

ywca princeton • 59 paul robeson place • princeton, nj 08540 • (609) 497-2100 • www.ywcaprinceton.org

ywca princeton historical timeline

Since our humble beginnings, the YWCA Princeton has served local women and their families for nine decades offering programs that enrich, educate, and empower, as well as opportunities to volunteer and lead. Throughout our history, we have demonstrated active concern for innumerable social issues including civil rights, women’s rights, child labor laws, economic empowerment, women’s health, and more. Our mission is to eliminate racism and empower women. For we cannot effectively empower ALL women, without first eliminating racism.

In 1922, we received our charter. Today, we are one of 300 YWCAs nationally, and proud to be part of the first women’s organization in the United States (1858). Worldwide, the YWCA is the largest women’s governing body with more than 25 million members in 106 countries.

As you will see below, since our inception, the YWCA Princeton has been meeting the ever-changing needs and interests of the community. We have been and continue to be a place where diversity works as a positive force to address social issues, to respond to crisis, and to foster change where needed. For 90 years women have come to us in times of crisis, for childcare, for counseling, for education, for wellness. They come for a variety of reasons. And they leave with a renewed spirit, new skills, and stronger lives. As in the past, we remain dedicated to the growth and development of women and the enrichment of the community.

Date	YWCA Princeton Milestones
1917	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Princeton Women's League for Patriotic Service organizes the Girls' Patriotic League (later becoming the Girl Reserves) under the supervision of Miss Philena Fine with space rented a single room in the Bickford Building at 148 Nassau Street. This forerunner of the YWCA Princeton "keeps idle girls so busily employed that they would not have time to even look at the boys of the military camp on the Princeton University campus.
1918	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Girls' Patriotic League becomes the Mercer County Young Women's Christian Association, conducting YWCA work throughout the county. One of its activities is operating a Hostess House in the Quadrangle Club on Prospect Street with funds from the War Work Council of the National Board of the YWCA.
1919	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA activities include a lounge for visitors and shoppers, a meeting place and recreational program for both white and black women and girls, a room registry service, and an employment center.
1920s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The YWCA offers English language and American culture classes for the foreign born, a Cosmopolitan Club for girls from different lands, health education, crafts, and public affairs discussion groups.
1921	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Princeton withdraws from county YWCA and forms its own Association.
1922	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA National Board in grants the YWCA Princeton its charter membership.
1925	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The YWCA's Committee on Colored Work leads to establishment of the Witherspoon Branch of YWCA Princeton at 184 Witherspoon St. for women and girls of color.
1927	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Witherspoon Branch receives its own full time professional leader with help from the National

Date	YWCA Princeton Milestones
	YWCA.
1930	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Princeton Leisure Time School established by YWCA; now known as Princeton Adult School.
1931	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA Princeton moves to more spacious quarters at 148 Nassau Street. If the
1935	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Margaretta Link is hired as first Executive Director, and serves for 13 years.
1938	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students at 15th National Convention urge extensive study of the impact of racial segregation on Association and community life.
1940s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Women's Lounge is opened where wives of servicemen stationed locally could meet their husbands, find housing, and enjoy other professional services including job placement. It collected clothing and supplies shipping packages through the YWCA World Emergency Fund overseas to areas devastated by the war. The YWCA became a community center sharing its space with 20 other civic organizations without space of their own such as the Girls Scouts, League of Women Voters, the Service League, and the 4-H Club.
1946	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA National Convention adopts a "Interracial Charter" and 35 recommendations on interracial policies and practices with a clear determination of full integration as a conscious goal.
1948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The YWCA Witherspoon Branch is incorporated into the YWCA Princeton to "serve all of the women and girls of the community."
1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sadie Poulson Dickerson is the first woman of color elected president of the integrated Princeton YWCA.
1958	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The YWCA moves to a new location on Avalon Place (now known as Paul Robeson Place) which is jointly owned with the YMCA.
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pearl Bates Scholarship Fund is established, to enable economically disadvantaged community members to participate in YW programs.
1967	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Public Affairs Committee of YWCA Princeton undertakes a program to end discrimination in housing in Princeton. Mrs. Robert W. Claytor is the first woman of color to be elected National President of the YWCA.
1967-72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA Committee on Abortion Reform helps bring test case before the courts in New Jersey, which eventually rules New Jersey's abortion law unconstitutional.
1968	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA Princeton provides major support to the Princeton Community Job Fete, which coordinates employment opportunities and locates youth who need them.
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint YWCA/YMCA \$1.6 million campaign to add gym, handball courts, exercise rooms, more locker facilities, new program rooms, larger parking area, and better access from "Avalon Place."
1970-73	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National YWCA's One Imperative is established: "elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary." YWCA Princeton responds with a Committee for Racial Justice, which attempts to bring human relations programs into schools, and stands in favor of low- and middle-income housing.
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The YWCA helps found the Professional Roster, as a placement service for qualified women seeking jobs.
1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot After-School Program for children of working parents is inaugurated. ENCORE, a rehabilitation program for women who have undergone mastectomies, originates at the YWCA Princeton and is officially adopted as a National YWCA program (in 1977). Interim Homes program is established, for teens needing temporary alternative living arrangements when in conflict at home.

Date	YWCA Princeton Milestones
1973	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The International Festival changes its name to "Craftwomen's Marketplace," and continues to be held at "Avalon Place" (later renamed "Paul Robeson Place").
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA's Musical Interludes program generates both Princeton Pro Musica in 1979 and the Little Orchestra of Princeton, now known as the Chamber Symphony of Princeton, in 1980.
1984	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA Princeton holds its first annual "Tribute to Women and Industry" (TWIN), a national YWCA program, recognizing women who have made significant contributions to their professions and community in executive, entrepreneurial, and professional roles.
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bramwell House is purchased as an annex for expanding classes and programs. ENCORE program is renamed and becomes known as the "Breast Cancer Resource Center (BCRC)".
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English as a Second Language program expands to better serve new immigrants to the greater Princeton area.
1990	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craftwomen's Marketplace moves to the John Witherspoon Middle School.
1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The J. Seward Johnson, Sr. Charitable Trust endows the Breast Cancer Resource Center with a \$150,000 grant.
1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Race for the Cure, hosted by the YWCA Princeton, is held. "Craftwomen's Marketplace" becomes "Crafters' Marketplace."
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA Princeton Child Care Center at Valley Road School, which prepares non-English speaking children for kindergarten, is established to serve primarily low-income African American and Latino populations who are not being served elsewhere.
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA Princeton launches a \$3 million 75th Anniversary Endowment Campaign to augment its ability to expand mission-based programming (and is completed successfully three years later).
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National YWCA convention votes to maintain its single-sex status as a means to support more effectively the worldwide women's movement. Convention attendees also vote to dissolve the YWCA of the USA and replace it with a regional model.
2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YWCA of the USA reorganizes; it forms National Coordinating Board with regional councils to facilitate communication and focus among local associations. Tribute to Women and Industry (TWIN) program shortens its name to Tribute to Women, and broadens its reach to women in education, entrepreneurial roles, etc.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New annual programs initiated the Main Event, a membership drive and networking opportunity. The annual Women's Choreographers' Showcase is founded, highlighting a dynamic dance cooperative of NJ women choreographers and dancers over the age of 40. A new national branding campaign is launched, "Eliminating Racism. Empowering Women." To increase and enhance understanding of its mission. The St. Nicholas Project is launched, providing holiday presents and food to local families in need.
2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new program is initiated: national Day of Commitment to Eliminate Racism, jointly cosponsored with the YWCA Trenton. It will expand into a national movement with over 250,000 participants by 2011. The Breast Cancer Resource Center holds its first "In the Pink" Fashion Show featuring breast cancer survivors, their physicians, and family members as models and raising funds to support the center. A new seminar, "Surviving and Thriving", is held providing new information on breast cancer issues. The ETS Firecracker 5K Fun Run is launched with proceeds benefiting both the YWCA Princeton and the Princeton Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New annual programs are initiated: Career Development Series for Women, Yoga Inspires for breast

Date	YWCA Princeton Milestones
	<p>cancer patients and survivors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2006, the YWCA Princeton and the YWCA Trenton partner to form the Racial Justice Institute. This collaborative program brought together the two associations and the communities they serve to raise awareness about the existence of racism, prejudice, bias and white privilege; to initiate racial justice dialogues; and to promote trusting environments in which to dismantle barriers throughout Mercer County.
2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Stand Against Racism is founded, gathering together residents from Mercer County and beyond to rally against racism and promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity in their community attracting more than 5,000 participants from 60 organizations. The “Paddle for Pink” Dragon Boat Festival organized by the Machestic Dragons had over 1000 participants this year.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first “Fannie Floyd Racial Justice Award” is awarded to Fannie Flloyd, who contributed significantly towards the goal of racial justice and equality in the Princeton community. The YWCA and YMCA adjust their program structure to simplify choices and eliminate duplication of classes for members and the public.
2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our first “Women’s Equality Day Celebration,” is launched commemorating the 90th anniversary of 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote on August 26. The Valley Road Child Care Center moves from Cherry Valley Road to the YWCA’s main campus at 59 Paul Robeson Place. The General Secretary of World YWCA, Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, is a special guest honoree at the annual Friends Luncheon and becomes a member of the YWCA Princeton. A series of free financial education classes is initiated providing women and girls of all ages the tools for economic empowerment.
2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Nurturing the Nurturer,” a free conference open to the public is held highlighting local resources and critical issues facing caregivers, and enabling caregivers to connect in collaboration with numerous community organizations and caregiving experts. YWCA celebrates Einstein’s local and national civil rights efforts holding its first “No Socks” Sock Hop on Pi Day Weekend (Einstein claimed he could not think when he wore socks). Expanding its multicultural offerings, a “Japanese Culture and Business Etiquette” class is offered for those interested in Asian culture and customers, considering a trip to Japan, hiring Asian employees, or firms conducting business with overseas organizations. New Jersey State Judo Championships host with numerous YWCA children, teens, and adults competing. A special exhibit, “Women Changing Lives,” highlights an extraordinary group of women whose involvement and support of the YWCA Princeton helped change the lives of women in our community. Child Safety Day educates youngsters and parents about safety providing 150 identity kits, fingerprints, and child ID cards to parents. The Women’s Empowerment Series is launched empowering community women and girls to promote, protect, and prosper.