

# AYP Directions

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**Virginia AYP Chapter 25:**  
Dedicated to the support of  
Virginia YMCA professional  
staff.

## Manage Your Membership

After a tough economic year, Chapter 25 is still the greatest and largest in the land! We finished the year with 413 members—something we should be very proud of. In 2009 we recruited 56 new members! At the AYP Fall New Member Orientation, we had 10 members attend, and even recruited a new member.

You can now renew/transfer your AYP membership with one form! To transfer a membership from a former employee to a new employee, simply visit [www.aypymca.org](http://www.aypymca.org), click on the “join today” button and follow the directions on transferring memberships.

If you are unsure when your membership is up for renewal, please contact Jaime at [gambaccinij@ymcarichmond.org](mailto:gambaccinij@ymcarichmond.org).

As always, we would love your feedback. If there is something that you think our Chapter could improve upon, please let us know.

*Jaime Gambaccini*

## Letter from our President, Bill Zazynski



To say the least, 2009 was a huge challenge for all of us in the YMCA. During the past year, many of us said membership and contributions declined, and the demand for financial assistance increased in our programs and in membership. And, I am sure you added more hats to your closet of jobs. Through the year you may have been faced with tough decisions like discontinuing a program you worked so hard to start, cutting back on services or cutting back on staff or the hours they were working. With all those challenges, I tend to look at the silver lining of it all. I hope we all learned about ourselves, our colleagues with whom we work with everyday and how we can operate when faced with difficult circumstances. I am sure for some of you baby-boomers, your grandparents told you of the hard times that everyone experienced during the great depression. Although we may have not have faced such dire circumstances, there were definitely challenges. I am sure many of us know friends who lost jobs. We empathize for their family in hopes they can get back on their feet. As leaders, I hope we will take away something

from this economic experience that we can instill in those we lead. Here are a few take-a-ways that I have learned:

**Live within our means!** This is just not just for personal finances, but also with your finances that you are accountable for. Make sure you continually ask yourself where your expenses are going, and do they create value to your programs and membership. Do we really need this or can we live without it? Remember your budget is your road map for success, but make sure your revenue is coming in before your expense is going out.

**The times are challenging, but our future looks great.** Believe this and live this. What a great opportunity to evaluate your programs and services. Are we meeting our mission and business models that we have set? Are we reaching out to those in need and telling our story to those we need to?

**We cannot wish our way back to prosperity!** Too often we see our directors looking for magic pills to solve a crisis like this one. The truth is that anything worthwhile takes hard work—otherwise, everyone could do it. You need to gain a solid commitment to best practices from everyone in order to save your YMCA. It takes a village to see the way back to being financially solvent.

**Tell your story to all!** We all have seen a spike in our financial assistance requests. This is ground zero to our YMCA mission and movement. This is also a wonderful opportunity

to have an impact by telling our story of how we are helping others in our community to live healthier, more productive and positive lives. When was the last time you invited a group of individuals to observe a swim lesson or youth activity? Give your donors and prospects an opportunity to experience firsthand, the way we make a difference in our community. Tell your story and show the importance of the YMCA!

**Membership and program sales cure all ills!** Unfortunately, many businesses have focused too heavily on cost-cutting and not enough on the fundamentals of programming and membership selling. Get your teams back to the basics: focus on the value of selling and cross-selling of programs and activities, not results, so that when the market turns, your programs and branches will get more than their share. Get out in front of people in your community—don't keep your programs a secret!

This year will be no different from 2009, but hopefully you walked away smarter and savvier. Continue to push yourself and others to be your best each and every day. Be more purposeful in your day-to-day work. Spend time with your volunteers and staff to make sure they know how important their work is. What a wonderful opportunity we have to build others around us. I hope you will continue to see how blessed we are with this opportunity!

In the Spirit,  
Bill Z.

## An EAF Inspirational Story

Thanks to the generous support of AYP Chapter 25, we've raised over \$13,000 for the Emergency Assistance Fund (EAF). Unfortunately, the need is as great as ever with more and more people in our YMCAs facing adversity in their lives. One member of our Y family who has benefited from the EAF is Michael Smith, Branch Director for the Gainsboro Family YMCA (a branch of the YMCA of Roanoke Valley). Here is his story.

Michael Smith, a native of Wisconsin and past Director of the YMCA of Greater Milwaukee, has been the Branch Director of the Gainsboro Family YMCA for the past five years. In that position, Michael's dedication, compassion and professionalism have exemplified what it means to live the Y-mission.

This past August, Michael had been feeling a little run down, working long hours running a newly renovated branch. After taking a few days off to rest, Michael was still low on energy and decided to see a doctor. Michael and the entire Y family



*Michael Smith, Branch Director of the Gainsboro Family YMCA*

were shocked to learn that Michael was diagnosed with AML (acute myeloid leukemia), which is an aggressive form of leukemia. Within days of the diagnosis, Michael began several weeks of chemotherapy and was in the hospital for over a month. Over the next four months, with his blood count still low, he had multiple sessions of chemotherapy and several blood transfusions. With mounting medical bills, two children in college, and his vacation and sick days exhausted, Michael needed financial help.

Cal Johnson, Executive Director of the YMCA of Roanoke

Valley, and Bill Zazynski, District Executive Director of the Great Bridge/Hickory Family YMCA, stepped in and helped Michael start the process of applying for EAF. Through this fund, Michael was awarded \$10,000, which he used for medical and household bills, and his daughter's college bills. In a recent phone conversation, Michael expressed his tremendous gratitude to Cal and Bill for making this funding possible.

As of January 15, 2010, Michael's blood count is stable and the doctor has no plans for additional chemotherapy. Michael said when he was

released from the hospital, all the nurses were hugging him. They told him many patients with this form of leukemia don't leave the hospital, and that he was very fortunate. "It's now time to rest and heal," he told me during a recent phone call. "I want to come back to the Y, but I need to take it slow." Each time I talk to Michael I'm inspired by his positive attitude and inner strength. He has not allowed his spirit to weaken though the disease weakened his body. Through the EAF and the generosity of AYP members, Michael can remain focused on his health as he grows stronger every day and continues to fight for a full recovery.

Please remember to tell the story of EAF and encourage any AYP member to apply for a grant if he or she is in need of financial help. Also, if you'd like to give to the fund, please contact Jackie Grant at (540) 342-2332 or [jgrant@ymcaroanoke.org](mailto:jgrant@ymcaroanoke.org).

*Jackie Grant*

## Goal Setting for 2010

We've all heard that goals should be SMART—Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely, but will this really help us to achieve them? The New Year is often a time for resolutions, a time to reflect on the upcoming year and all of the things we want to achieve. By setting SMART goals and resolutions, we stand a better chance of keeping them well into the year. When goals are too ambiguous, how do we know that we've achieved them? For example, instead of setting a goal of "going green" in 2010, strive for something



more specific like, bringing your reusable bags to the store and no longer using plastic bags. Once you have made that change, consider another step, like bringing your own mug to the coffee shop. Having a

measurable goal allows you to celebrate your success, so don't be afraid to break a big goal into smaller ones. If you hope to run a marathon this year, don't forget to acknowledge achievements along the way like completing a 10k or half-marathon. Make sure your goals are attainable and realistic. You should have control over your own goals. You won't be able to change other people's behavior, so focus on what you can do. Write your goals down and share them with others so that they can support you and hold you accountable. Finally, give

yourself a timeline to complete your goals, something to strive for. If you have many goals, try prioritizing them and focus on some of your resolutions now, and others later in the year. Abraham Lincoln said, "A goal properly set is halfway reached." As you consider your resolutions this year, personal or professional, remember to keep them SMART. Good luck!

*Anna Schemmel*

## Introducing New Award for Chapter 25

For 2010, the AYP Chapter 25 Board has decided to include the Achievement in Christian Emphasis Award to the list of honors. This award will be presented to the branch that has implemented Christian Emphasis in their programs, meetings and events. Also, Christian Emphasis should be communicated throughout their membership through Bible studies, prayer request box, and other avenues to increase Christian awareness.

Please begin thinking about who the shining star is at your branch, in your association, or in your chapter! Please take the time to nominate someone. You could make his or her 2010 a little brighter! Please email nominations to Jennifer Cass at [jcass@ymcashr.org](mailto:jcass@ymcashr.org).

*The deadline for submission is March 31, 2010.*

Awards Include:

**AYP Service Award**—presented to a current member for outstanding service to AYP.

**Distinguished Leadership Award**—presented to a current member for outstanding and effective leadership in their YMCA and the community.

**Director of the Year Excellence Award**—presented to a current member for achieving excellence in the past calendar year in the following areas: program development, staff development, community development, and volunteer development.

**Outstanding New Director of the Year**—presented to a current member for outstanding on the job achievement (to qualify, nominee needs to have been on

the job more than 6 months and less than 2 years of continuous employment).

**Partnering in the Community Award**—presented to the program director that has developed program quality through seeking community partners as well as positioning the YMCA as a strong partner in the community.

**Outstanding Development Work**—presented to the branch with the highest increase in their overall goal, as well as: staff, board, major gifts, and community campaign. Please recognize efforts in cultivation, and commitment to achieve their goal. Please submit examples with your application.

**Character Commitment Award**—presented to the director that has effectively promoted the YMCA core values through

staff development, program management, and member awareness.

**Achievement in Activate America**—presented to the branch that has had the most “culture change” in their branch. This award recognizes and rewards creative efforts, messaging, new programs, communication of the core objectives of Activate America, and deepening engagement in all areas of Y work.

**Achievement in Christian Emphasis**—presented to the branch that has implemented Christian Emphasis in their programs, meetings, and events. Please visit [www.ayp25.org](http://www.ayp25.org) to download a nomination form today!

*Jennifer Cass*

## Coming Soon: Spring Conference Registration

Don't miss the opportunity to make AYP history. Plan on attending the AYP Chapter 25 Spring Conference at the Omni Hotel in beautiful Charlottesville from May 20–21. You will have the chance to:

- Network with other AYP professionals representing YMCAs from across the state
- Be entertained and motivated by National Speakers

- Represent your Y by playing in the 6th Annual “Virginia Cup” golf classic
- Celebrate the accomplishments of your YMCA peers
- Enjoy the Thursday Social
- Be activated and participate in AYP Walk/Run (early-bird workout)
- Take a Winery Tour
- Meet our Vendors

Registration forms and hotel information are on the way. For more information, contact Conference Co. Chairs: Kelly Bridgman at (757) 456-9622 or Jaime Gambaccini at (804) 360-8767 or Registration Chair: Clarissa Hoagland at (757) 275-9435.

*Kelly Bridgman*



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