



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**NORTH SUBURBAN  
YMCA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **North Suburban YMCA Recognized by National YMCA for Social Responsibility Initiatives**

**Northbrook, Illinois – February 2017:** The North Suburban YMCA has been honored by the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) Executive Conference for Small and Mid-Size YMCA's for its innovative Social Responsibility Program: Strong Communities. The NSYMCA received the Advancing Our Cause Sponsors' Award at the Y-USA's national CEO conference in Florida, along with a \$2500 grant to support expansion of the program.

Advancing the Y's charitable mission through unique monthly volunteer projects that touch the lives of thousands of people throughout the Northern Suburbs, the Strong Communities program began in 2016. Efforts were completely accomplished through volunteer service and in-kind donations by Y staff, volunteers and community partners.

The program targeted the needs of a wide range of populations, including veterans and military service members, seniors, low-income families, animal welfare organizations, literacy support groups, and environmental interests. Projects completed by the Strong Communities Committee last year included:

- **Collecting vases and creating floral arrangements for hospitals and nursing homes**, in partnership with Random Acts of Flowers
- **Planting and distributing rose milkweed plants** to support monarch butterfly populations, in partnership with the Northbrook Garden Club
- **Promoting the "upcycle" of unwanted items** with assistance from Terracycle, to reduce waste and the burden on landfills
- **Hosting a wheelchair football exhibition game**, bringing together athletes from the Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association, Northwestern University, the Ability Experience, and North Shore Griffins Youth Football League
- **Coordinating donations of needed goods** for animal shelters, food pantries, and toy drives.
- **Sending Halloween candy donations to overseas troops** in hopes of reducing childhood tooth decay and obesity while brightening the day of a US armed services member

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- **Establishment of a Little Free Library** with a reading garden outside the Y, in partnership with the Northbrook Public Library and Lowe's Home Improvement of Northbrook
- **Giving back to the community on "Giving Tuesday"** with the delivery of toys, donated by Toys R Us of Highland Park and ConTech Lighting, to 13 social service organizations supporting children throughout the northern suburbs.

For 2017, the NSYMCA plans to expand its Strong Communities efforts by adding staff to coordinate volunteers and expand special efforts, such as the Y's swim lesson and safety around water programs. Other planned projects include anti-bullying advocacy, a community read, and a pet adoption day in partnership with a local shelter.

The \$2,500 grant from the Y-USA award will be applied to the projected \$10,000 budget for the additional program staffing and expenses related to these projects. The Y also hopes to partner with other community-minded businesses and organizations to grow its efforts to provide opportunities for its staff and members to give back to our community.

"At its core, the Strong Communities Program is our fulfillment of the Y's focus on giving back and providing service to all our neighbors," noted Howard Schultz, President and CEO of the NSYMCA. "This has been a grass-roots, volunteer effort led with enthusiasm by our staff, members, and over 30 partner organizations. We are delighted to receive recognition for the program from Y-USA, and encourage other local businesses to join in supporting our charitable mission."

To learn more about the North Suburban YMCA's Strong Communities initiatives or to make a donation, contact Senior Director of Development Adrienne Wright, [awright@nsymca.org](mailto:awright@nsymca.org).



*Photo Caption: The North Suburban YMCA received the Sponsors' Award for Advancing Our Cause from the Y-USA Executive Committee. Pictured from left: Conference Chair Marisa Fink, YMCA of the USA Vice President Tony Fragale, NSYMCA President/CEO Howard Schultz, and YMCA of the USA Executive Vice President Angela Williams.*

### **About the North Suburban YMCA**

The North Suburban YMCA serves 15 northern suburbs of Chicago, and for over 48 years has provided programs and services that address youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility every day. Working together for good is who we are: an association of people united in a common effort to help individuals become healthier, more connected, and confident. There is no other nonprofit quite like the Y: we have the national and local presence and partnerships to not just promise, but deliver, positive change, making sure that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For more information, visit [NSYMCA.org](http://NSYMCA.org).