

"Always Do Your Best." Don Miguel Ruiz

Sustainability in Facility Management, Operations and Maintenance

Sustainability is.... good. And it is... green? And... ? We're all for it!

Sustainability and the YMCA Mission

Here's an idea— add "sustainability" to your next Property Committee meeting agenda and see where it leads. Sustainability weaves through Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. It is a theme that challenges us to "always do our best", because it questions legacy thinking about what is, in fact, "best". Do today's choices also consider future generations? Do our decisions about our facilities, property and neighborhood benefit our communities, our nation and our planet? Does the "triple bottom line" (People, Profits, Planet) also stretch us to create new "Processes" and "Partnerships". Our "best" is always better when we work together – the YMCA way!

YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh* – Stimulating Sustainability

In 2009, the Association's Planning Committee spawned a Sustainability Initiative and engaged Sustainable Pittsburgh, a local non-profit consultancy to assess its current sustainability practices to establish a starting point. Based on their report, the Association hired a Sustainability Coordinator (funded by the Heinz Endowments) to focus priorities, galvanize commitments and secure additional funding sources.

The Association's Sustainability Initiatives reduce waste, conserve natural resources and improve indoor environments for members and staff by using low-emitting materials and cleaning products. They reduce facilities' environmental impacts, while producing annual savings of nearly \$57,000, plus additional financial gains from one-time projects. They also promote sustainability through association-wide programs, neighborhood projects and city-wide partnerships which strengthen the Association and its communities. Sustainability lowers operating expense, improves environmental health and the health of the environment – that all embracing triple bottom line – sustainability is an imperative!

The Association is submitting for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver Certification for two capital projects: the downtown PNC YMCA; and, the new Thelma Lovette Family YMCA now in construction. Importantly, The Association has set goals to reduce energy and waste by 10% through lighting retrofits, equipment upgrades and aggressive recycling. Duquesne Light and Waste Management are important partners in achieving specific process and system improvement goals.

New ideas keep coming – composting of biodegradable dinnerware; single-stream recycling of paper, plastic, glass and aluminum; use of Green Seal cleaning products; recycling of electronics, lamps, ballasts and batteries; planting of street trees and an urban garden program. Sustainability is ideas in action.

Everyone's Involved

Encouragement for and interest in sustainability abounds among board members, volunteers, members and staff. The Sustainability Initiative is integrated throughout the Association's youth programs and is widely communicated through member newsletters, online media, educational signage and broad press coverage. Sustainability initiatives bring communities together in practical ways for mutual benefit.

Amy Piccirilli, the Association's Sustainability Coordinator, notes that, "The Y works proactively to educate our members and staff on the importance of sustainability and to integrate it into the Y culture. It is our responsibility as community leaders to demonstrate sustainability for the greater good of our region.

Always doing our best to be responsible stewards matters to everyone, everywhere, now and for generations to come. Even the smallest association, doing its best, can reach the modest home, the small business, the corner store. Not everybody has new buildings, wide-ranging programs or deep pockets; but everyone has a "best we can do, always".

**The YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh, founded in 1854, serves more than 90,000 individuals through after school, community outreach, youth sports, health & fitness, youth and senior programs and camping through its seventeen branches and three resident camps. Amy Piccirilli is the Sustainability Coordinator. Richard Perallo is Vice President of Facilities and Construction and Steve Nathanson is Associate Vice President of Facilities.*

Please visit the YMCA of Greater Pittsburgh's Sustainability webpage:
<http://www.ymcaofpittsburgh.org/about-us/sustainability/>
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