

Creating Community Partnerships to Support and Strengthen the Student Experience

New Jersey Higher Education
Mental Health Summit
Seton Hall University

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

YWCA IS ON A MISSION





WELCOME

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Helen Archontou, MSW, LSW
Chief Executive Officer
YWCA Northern New Jersey



Learning Objectives

Accessing expert training for campus communities

Creating engagement opportunities for student volunteers



YWCA NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

YWCA Northern New Jersey is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

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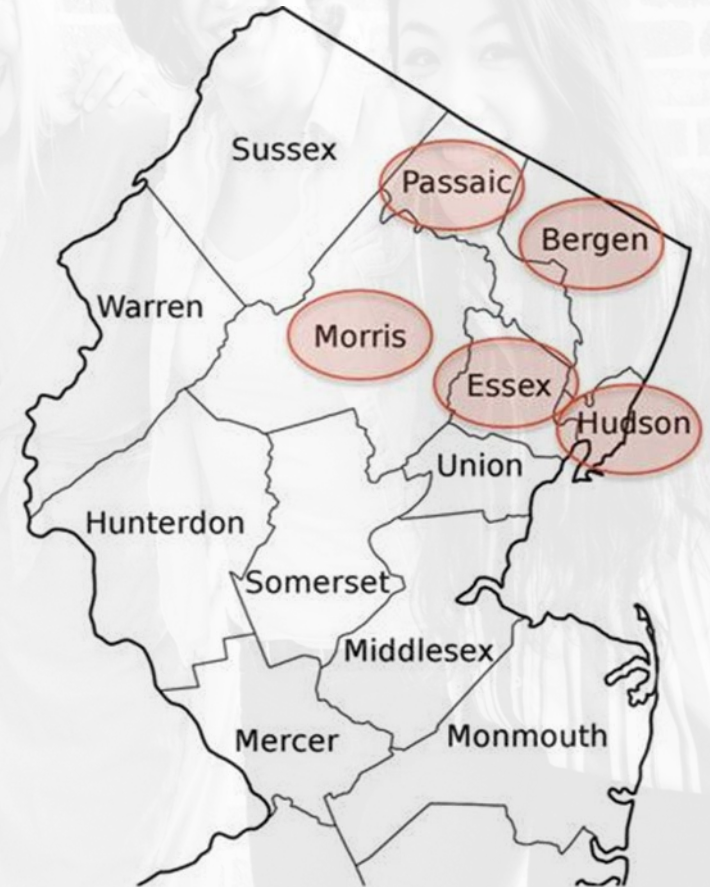
ABOUT

YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world. Across the globe, the YW has more than 25 million members in 122 countries, including 2.6 million members and participants in 200+ associations in the United States.

YWCA Northern New Jersey (*formerly YWCA Bergen County*) has been serving the community for over 100 years since 1920.

In 2019:

- Moved our headquarters, after 72 years, from Ridgewood to Hackensack
- Changed our name from YWCA Bergen County to YWCA Northern New Jersey to reflect our expansion into the counties of Essex, Hudson, Morris and Passaic, while deepening our mission in Bergen County, where we will always be firmly rooted.



YWCA Northern New Jersey **Service Area**

ORGANIZATIONAL PILLARS

Trauma Informed Care

Offering clinical care focused on the unique needs of survivors of sexual, racial, and institutional trauma, helping them feel recognized, empowered, and supported.

Equity

Promoting fairness and justice for all through empowerment, economic sufficiency, leadership development as well as creating allies to remove systemic barriers that reinforce racism.

Safety & Support

Providing affordable and enriching community childcare that's focused on their mental, physical, and cognitive growth and wellness initiatives for senior populations.

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ADVOCACY

Shifting culture through educational campaigns,
Community organizing,
and mission-linked policy advocacy.

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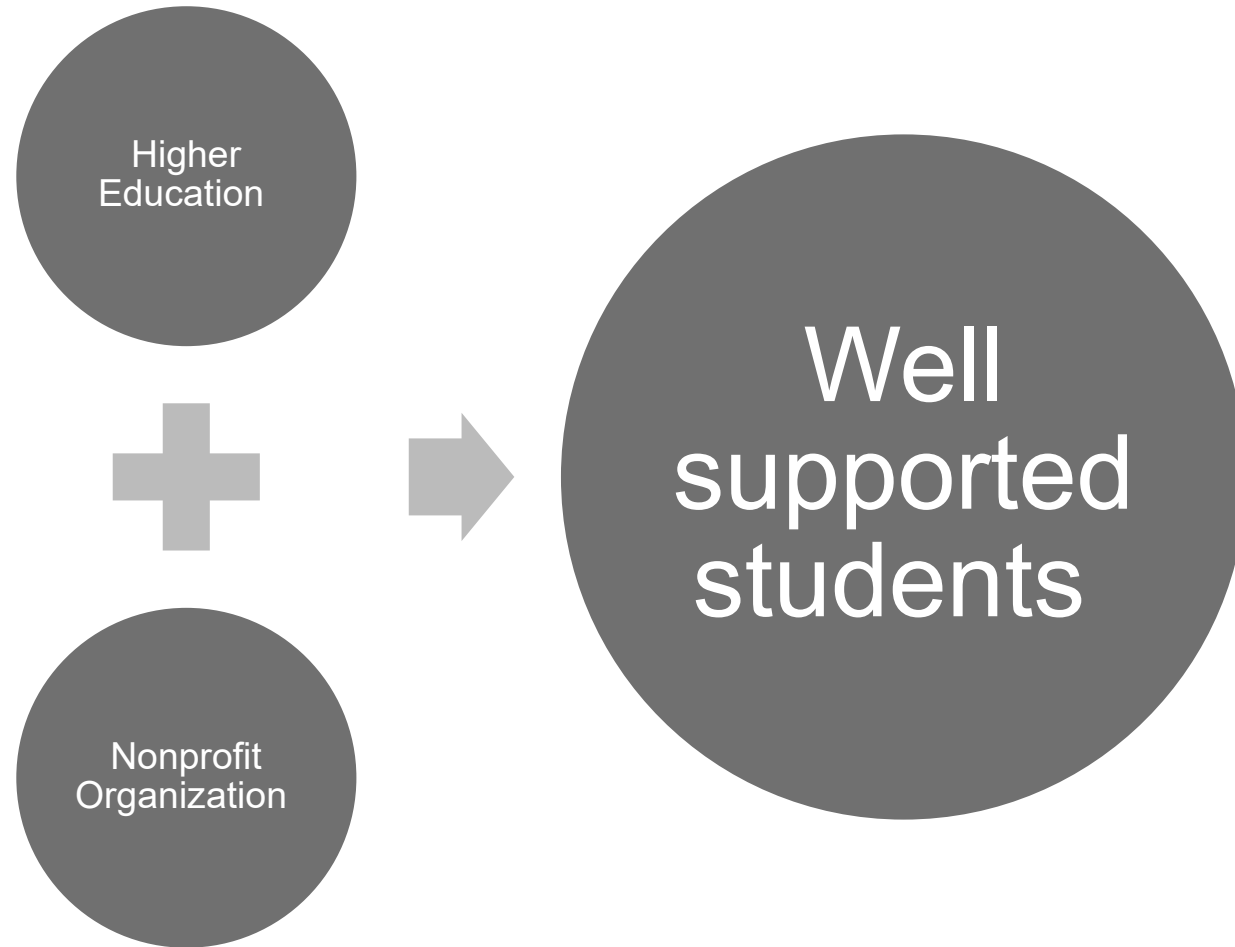
WHAT WE KNOW

Mental health is a critical component of overall well-being

College years are a period of significant transition, exploration, and stress, making mental health a paramount concern

Academic, social, and personal challenges only have increased since the pandemic

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION



NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS



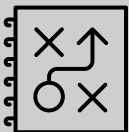
Mission linked expertise



Empowerment model



Flexible and smaller system



Innovative strategies and solutions to complex issues

BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



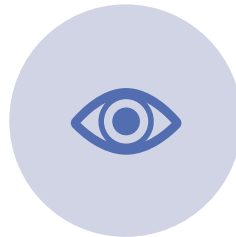
Access to specialized resources



Develop comprehensive, long-term support system for students



Model the power of partnership for students



Gain objective, expert feedback of campus processes

BENEFIT FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING



Widens circle of support



Develops coping mechanisms for stressors



Increases resilience



Reduces Stigma



Highlights HE commitment

DEVELOPING STUDENT LEADERS



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DEVELOPING STUDENT LEADERS

Link leadership development seminars to external organizations

- Launch joint projects
- Focus on problem-solving and skill development
- Embed opportunity to grow responsibility and gain confidence in decision-making

Partner student organizations with community NFP that mirror their mission

- Enhances learning opportunity
- Links campus work to community
- Creates model and direction for student org

Engage community leaders to discuss equity issues with students

- Instill civic responsibility and social action
- Gain insight on systems and navigating them
- Develop student voices

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Effective community-based organizations focus on building relationships among youth, adults, and the broader community. They are sensitive in honoring the diversity of race, language and culture within the broader community.

Opportunities are needed to engage students internally in dialogues about improving institutions and externally in activities within their communities.

When students feel like they are making an impact on their campus and their community, it positively impacts their retention, adjustment, and long-term attachment to their institutions.

Building connections between school and community organizations contributes to more fulfilled college graduates

Students who find ways of connecting their curricular and extracurricular activities are the most satisfied with their college experience

Light, R.J. Making the Most of College (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001).

PARTNERSHIPS

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TYPE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Transactional Partnerships	Transformational Partnerships
Exchanging information	Enhancing capacity
Sporadic interaction	Frequent interaction
Minimal project scope	Broad project scope
Low involvement, few resources	High involvement, significant resources
One-time event	Ongoing effort
Short-term project	Long-term

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Counseling and
therapy services



Workshops and
educational programs



Crisis intervention
and helplines



Faculty and Staff
Training



Peer-led Awareness
Initiatives



Resource Fairs and
Information Booths

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Student Leader
Workshops



Social Media &
Multimedia Content



Interactive
Workshops and
Events



Student
Organization
Collaborations



Awareness Weeks
and Months



Guest Speakers
and Experts

A partnership model: YWCA Northern New Jersey

Montclair State University
Felician University
Ramapo University
Bergen Community College

Farleigh Dickinson University
New Jersey City University
Caldwell University

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CURRENT PROGRAMS

Trauma Informed Care

healingSPACE - Bergen County's state designated sexual violence resource center provides support for survivors of sexual violence and their loved ones with specialized support for male survivors and the transgender community; 24/7 crisis intervention hotline, legal and medical accompaniments, counselling services and prevention education programs and events.

Reentry Support Services - Our reentry support services for incarcerated women reentering the Northern NJ area. Services include direct case management support, and clinical care to assist them with their transition into the community.

Center for Racial Healing - The first of its kind in NJ, the *Center* will address the impact of racial trauma on youth, their families, and our communities by providing clinical care services, partnerships with physicians, clinicians, and NJ universities, creating a pipeline of professions with an expertise in racial trauma. It will also offer education and awareness opportunities through focused training to better support clients who have been impacted by racial trauma.

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CURRENT PROGRAMS

Equity

Women's Empowerment

- Women's Leadership Conference
- Your Story
- Women's Empowerment Network
- Tribute to Women of INfluence
- Motherhood Uncensored
- Women of the Workforce (WOW)
- YWTECH Lab
- YW WE360° Business Essential
- Next Chapter

Girl's Empowerment

- YW RISE
- SAS – Serious About STEM
- EmpowerU(niversity)
- Gen on the GO!

Racial Justice

- Undoing Racism
- Raising Race Conscious Children
- 21-Day Racial Equity and Social Justice Challenge
- R.A.C.E. Training
- Share the Mic Now
- Racial Justice Awards
- Until Justice Just Is *Advancing Justice: Ensuring Equity for All*
- Junior Jump Start in Partnership with Parent Matterz
- Courageous Conversations

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CURRENT PROGRAMS

Safety & Support

Youth Services

- **Before and After Care** - Offering safe and affordable childcare that facilitates a child's cognitive, social, physical and emotional growth AND meet the needs of the entire family. We serve the Cresskill, Dumont, Harrington Park, and Oradell School districts.
- **Summer Camp** - ACA-Certified - High-quality traditional summer day camp experience at an intentionally affordable price with locations in Mahwah, Dumont, and Weehawken.

Senior Services

- **Caregiver Support Group** - An online support group designed for families, partners, and other caregivers who want a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges, and rewards of caring for adults as they age.
- **Fitness Classes** - In person and virtual onsite fitness classes available at designated senior centers throughout Bergen County. following senior centers
- **Friendship Friday** - Monthly hybrid seminars that offer engaging and innovative topics for active older adults.

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CURRENT PROGRAMS

Advocacy

Some current advocacy campaigns include:

- **Menstrual Equity Initiative** - Events and programs that build awareness and create a safer, healthier, and more equitable future for women and girls in New Jersey.
- **Unite Against Hate** - A series of conversations addressing the surge of hate crimes in New Jersey. Learn about the resources, support, and the use of awareness for action, response, and prevention..
- **Creating Safe Workplaces in NJ** - An awareness campaign that includes an educational training video for political campaign staff that provides resources to keep anyone working in NJ politics safe and free from sexual harassment and intimidation
- **Employment Law Project** - A new initiative to support and educate women, especially nonwhite women about workplace protection that is available to them and their workplace rights, along with how to access them.

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College Campus Initiatives

Ramapo College of NJ healingSPACE Drop-In Center



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College Campus Initiatives

Caldwell University Unite Against Hate Town Hall



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College Campus Initiatives

Ramapo College of NJ Trans Remembrance Day



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College Campus Initiatives

Montclair State University A Path Forward Event



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College Campus Initiatives

New Jersey City University Menstrual Equity Drive



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College Campus Initiatives

Ramapo College of NJ Menstrual Equity Drive



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College Campus Initiatives

Montclair State University Voter Registration Drive



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PLANNING FOR STRONG PARTNERSHIPS



MOUs



Cross training & team building



Open communication



Education on campus culture



Feedback and Debrief

COST OF COLLABORATION: SOME CONSIDERATIONS

Not free but cost effective

Shared financial costs

Collaborative grant opportunities

Greater access to funding sources

Partnerships are attractive to funders and donors

Unexpected Outcomes

Strengthens student experience

Creates positive press

Engages donors

Enhances recruitment

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Key for success:

- **Define outcomes**
- **Increase data fluency & tracking**
- **Create strong linkages**
- **Interpersonal relationships are a double-edged sword**
- **Regular communication**
- **Diversify PoC**

Kepler, Samantha, and Karen Smilowitz. 2023. "The Costs of Nonprofit-Provided Resources and Services: Evidence from School Beneficiaries." Working Paper.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS

Success rooted in:


- **History of NFPs institutional affiliations**
- **Both partners sharing resources & time**
- **Flexibility and open to negotiating costs and approaches**

Kepler, Samantha, and Karen Smilowitz. 2023. "The Costs of Nonprofit-Provided Resources and Services: Evidence from School Beneficiaries." Working Paper.



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Learn more about our mission
and work by visiting us at

www.ywcannj.org

Follow us on social media:

[@ywcannj](https://www.instagram.com/ywcannj)

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