

LEADERSHIP FOR A LIFETIME



2025-26
Impact Report
Kentucky YMCA
Youth Association

kyyymca.org



LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Y Friends,

Every year, I am reminded that our work is about so much more than programs or participation numbers; it is about people. It is about the young person who discovers their voice, finds a place where they belong, and begins to believe in the difference they can make.

This year, we celebrated meaningful growth across our organization. The Kentucky Youth Assembly, Go for It conference, Commonwealth Teen Advocate program, and the Leadership Training Conference all welcomed more teens. With each new school, community, and county represented, we move closer to our vision of ensuring every teen in Kentucky has access to transformational leadership experiences.

Behind every program we run is a story. One student shared that she had become comfortable with going through high school without friends. Through our programs, she found not only friendship, but confidence and connection that changed the course of her high school experience. Another participant discovered a passion for service through Y-Corps and left inspired to pursue AmeriCorps because she had experienced the joy and purpose that comes from serving others.

Throughout the year, we watched students cast their first ballots, debate ideas with confidence, learn about countries they had never heard of, engage thoughtfully with elected officials, and discover that their voices matter. These moments remind us why this work is so important. We are not simply preparing young people for their professional life; we are preparing them for citizenship, leadership, and lives of service.

None of this would be possible without you. To our staff, volunteers, teachers, and advisors, thank you for investing your time and talents in Kentucky's young people. To our donors and partners, thank you for making it possible to say "yes" when financial barriers might otherwise keep a student from participating. Your generosity opens doors that change lives.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on expanding opportunities for more young people across Kentucky, strengthening our scholarship fund so every student can participate regardless of financial circumstances, growing our alumni community through our alumni association, and deepening our impact through civic education.

Together, we are building stronger leaders, stronger communities, and a stronger Commonwealth. Thank you for believing in this mission and for making this work possible.

Sincerely,

Amanda Chism

Y- CORPS 2025

Y-Corps empowers young people to discover that leadership begins with service. Through meaningful, hands-on projects in communities across Kentucky and beyond, participants tackle real challenges while developing resilience, teamwork, and a lifelong commitment to civic responsibility. Whether restoring natural spaces, supporting local nonprofits, or responding to community needs, students leave understanding that they have the power to improve the world around them. Y-Corps service hours amount to \$113,000 in terms of time and talent given Y-Corps transforms service from something students do into part of who they become.



\$27,022

raised by Y-Corps
Students

270

scholarships funded by
Y-Corps student
fundraising

3,245

hours of service
completed throughout
the year

50

communities served by
Y-Corps teams

CTA 2025

Commonwealth Teen Advocates equips students to become informed, confident voices for issues that matter most to young people. Through research, public speaking, advocacy training, and direct engagement with decision-makers, participants learn that meaningful change begins with informed dialogue and respectful collaboration. Students develop the skills to analyze complex issues, build consensus, and advocate for their communities, preparing them to become thoughtful leaders who strengthen Kentucky's future through civic engagement.



61

Participants

7

Volunteers

5

Counties

20

Advocacy Projects

KENTUCKY YOUTH ASSEMBLY

For eight decades, the Kentucky Youth Assembly has inspired students to believe that their voices belong in the democratic process. Through immersive simulations of the legislative, judicial, and executive, branches of state government, participants move beyond learning about civics to experiencing it firsthand. They develop the confidence to debate ideas, defend their perspectives, collaborate across differences, and lead with integrity. Long after the conference ends, students leave knowing they are not simply future leaders, they are capable of making an impact today. KYA hosted 240 schools from 77 Commonwealth counties.



"My students had an amazing time. Coming from a school that is unlike most that attend KYA I was blown away by the way my students just jumped in. They didn't get discouraged, they worked so hard! Thank you to the Y for providing this opportunity for my students and they already cannot wait to come back next year."

Advisor & Teacher



\$72,117

Need-Based Scholarships

2,382

Middle School Participants

3,107

High School Participants

517

Advisor Participants

9

Volunteers

64

Presiding Officers

438

Bills Submitted

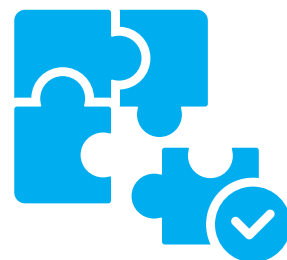
4

Specialized Programs

54

Supporting Officers

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



Leadership Training Conference 2026

Leadership Training Conference is where emerging leaders discover that leadership is not about holding a title, it is about serving others with purpose. Through intensive leadership development, team-building, and personal reflection, participants are challenged to grow in confidence, character, and responsibility. Students return to their schools equipped not only with practical leadership skills, but with a renewed commitment to creating welcoming communities, inspiring others, and leading with empathy and integrity.

187

Attendees

29

Volunteers



Go For It Conference 2026

Go For It introduces middle school students to the confidence and skills they need to navigate adolescence with purpose. Through engaging, age-appropriate experiences, participants strengthen communication, decision-making, teamwork, and self-awareness while discovering their own potential as leaders. At a pivotal stage in their development, students gain the courage to step outside their comfort zones, build meaningful friendships, and begin seeing themselves as individuals capable of making a positive difference in their schools and communities.

232

Attendees

29

Volunteers



\$13,165 Need-based scholarships awarded to LTC & GFI attendees including 2 scholarships from the Melanie Carroll Memorial Fund and 1 scholarship from the Anthony Flaherty Fund

KENTUCKY UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY

KUNA - March 2026 Events Summary

The Kentucky United Nations Assembly challenges students to think beyond borders and embrace their role as global citizens. By representing nations, debating international issues, negotiating solutions, and building consensus, participants gain a deeper understanding of diplomacy, cultural awareness, and collaborative leadership. KUNA empowers students to see that even the world's greatest challenges can be addressed through respectful dialogue, critical thinking, and a willingness to work together across differences. KUNA hosted 155 schools from 54 Commonwealth Counties.



\$57,873

Need-Based Scholarships

1,318

Middle School Participants

2,275

High School Participants

326

Advisor Participants

6

Volunteers

33

Presiding Officers

215

Resolutions Submitted

4

Specialized Programs

50

Supporting Officers

STUDENT Y

Student Y is the year-round foundation of the Kentucky YMCA Youth Association, creating spaces where young people belong, lead, and grow in their own communities. Through local chapters in schools across the Commonwealth, students build leadership skills through service projects, civic engagement, character development, and meaningful relationships with peers and adult advisors. Volunteer hours total over \$70,000 in time and talent given. Student Y empowers thousands of young people to discover their voice, strengthen their communities, and develop the confidence to become engaged citizens long before they attend a statewide conference.



4,593

Student Y Members

2,069

Service hours completed

“I’ve always felt like the outsider in every situation, especially at school. Becoming a Y kid, meeting all of my amazing friends and mentors, and trying my absolute hardest to participate and be seen at every single conference, whether that be speaking up during debate at KYA or almost taking people out in volleyball during Y-CORPS, has taught me that I do deserve to be seen, I do deserve to be heard, and I do belong. I feel like I’ve been given a fair chance for the first time in forever and I hope that every new Y kid can be given that same opportunity. ”

Student Y Member

Thank You to All Who Fundraised on Behalf of the KY YMCA

F Ryan Keith
Allison Mefford
Amy Simpson

Brad Hayes
Bryan Flachbart
Chris Reitz

Kelly Busick
Amanda Chism
Emily Lepping

Thank you to the families who have created scholarship funds in memory of loved ones who have passed

Melanie Carroll Memorial Scholarship Fund
Anthony Flaherty Scholarship

Kentucky YMCA Mission Statement

The mission of the Kentucky YMCA Youth Association is to develop engaged citizens and servant leaders, inspired to affect change in their school, community, Commonwealth, nation, and world. Through experiential learning, service, and community activism, the Kentucky YMCA Youth Association fosters critical thinking, leadership, and social responsibility in teens.

2025 – 2026 Leadership

Board of Directors Officers	Amy Simpson– Board Chair Bryan Flachbart – Vice Chair		Brad Hayes– Treasurer & Finance Chair David Byerman/Emily Lepping – Governance Chair Kerri Richardson – Development Chair	
Board of Directors	Allison Mefford Chris Reitz Bryan Ernstberger Steve Gold	Christopher Head F. Ryan Keith Bradley Hayes Emily Lepping	David Perlow Robert Rich Chris Mitchell Grace Flaherty	
Student Directors	Patrick Grabivoy Chase Colvin	Sophia Staples Katherine James	Amal Kalik Ryan Britz	Anthony Northington
Advisory Council	Tyler Boyle Barton Christmas	Caroline Cowan	Emerson Harned Elizabeth Tully	Jacqueline Thompson Maria Wimsatt
Board of Overseers	Maria Rapin – Chair	Luke Boyett Greg Palmer	Chad Carlton Chip Polston	Gary McCullom
Staff	Amanda Pile Chism CEO/President		Ricki Brooke Link Senior Operations Director	