the lives of their family or friends.

After all, what matters isn’t only “Y the W Makes a Difference” to us. It’s “Y the W Makes a Difference” to others, too. Isn’t that what empowerment is all about?

The 5 “W’s”:

Who (we serve): Women, girls and their families, across all generations, abilities and walks of life.

What (we do): We provide programs and services that improve lives, inspire change and create opportunities.

When: 24/7 since 1920.

Where: Throughout Bergen County and beyond—wherever our programs take us.

Why: Because **W**e stand for **Y**ou: a force for peace, justice, freedom and dignity.

10 Ways Our YW Makes a Difference

1. **YWCA** is the world’s oldest & largest multicultural women’s organization.
2. **YWCA** Bergen County has been serving our community since 1920.
3. As the area’s largest childcare provider, we give the parents of 1,500+ children the peace of mind to pursue their professional and economic goals.
4. Children in 20+ schools throughout the county participate in our before & after care programs.
5. Our summer camps have provided fun & affordable family experiences since 1960.
6. We offer quality health & wellness programs to empower women, girls & families.
7. Our specially designed fitness and aqua-therapy programs serve mentally and physically challenged individuals of all ages.

8. We operate the only 24/7 Rape Crisis Center in Bergen County (hotline: 201-487-2227).
9. The community-wide Stand Against Racism is the most recent initiative undertaken by our YW to help eliminate racism in Bergen County.
10. The Annual Tribute to Women in Industry (TWIN) awards has honored more than 1,800 women and 200 companies since its inception in 1974.

YWCA Bergen County: Fact Sheet

- The **YWCA** is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world, with more than 25 million members in 122 countries. In the U.S., 300 local associations serve 2.6 million members.
- The Ridgewood **YWCA** was founded in 1920. Upon assuming the programs of the Hackensack **YWCA** in 1991, the combined organization became the **YWCA** Bergen County.
- **YWCA** Bergen County serves 5,000 members and their families at 28 sites in Bergen County, NJ and Rockland County, NY.
- **YWCA** Bergen County is the area's largest provider of **Child Care** services, caring for an average of 1,500 children daily.
 - All Day Child Care is available for children ages six weeks to six years.
 - Three Nursery Schools provide education for children ages 18 months to four years.
 - Enrichment programs are offered for children ages two months to six years.
 - Before and After School programs provide supervision to almost 1,400 children in 27 locations.
- For over 40 years, **YWCA** Bergen County has provided fun and affordable **Summer Camp** experiences for children ages 2½ to 16, serving an average of 900 campers each summer at four day camps in Bergen County and one residential camp in Bear Mountain, NY.
- **YWCA Aquatics** provides American Red Cross Certified Swim Lessons for swimmers ages six months to adult in two indoor swimming pools.
- **YWCA Fitness and Dance** provides fitness and wellness classes for teens, adults and seniors and dance classes for children ages three to 14.
- **YWCA Special Needs Programs** offer adapted recreation classes for mentally and physically challenged individuals of all ages. These include group and private swim lessons and gym activities for youngsters.
- **YWCA Aqua-therapy** provides rehabilitation, recreation, and instruction for adults with neurological and orthopedic conditions. Programs include arthritis classes and no-fee swim instruction for cancer survivors.
- The **Bolger Fitness Center**, which the **YWCA** runs jointly with the Ridgewood YMCA, is a fully equipped fitness center with cardio and strength training equipment that serves 1,000 members.
- **YWCA Girls Programs** empower the women of tomorrow by helping them build self-esteem, develop healthy body images, and acquire leadership skills. These include fitness and wellness classes and a “girls only” summer camp for pre-teens.
- **YWCA** Bergen County provides **Community Programs** designed to enrich the lives of women, girls, and their families in all stages of life, including: the Ridgewood Newcomers Club, the Women for Sobriety support group, writing classes, and professional development workshops.
- Established in Bergen County in 1974, The **YWCA's Tribute to Women and Industry (TWIN)** awards honors managerial, executive, and professional women for their achievements and acknowledges the progressive policies of the companies that honor them. TWIN has honored more than 1,800 women and 200 corporations and been replicated in communities across the country.
- The **YWCA** operates Bergen County's only **Rape Crisis Center** and 24/7 crisis hotline, providing confidential crisis intervention, emotional support, information, and referrals to survivors of sexual assault, their families, and friends. The Center also offers support groups, prevention-oriented community education programs, and training for professionals and volunteers who work with survivors.
- The community-wide **Stand Against Racism** is the most recent initiative undertaken by the **YWCA** to help eliminate racism in Bergen County.



“y the w makes a difference”

YWCA Bergen County: Milestones

1920 - Nell Doremus receives a Charter from the National **YWCA**. The Ridgewood YWCA is established in the Opera House in Ridgewood, NJ (now the site of the bus terminal), and provides food services to the community's young working women.

1928 - Growth in membership necessitates a move to larger quarters on E. Ridgewood Avenue, across from the present movie theater. Dues are \$1 and total membership is 207.

1930 - The **YWCA of Hackensack, NJ, affiliates with the national **YWCA**.**

1939 – The Ridgewood **YWCA** purchases a new building on the site now occupied by the Stop and Shop.

1947 - The Newcomers Club, with an enrollment of 44, begins at the **YWCA**.

1951 – The nation's first joint **YWCA and YMCA opens at our current 112 Oak Street, Ridgewood location.**

1954 - The **YWCA** of Hackensack separates from its joint operation with the YMCA. The Grannon Pool opens at 112 Oak Street, Ridgewood.

1957 – First **YWCA Nursery School opens with 50 children.**

1958 - Swimming programs for the developmentally disabled win national recognition.

1960 – Our first summer day camp, Camp Y-Oak-A, opens.

1966 - Small Fry Club begins in the **YWCA** of Hackensack gym, serving preschoolers whose mothers use the facility.

1970 - The Room Registry Service is established by the Hackensack **YWCA**, matching single working women with homeowners with rooms to rent. The Second Start Jail Program is also established, teaching grooming and yoga to women in the Bergen County Jail Annex.

1972 – First **YWCA child care center opens in the First Reformed Church on Prospect Street in Ridgewood to meet the needs of working women.**

1974 - The **YWCA** Women's Center gets underway.

1975 - Tribute to Women and INdustry (**TWIN**) is founded by **YWCA** board member Evelyn Atwater, honoring 50 professional women and the companies they work for.

1975 – After School Program begins for 1st through 3rd graders of working parents.

1979 - The Hackensack YWCA undertakes the sponsorship of a countywide rape intervention program (S.E.R.V.E.).

1983 - Although funding ceases, the **S.E.R.V.E.** program continues, staffed by volunteers.

1985 - With **YWCA** leadership, the Bergen County Coalition Against Sexual Assault (**CASA**) is organized and sponsors its first conference, "Violence Against Women." The Hackensack **YWCA** also begins to take an active role in the Bergen County Coalition to Shelter the Homeless.

1986 - The new Campbell Wing is dedicated at the **YWCA/YMCA** Ridgewood site, housing a second pool and the Center for Fitness.

1988 - The **YWCA** Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest is inaugurated.

1988 - The **YWCA** and The Valley Hospital offer an employer-sponsored child care program on the hospital grounds.

1989 - Camp Ma-Kee-Ya opens in Harriman State Park, NY.

1991 - The Ridgewood YWCA assumes the programs of the Hackensack YWCA, creating the YWCA of Bergen County.

1993 - The **YWCA** starts a Judo program for developmentally disabled and handicapped individuals. The National Judo Association recognizes the program as the first of its kind.

1995 - Encore Plus, a program that provides low cost breast cancer screening for medically uninsured women, is brought into the **YWCA**.

1995 - Senator Bill Bradley helps kick off our first "Week Without Violence."

1996 - Encore Plus receives the Johnson & Johnson Community Health Care Crystal Award and a two-year grant for \$100,000.

1997 - The first Study Circle on Racism is held.

1998 - A third **YWCA** childcare center opens in Haworth.

1999 - TWIN celebrates its 25th Anniversary of honoring professional women.

2001 - The **YWCA** provides support and free programming to families of 9/11 victims.

2001 - The Rodie Child Care Center opens in Upper Saddle River. A second **YWCA** day camp opens in Cresskill.

2005 – A joint YMCA/YWCA Capital Campaign to raise funds for 112 Oak Street building renovation is completed.

2007 – YWCA and YMCA celebrate grand re-opening of Oak Street facility. Improvements include the new Bolger Fitness Center, a handicapped accessible elevator in the new lobby, and central air conditioning.

2007 - YWCA consolidates its administrative offices in Hackensack, further extending its footprint in Bergen County.

2008 – YWCA Rape Crisis Center receives funding from the Division on Women and forms a county-wide collaborative, Sexual Assault Free Environment (S.A.F.E.) Coalition, which begins to develop strategies aimed at preventing sexual violence perpetration and victimization.

2008 – First annual “Denim Day in NJ” is observed on April 28, spearheaded by the Rape Crisis Center to raise awareness about consent and the prevention of sexual violence.

2009 - YWCA Bergen County holds its first Stand Against Racism, joining 14 sister YWCA’s in the northeast region in raising awareness about racial discrimination and celebrating diversity.

2009 – First Girl Power Camp is held in July, providing pre-teen girls with a unique, “girls-only” environment for building self-esteem and leadership skills.

2009 – TWIN turns 35, having honored 1,804 women and 213 corporations since its inception.

2009 – The YWCA After School Program expands to its 27th location in Bergen County, and now serves over 1,000 children daily.

2010 – The YWCA celebrates “90 Years of Making a Difference” in the community, and launches “Y the W Makes a Difference” viral marketing campaign.



Helen Archontou, MSW, LSW, *Chief Executive Officer*

Helen Archontou, Chief Executive Officer of the YWCA Bergen County, has 15+ years of executive management experience in the not-for-profit sector. Prior to joining the YWCA in July 2011, she was the program director of Saint Clare's Hospital Center for the Protection of Children in Denville, NJ, and previously served as the founding executive director for Wynona's House, the first co-location child advocacy center for the State of New Jersey, in Essex County. She has served as multi-disciplinary team coordinator for the Sex Crimes/Child Abuse Unit with the Bergen County Prosecutor's Office and executive director of Literacy Volunteers of America – Bergen County. Helen is a registered governmental affairs agent in the State of NJ and an adjunct professor in the graduate program for the Center for Child Advocacy at Montclair State University. An active member of the International Institute of New Jersey's Cultural Competency Taskforce, she holds a Master of Social Work from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a Certificate in Public Management from Farleigh Dickinson University, and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Montclair State University. She is also a graduate of the New Jersey Child Abuse Institute and Finding Words NJ.

