

At the NSYMCA, the Power of Social Responsibility Has Never Been Stronger

Even during a pandemic, the North Suburban YMCA has remained focused on ensuring the community has access to charitable programs, financial assistance, and operational security for generations to come. 2021 brought out the best in everyone as the North Suburban YMCA staff, volunteers, members, board members, businesses, and the community at large offered their time, money, and skills to fortify this amazing mission-driven agency.

- **The 2021 Holiday Giveback** drew over 175 volunteers to help create “Blessing Bags” for people experiencing homelessness. The Blessing Bags, filled with essential items such as baby wipes, socks, deodorant and other toiletries, were donated by NSYMCA members and board members, local businesses, and the community at large, were distributed through Project I Am, a Chicago-based 501c charity.
- **Community Strong Fundraising.** NSYMCA’S fundraising events support its Financial Assistance Fund, allowing programs to be accessible to everyone in the community. The Y provides over \$560,000 annually in financial assistance to more than 1 out of 5 Y members. These funds enable families to access programs and services like after-school childcare, day camp, swim lessons, and chronic illness prevention programs. This is made possible through ongoing fundraising initiatives and the Y’s Community Strong fundraising activities (formerly the Strong Kids Fundraising Dinner) which in 2021 included an inaugural Golf Outing and a “Dinner Under the Stars” event held outdoors on the Y’s Northbrook campus.
- **Celebration of all Cultures and Ages.** The Y has always supported diversity throughout its community, from partnering with the Community Relations Commission, to hosting Taste of Asia, to sponsoring Black History Month programs and SeniorPalooza. In commemoration of Black History Month 2021, the Y partnered with RAIN (Racial Awareness in the North Shore) for a special virtual event entitled “How to Have Conversations About Race”.
- **Feeding Local Families in Need.** In partnership with the Northfield Township Food Pantry and Hunger Free Northbrook, a program of Hunger Resource Network, the Y helps to feed local families. Donations of new packaged foods and cleaning items are collected in a large yellow bin outside of the Y’s entrance at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook.
- **Hosting Critical Blood Drives with the Red Cross.** The Y hosted several record-breaking blood drives in 2021, collecting more than 600 units of blood, saving well-over 1,800 lives.
- **The “Treats for Troops” Social Responsibility Initiative** collected over 500 pounds of leftover Halloween candy for troops at the Great Lakes Naval Base.
- **The Grand Opening of Café Voca**, a new coffee bar in the Y’s lobby that provides vocational training and employment experience for individuals with intellectual and developmental challenges opened in October.

- **Addressing Mental Health Issues.** As the NSYMCA responds to the mental health crisis due in part to the pandemic, 12 Y staff members were certified as “Mental Health First Aid Responders”.
- **Responding to Evolving Social Needs.** Y staff members attended a comprehensive “Gender 101” workshop which included an overview of gender concepts, best practices to creating a gender inclusive environment, and offered practical tools for implementing gender inclusion.
- **Y.E.S. Adult Education Series.** The most popular adult offering at the Y with virtual and live programming covering topics from Estate Planning to Meditation.
- **2021 Winner of the Diversity in Business Awards.** The North Suburban YMCA was selected as an honoree in the inaugural Daily Herald Diversity in Business Awards.
- **2021 Readers’ Choice Awards Winner.** The Y received 7 awards in the Daily Herald Readers’ Choice Awards, winning Best Overall Camp, Best Sports Camp, Best Gym/Fitness Center, Best Bar/Bat Mitzvah Venue, Best Art Studio, Dance Studio, and Best Swim School.
- **Successful Summer Camp.** After more than a year into the pandemic, the Y knew that kids needed a safe place to learn, grow, and connect during the summer. In 2021, the Y had its most successful summer camp season ever, keeping kids ages 2-14 safe and active!

The North Suburban YMCA strives to promote values that build strong families and the health of each individual’s spirit, mind, and body in an inclusive, welcoming environment. To find out more about the North Suburban YMCA, visit nsymca.org, or call 847-272-7250.

About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)

The North Suburban YMCA, located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook services Northbrook and 14 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help its residents become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org or call 847-272-7250.



Caption: The North Suburban YMCA's Community Strong "Dinner under the Stars" fundraiser featured live music, a dining experience, casino games, and a live auction hosted by Sunset Foods' Ron Bernardi.



Caption: The North Suburban YMCA 2022 Summer Camp Program is now open for registration offering over 40 different day camps.