



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**NORTH SUBURBAN  
YMCA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**YMCA Named “Small Business of the Year” at Northbrook Chamber Event**

**Northbrook, Illinois: January 2013** – The Northbrook Chamber of Commerce has selected the North Suburban YMCA as its Small Business of the Year, in recognition of the Y’s dramatic turnaround, consistent growth, and dedicated commitment to community service. Chamber President Tensley Garris announced the award during a “Chamber After Hours” reception held at the Y on January 17. Approximately 200 Chamber members attended the function, which included building tours, membership specials, and food provided by The Landmark Inn.

The Chamber award reflects the Y’s success in regaining its prominence as a thriving community center, complete with a renovated facility and a quickly expanding membership base. In 2006, the Y was on the verge of closing its doors due to crippling debt, plummeting membership, deteriorating infrastructure and the potential revocation of its charter from YMCA of the USA. A “Save the Y” campaign, launched by Executive Director/CEO Howard Schultz and the Y’s Board of Directors, built on the Y’s deep roots in the community and then reached out to new potential partners and supporters. Momentum built quickly and steadily, enabling the Y to completely discharge its \$2.3 million of debt by March 2008 and reassure the Y USA of its viability. A capital campaign followed, raising a total of \$5.8 million to date, which provided the funds to remake the facility into an attractive, welcoming location and to replace much of its aging mechanical systems. Other improvements targeted the Y’s facilities that emphasized core programs in youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, including renovation of multi-purpose community rooms.

Six years later after pulling back from the brink, the Y is enjoying a surge in membership. Through mid January, membership has grown over 35% since 2009, including a 15% leap since the completion of major renovations in September alone. The Y now boasts over 2100 dues paying member households. At the same time, the Y maintains a commitment to keeping its services available to all, by providing financial assistance to families enable participation in membership, child care, day camp, and other programs important to their family needs, through its Strong Kids Financial Assistance Fund. Approximately one out of five participant members, approximately 2000 people, receive some level of assistance, with roughly \$490,000 in aid being distributed in 2012 alone. The Y’s annual Ken & Alta Thiel Strong Kids Dinner has been the primary source of the over \$1.8 million raised for financial assistance since 2006.

“What happened with the Y these last few years is nothing short of miraculous,” comments Ron Bernardi, who helped found the organization along with his Rotary colleagues in 1968. He credits the Y for maintaining the creed of its Rotary founders – emphasizing the importance of “Service Above Self”. He adds that that the Y turnaround brought the community together, due in part to its customer service philosophy. “The Y is like the Sunset Foods of family recreation,” he says. “They are truly committed to serving their customers and the community.”

At the January 17 event, Schultz publicly thanked the Chamber and its members for their participation in the Y’s resurgence. “On behalf of all the Y’s members, Board of Directors and staff, I want to thank the Chamber for this outstanding honor. It’s tremendous to know where we came from and to see where we are now,” he told the guests. “Our Y has grown substantially in the past few years because you as a community have supported us. We’re thrilled to be members of the Chamber and to restore the Y as a vital member of the community.”

For more information regarding the North Suburban YMCA, visit [www.nsymca.org](http://www.nsymca.org).



Photo Caption: North Suburban YMCA Executive Director/CEO Howard Schultz (left) with Tensley Garris, President of the Northbrook Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has recognized the NSYMCA as its Small Business of the Year.

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

The YMCA is a not-for-profit entity and relies on donations to fund capital improvements and keep its programs available to all, including those facing financial hardship. All board members are community volunteers, who donate their time, talents and financial resources. Located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook, the YMCA has served area families in its twelve-city region for over 40

years. The Y is about youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, providing programs and services that meet the needs of our community and are accessible to all. For more information or to make a donation call Tara Bilby at 847-272-7250, [tbilby@nsymca.org](mailto:tbilby@nsymca.org), or visit [www.nsymca.org](http://www.nsymca.org).

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