New West YMCA—Capital Campaign

YOUTH SPORTS

Confidence, Character, and Belonging

Unique Benefits



YMCA of Dane County

Mark Westover,
President & CEO

2026

COMMUNITY NEED:
Building Mentally, Physically, and Socially Strong Kids

Youth sports play an essential role in helping children and teens grow into confident, connected, and resilient adults. Across Dane County and throughout the nation, too many young people lack safe, inclusive spaces to be active, to belong, and to develop character.

The YMCA of Dane County provides youth sports that nurture confidence, character, and belonging. Our programs bring children together to move, learn, and grow through play and teamwork. We know that when young people participate in sports, they gain far more than physical fitness. They build friendships, develop resilience, and experience a powerful sense of belonging that helps them grow mentally, physically, and socially strong.

Unfortunately, many families face barriers such as limited space, access, or affordability. The YMCA is uniquely positioned to meet these needs by expanding opportunities in a values-driven, inclusive environment where every child is welcome.

HOW THE NEW WEST YMCA MEETS THE NEED:

Values-Driven Coaching and Culture

Every coach and volunteer is trained to foster the YMCA's five core values:

> Caring: supporting teammates and celebrating effort
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> Honesty: practicing fair play and integrity
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> Respect: honoring teammates, coaches, and opponents
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> Responsibility: showing commitment to the team and accountability for one's actions
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> Fun: finding joy in participation and teamwork

These values are woven into every practice, game, and moment of recognition, ensuring that sports remain a safe, uplifting experience for every participant.

A Focus on Safety and Belonging

Youth sports at the YMCA are about more than winning. They are about building confidence and community. Our trained coaches create environments that encourage inclusion, kindness, and respect. By emphasizing teamwork and empathy, we help prevent bullying and ensure every child feels supported and valued.

Mentally, Physically, and Socially Strong

Through YMCA sports, children become physically strong as they develop endurance, coordination, and lifelong habits of activity. They grow mentally strong as they gain confidence and perseverance. They become socially strong as they experience empathy, leadership, and connection through teamwork and shared goals.

Family and Community Connection

Families are invited to attend games, volunteer, and cheer, turning the Y's fields and courts into gathering places that bring people together. Local schools, social service agencies, and neighborhood partners collaborate with the Y to connect underserved youth to team opportunities and ensure that every child has the chance to play.

Youth Sports at the Heart of Community Building

The YMCA of Dane County provides youth sports that nurture the development of mind, body, and spirit. Our programs emphasize belonging, skill development, teamwork, and fun, building habits and friendships that last a lifetime.

Comprehensive Sports Opportunities

Basketball, soccer, volleyball, flag football, pickleball, and adaptive sports programs run year-round, both indoors and outdoors. Every child has a place to play, regardless of income or ability, through YMCA financial assistance and community partnerships.

Expanded Space and Greater Program Diversity

The increased space of the new facility eliminates competition for gym and field time that currently limits offerings. This allows multiple programs to run simultaneously, increasing accessibility and providing a greater variety of activities that appeal to a broader range of interests. From developmental leagues for beginners to skill-building clinics for older youth, expanded capacity means more kids can participate, more often, in programs that inspire them.

THE POWER OF YOUTH SPORTS:

A Foundation for Character, Confidence, and Connection

Youth sports strengthen more than muscles, they strengthen character. Children learn how to work together, how to win and lose with grace, and how to lift each other up. They discover the joy of belonging to something larger than themselves. When young people feel connected to their team, they carry that confidence into every part of their lives, in school, at home, and in the community.

At the YMCA of Dane County, we believe that when children play together, they learn together, and when they learn together, they build community. Our youth sports programs help young people grow stronger in body, mind, and spirit while learning what it means to be part of something bigger than themselves.

UNIQUE BENEFITS:

Youth Sports Connected to a YMCA

Unlike independent leagues or clubs, youth sports at the YMCA are part of a holistic environment where wellness, learning, and family support come together.

Expanded Space and Opportunity

The new facility's additional courts, turf, and multipurpose areas eliminate scheduling bottlenecks, providing more opportunities for youth to play, practice, and discover new interests.

Inclusive Access

Financial assistance ensures every child can participate, regardless of income.

Year-Round Engagement

Indoor and outdoor spaces allow consistent participation in every season.

Whole-Child Approach

Programs are integrated with the Y's wellness, education, and family services.

Community Impact

By engaging thousands of youth and families, YMCA sports strengthen Dane County's social fabric and advance our mission to build strong communities.

Titus's Story: Inclusion Through Sports

He is medically complex and faces challenges that make certain activities more difficult for him than for his peers. However, that has never stopped him from trying.

Until this past Saturday, he had never made a basket during a game. But then, something truly special happened. His teammates and coaches encouraged him to take the shot, and when he did, he made it. The entire crowd erupted in cheers. His face lit up with pride, and in that moment, he experienced pure joy. Without the YMCA, so many kids wouldn't have the chance to chase their dreams and feel this kind of support. Thank you for creating an environment where kids like T can feel included, celebrated, and encouraged.

–Nicole, YMCA Parent

THE TIME IS NOW

The new West YMCA ensures that every child, regardless of background, has the opportunity to move, play, belong, and grow. Through youth sports, we are building the next generation of leaders, mentally, physically, and socially strong, grounded in values that last a lifetime.



SCAN TO SEE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CAMPAIGN