



New West YMCA—Capital Campaign
AQUATIC CENTER

Unique Benefits

YMCA of Dane County

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COMMUNITY NEED:

Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children ages 1 to 4 in the United States.

According to the CDC, Black children ages 10–14 drown at rates 7.6 times higher than white children.

The USA Swimming Foundation reports that 79% of children in families earning less than \$50,000 have little or no swimming ability.

Formal swim lessons reduce drowning risk by 88% for children aged 1–4 (NIH).

Our YMCA directly addresses this public health crisis by expanding swim access for children from low-income, underserved, and racially diverse communities who are at highest risk.

HOW THE NEW WEST YMCA MEETS THE NEED: YMCA Aquatics Center

A YMCA Aquatic Center will serve our communities by promoting overall health and well-being through fitness activities, by providing essential water safety education, by offering accessible and inclusive programs for all ages and abilities, and by fostering a strong sense of community connection through shared aquatic experiences. The new Aquatic Center will focus on Health and Wellness, Safety Education, Accessibility and Inclusivity, and Community Building.



WE PLAN TO OFFER:

The New West YMCA will offer two pools; an 8-lane Lap Pool with a whirlpool on deck, along with a warm-water family pool with a propulsion channel. Both pools will be accessible and inclusive spaces for exercise, recreation, and therapy for people of all ages and abilities, addressing gaps in local services, health concerns, and a lack of year-round aquatic access in many areas.

1. Lap Pool

Unique benefits of a YMCA community lap pool include low-impact, full-body fitness that builds endurance and strength while being gentle on joints, a safe and accessible environment with lifeguards and year-round access, a strong community focus through lane sharing and group swimming opportunities, and access to structured programs like swim lessons and water aerobics.

Physical Health Benefits

Low-Impact Workout: Swimming is a gentle activity that provides a full-body workout, toning muscles, and increasing strength and endurance without putting stress on joints.

Cardiovascular Health: Regular laps improve circulation, lower blood pressure, and increase lung capacity, contributing to better heart health and a reduced risk of related diseases.

Increased Flexibility & Mobility: The water resistance and wide range of motion in swimming enhance flexibility and mobility, particularly for joints and muscles.

Mood Booster: The rhythmic nature of swimming and the fun pastime aspect can improve mindset, reduce stress, and boost mood.

Community & Accessibility

Safe & Accessible Environment: The pool is heated, staffed with lifeguards, and provides accessible features like a pool lift, ensuring a safe and welcoming space for everyone.

Community Connection: The YMCA's lap pool fosters a sense of community through encouraged lane sharing and circle swimming, providing opportunities for social interaction and shared fitness goals.

All Ages & Fitness Levels: The low-impact nature of swimming makes it ideal for everyone from seniors and young adults to children, catering to a wide range of ages and activity levels.

Programmatic & Structural Benefits

Structured Programs: The YMCA offers structured programs such as swim lessons, water aerobics, and swim conditioning for guided instruction and skill development.

Equipment Access: Members can enhance their workouts with available pool equipment like kickboards, water weights, and noodles.

Year-Round Fitness: Indoor lap pools provide a consistent and accessible venue for maintaining fitness routines regardless of the season

2. Warm-Water Family Pool

The warm-water pool provides a therapeutic environment that eases joint pain and improves flexibility. It also offers accessible and inclusive aquatic programs for all ages and abilities, a safe space for swim lessons and water safety education, and a welcoming community setting where families can connect through gentle exercise and open swim times. The warm water is especially beneficial for older adults, for rehabilitation, and for those who are new to water activities and building confidence.

Therapeutic & Health Benefits

Relieves Pain and Stress on Joints: Warm water decreases stress on joints, helping to relieve pain for people with arthritis or other chronic conditions.

Improves Flexibility and Range of Motion: The buoyancy of the warm water promotes relaxation, improves flexibility, and helps increase the range of motion.

Reduces Swelling: Warm water can help to reduce swelling and inflammation in joints.

Accessibility & Inclusivity

Safe and Gentle Environment: The warm water provides a safe, less intimidating environment, which is particularly beneficial for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and young children.

Low-Impact Exercise: Warm-water pools support low-impact water exercise classes, making them ideal for full-body workouts that build strength, flexibility, and stamina without stressing the body.

Accommodates All Ages and Skill Levels: These pools serve as excellent venues for swim lessons for all ages, water aerobics, and family open swim times.

Community & Safety

Community Building: The warm-water pool acts as a central gathering point, creating a sense of community and support for members.

Drowning Prevention: The safe, supervised environment is crucial for teaching vital water safety skills and swimming lessons, contributing to a healthier community.

Promotes Confidence: The safe and effective therapeutic environment helps build confidence in individuals to continue exercising and exploring new aquatic activities.



3. Warm-Water Propulsion Channel

A YMCA warm-water propulsion channel offers unique benefits by combining therapeutic warm water, water buoyancy, and an adjustable current for a versatile, low-impact exercise environment. It is especially beneficial for multigenerational families and those with specific health needs, fostering a sense of community while improving physical and mental well-being.

Multigenerational access and bonding

Safe for all ages: The warm water is non-intimidating and comfortable for young children and older adults, making it an ideal space for families to exercise and play together safely.

Accommodates different abilities: Family members with varying fitness levels can use the channel simultaneously. Some can walk or jog against the resistance current, while others can simply enjoy the massaging effect of the water jets.

Fosters family engagement: Provides a fun, non-competitive setting for families to connect and engage in healthy activity. This helps combat feelings of loneliness and isolation that can sometimes occur in traditional gym environments.

Enhanced therapeutic and physical benefits

Low-impact exercise: Water buoyancy reduces the body's weight by up to 90%, which takes stress off joints and muscles. This makes it a great option for people with arthritis, fibromyalgia, and other chronic pain conditions.

Increased resistance: The "propulsion" from the water jets creates an adjustable current that provides a natural resistance for a full-body workout. Exercising against this current helps build muscle strength and improve cardiovascular health more efficiently than on land.

Improved mobility and balance: The gentle resistance of the water challenges core stability and balance. This allows individuals recovering from injuries or those with balance deficits to improve their skills in a safe, controlled, and low-risk environment.

Pain management and circulation: The heat from the warm water helps increase blood flow to muscles, easing pain, promoting relaxation, and supporting faster recovery from injury or surgery. The natural pressure of the warm water helps improve circulation and reduce swelling, creating a therapeutic environment that supports healing and overall well-being.

Inclusive and adaptive features

Rehabilitation support: The channel can be used for physical therapy, allowing people recovering from injuries or surgeries to begin movement sooner and more safely than on land. The warm water relaxes muscles and allows for a greater range of motion.

Comfort for all levels: It provides a safe and encouraging environment for those who are not confident swimmers. Participants can stand, walk, or use flotation devices, reducing fear of deep water while enjoying the benefits of aquatic exercise.

The YMCA of Dane County is the region’s largest provider of youth aquatics instruction. In 2024, we delivered over 3,300 instructional lessons. Building a culture of safety around water: We don’t just offer swim lessons, we build confidence and safety in and around the water. Children learn essential skills like floating, and treading water comfortably, all while discovering that swimming can be fun and empowering. In 2024, our Safety Around Water program served 330 children at no cost, referred by organizations like Black Girl Magic, Reach Dane, Goodman Community Center, Aldo Leopold Elementary, Tri 4 Schools, and others.

Our commitment is simple: every child deserves access to the lifesaving skill of swimming regardless of where they live or what their family earns.



The Power of SAFETY AROUND WATER

I would like to sincerely thank the YMCA for giving my children the opportunity to participate in Safety Around Water this summer. They learned how to swim, overcame their fear of the water, learned new techniques and built self-confidence. I am especially grateful to each of the instructors who dedicated their time to teaching. All the teachers were kind and respectful with my children, and I am truly thankful for that. Many thanks to all of you.

— C. Salas (Mother of Participants)



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