



ILLINOIS STATE ALLIANCE OF YMCAS LEGACY AWARDS

Prior to 2026, these awards recognized outstanding performances by staff and volunteers in Illinois. Recipients have exemplified exceptional levels of work performance and displayed high regard and loyalty to the YMCA's mission and work in their communities.

STORMY WEBSTER AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING AQUATIC DIRECTOR

Stormy Webster began as a volunteer at the B.R. Ryall YMCA in 1952 teaching swimming and lifesaving at rented facilities as the Y did not have its own building. During her 38 years of commitment to the Y as a volunteer and staff member, Stormy was dedicated to providing training and staff development to improve the quality and safety of aquatics programming for youth in Illinois and Indiana. She was a master in working with volunteers. Under her leadership Stormy recruited more than 100 aquatic volunteers that taught more than 1,500 hours per week. Some of her accolades included Volunteer of the Year at the Ryall Y, SCUBA Commissioner for the Midwest Field and the Midwest Field Physical Director of the year in 1978. Stormy retired from the YMCA in 1990 as the Program Executive of the B.R. Ryall YMCA.

The Stormy Webster award recognizes a Y Aquatics Director who displays exceptional leadership, commitment and the attributes of being a cause driven leader in aquatics at a local, neighborhood or alliance level and is employed by a YMCA in the Illinois Alliance.

Stormy Webster Award for Outstanding Aquatics Director Recipients:

2025	Doug Miller	2012	Jen Foley	2000	Anne-Marie Buhrmester	1989	Nancy Reece
2024	Cindy Moss	2011	Julie Potocki	1999	Colleen Dempsey	1988	Pam Wagner
2023	Arthur Steiner	2010	Elaine Buckley	1998	Anita Perrotti	1987	Jeanette Bylwerk
2022	Missy Contri	2009	Valarie Cahill	1997	Cheryl Dollinger	1986	Kathi Cook
2020	Caitlin (Catie) N. Wallis	2007	Joy Thomen	1996	Teresa Hill	1985	Mike Boyer
2019	Deb Mortonson	2006	Lori Siegel	1995	Pat Burns	1984	Jeff Campbell
2018	Lynnae Touchette	2005	Karen Scott	1994	Sandy Krol	1983	Karen Bruchan
2017	Jenny Rogel	2004	Mary Lou Pease	1993	Kristi Umsted	1982	Vicky Blough
2016	Danielle Krohn	2003	Kathryn L. Borgmann	1992	Lynn Mikovich	1981	Jeff Ottaviano
2015	Lesley Webster	2002	Chris Bertana	1991	Jill Steiner	1980	Mike Cook
2014	Sarah Jones	2001	Kathy Dueball	1990	Paddy Harrington	1979	Stormy Webster

MATT OTTAVIANO OUTSTANDING PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Matt Ottaviano served as the Executive Director of the Lawson YMCA in Chicago before becoming Vice President of Operations at the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. Matt exemplified the characteristics of a cause driven leader. He was honest, fair, intelligent, and friendly. His philanthropic spirit and dedication to the movement allowed him to relate to major donors, staff, and Y members.

The Matt Ottaviano award recognizes a program director who displays exceptional leadership, commitment and the attributes of being a cause driven leader in program areas such as resident camp, day camp, child care, humanities, youth services, youth sports, gymnastics, and teen programming. Peer Communities: Overnight (Resident) Camp, Day Camp, Teen, Before and After School, Early Learning

Matt Ottaviano Outstanding Program Director Award Recipients:

2025	Nick Edwards - Program	2018	Julie Kapsch	2006	Debbie Bruce	1994	Scott Clark
	Shannon Sliwinski, Childcare	2017	Lisa McCully	2005	Sue DeTaeye	1993	Erika Barton-Wood
2024	Alex Totura, Program	2016	Derek Schlager	2004	Mary Pedersen	1992	Judy Bucci
	Paige Thompson, Childcare	2015	Lisa Parfitt	2003	G. Dianne Williams	1992	Kim Stout
2023	Megan Edwards, Program	2014	Allison Greenman	2002	Rona Roffey	1991	Terry Feldt
	Guylene Strange-Childcare	2013	Sarita Smith	2001	Jann Martin	1990	D'Ann Lagerblade
		2012	Cory Harrison	2000	Maureen McCarthy	1989	Judy Ellertson
		2011	Melissa Ryan	1999	Kimberly George	1988	David Lee
		2010	Katrina Luetkebuenger	1998	Kathy Holland	1987	Jill Kawulok
2022	Rona Rafferty	2009	Susan Chansey	1997	Claudia Lesser	1986	Nancy Battersby
2019	Rob Busby	2007	Amy Johnson	1996	Scott Peterson	1985	Shirley Spears
		2007	Shannon Payton	1995	Jacki Steffen		

JOSEPH ROKNICH AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING FITNESS–WELLNESS DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Joseph Roknich was Executive Director at the Irving Park YMCA before becoming the Vice President of Operations for YMCA of Chicago and MRC Director. The Joseph Roknich award recognizes a Y staff person who displays exceptional leadership, commitment and the attributes of being a cause driven leader in the area of health, fitness/wellness. Peer Communities: Health and Wellness

Joseph Roknich Award for Outstanding Fitness/Wellness Director Recipients:

2024	Eddie Edwards	2002	Connie Laidlaw	1986	Jim Rowland	1969	Bob Day
2023	Jennifer Buckwalter	2001	Sandi Philippin	1985	Mike Parks	1968	Bob Turner
2022	Emily Hayden	2000	Don Quinlan	1984	Dottie Bonnenfant	1967	Jerry Woolley
2020	Kristen Derengowski	1999	Kim Webb	1983	Frank Klipsch	1966	Helen Coryell
2019	Breanne Anderson	1998	Kimberly Stewart	1982	Doug Kohl	1965	Walt Brantley
2018	Angela Foulke	1997	Tim McCoy	1981	Wray Howard	1964	Chuck Donecko
2017	Ian Stewart	1996	Peg Paligraf	1980	Jean Thigpen	1963	Bruce Bromley
2014	Chelsey Bowermaster	1995	Monica Kaminski	1979	Rich Escutia	1962	J. Larry Meyer
2012	Kim Jass Ramirez	1994	Tony White	1978	Stormy Webster	1961	G. Mike Chianakas
2010	Amy Kanzler	1993	Diana Last	1977	Art Michaely	1960	Gordon Peterson
2009	Gretchen Isaac	1992	Vicki Lettow	1976	Marlow B. Garvin	1959	Art Holland
2007	Scott Earl	1991	Gretchen Kelly	1975	Joni Coe	1958	Earl Wilson
2006	Sue Munz	1990	Robin Cagle	1974	Dave Diehr	1957	Merton Kennedy
2005	Cheryl Green	1989	Liz Heller	1973	Cliff Lothery	1956	Joe Roknich
2004	Eddie Papis	1988	Doug Thornton	1972	Nicki Doehler	1955	Jerry Martins
2003	Pam Gall	1987	Linda Dean	1970	Yvonne Rish	1954	Bill Bartley

TOM STOLL AWARD

Tom Stoll, who passed away May 1, 2003, spent nearly 40 years in a love affair with the Y. Beginning in 1953 as a part-time volunteer at Oak Park Y Camp Douglas, Tom touched the lives of staff, volunteers, and members with the Oak Park, Aurora, Streator, and Naperville Ys. Tom was well known and respected for both the volunteer and staff leadership that he attracted and nurtured in the movement. As CEO of both the Streator and Naperville Ys, he built boards that were able to take good Ys and make them great. Tom recognized the importance of developing staff outside of his Y through active participation in both APD - now YPN - and as an instructor at Waubensee Valley Community College and George Williams College.

In recognition of Tom Stoll's Y legacy, the Tom Stoll Award has been established as an annual recognition presented to a Y professional on the ascending edge of service and who has developed outstanding executive or operational leadership and loyalty. Peer Communities: Operations, Executive Leadership

Tom Stoll Award Recipients:

2025	Patrick Mainieri	2022	Allison Greenman
2024	Kristen Lay	2018	Kathy Fielding

LEADERSHIP LEGACY AWARD

The Leadership Legacy Award recognizes a current Chief Executive Officer that provides extraordinary leadership to a corporate YMCA in Illinois by exemplifying the YMCA's values and mission. This award recognizes cause-driven leaders in their association, community, and the Y movement and among his or her peers across the State.

Leadership Legacy Award Recipients:

2025	Joe Capece and Ben Frazier	Howard Schultz	2013	Andy Thornton	2002	Dennis Mohrman	
		2018	Deborah Allen	2012	Rob Wilkinson	2000	Wray Howard
2024	Chris Weittenhiller	2017	B.J. Wilken	2011	John Lee Usmial	1999	Martha Rolf
2023	Angie Sowle	2016	Sam Brooks	2010	Don Darnell	1998	Don Heller
2020	Mike Wennekamp	2015	Mark Spiegelhoff	2006	Judy Ellertson	1997	Larry Elliott
2019	Gary Bublitz and	2014	Dan Chonowski	2004	Jon Robinson	1996	Dan Osterman

OUTSTANDING MEMBERSHIP-MARKETING DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

The Outstanding Membership/Marketing Director Award recognizes the Membership or Marketing Director who is committed to the member experience, displays leadership, creativity and exceptional customer service. Peer Communities: Membership, Marketing

Outstanding Membership/Marketing Director Award Recipients:

2025	Logan Wilson	2018	Abby Helm	2012	Keri Olson	2005	Marcia Green
2024	Ben Engle	2017	Ashlee Heady	2011	Beth Reusch	2004	Michele Chandler
2023	Alex Geisler	2016	Michelle Polivka	2010	Jean Flider	2003	Jan M. Jann
2022	Lexie Zebe	2015	Margaret Willet	2009	Teresa Hoshauer	2002	Rich Haas
2020	Heather Dunker	2014	Margie Hennig	2007	Wendy Bonilla		
2019	Hannah Robinson	2013	Alicia Whitworth	2006	Elizabeth Davin		

OUTSTANDING FACILITIES, BUILDING, AND/OR PROPERTIES DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

The Outstanding Facilities Director of the Year Award recognizes a full-time Facility Director in the Y movement for outstanding efforts in managing and maintaining a YMCA facility or facilities. Peer Communities: Property Management

Outstanding Facilities, Building and/or Properties Director of the Year Award Recipients:

2025	Kenny Mosely	2018	Joe Newingham	2015	Greg Smith	2012	Dave Wassenhove
2024	John Shea	2017	Tom Verheyen	2014	Gary Weirather	2011	Walter Myers
2022	Manar Nuaimi	2016	Jeremy Nelson	2013	Don Stolz	2010	Ralph Alvarez
2019	Jim Trainor						

OUTSTANDING SUPPORT SERVICES OR ADMIN OF THE YEAR

The Outstanding Admin Award recognizes an administrative or support staff in the YMCA movement who provides exemplary service to his/her YMCA operation or department and is dedicated team member that has demonstrated the core values of the YMCA movement. Peer Communities: Finance, Employee Services

Outstanding Support Services or Admin of the Year Award Recipients:

2024	Kayla Carter	2020	Leslee Schueneman	2017	Tom DuBois	2012	Julie Easton
2023	Argelia Gonzalez	2019	Nicole Propst	2015	Nancy Witt	2011	Sue Jackson
2022	Ellen Corbin	2018	Jane Bowers	2014	Charlie Irick	2010	Amy Robbins

ALLIANCE ROOKIE OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Alliance Rookie Award recognizes a "rookie" (6-24 months of employment) in the YMCA movement for outstanding on the job achievements and for demonstrating the ability to operate and manage successful programs, membership management or fundraising efforts in the YMCA through exceptional leadership.

Alliance Rookie of the Year Award Recipients:

2025	Tim Ready	2016	Samuel Phillips	2010	David Zielinski	2003	JoAnn Webster
2024	Zebulan Zillion	2015	Clayton Lott	2009	Susan Krause	2002	Melanie Brown
2023	Lou Bart	2014	Melissa Bryant	2009	Brad Cripe	2001	B.J. Wilken
2022	Keesiya Robertson	2013	Lesley Feyerherm	2007	Kristi Brewer	2000	Jan Schacht
2020	Rachel Latham	2012	Cody Duffie	2006	Joel Sieplinga	1999	Lori Oaks
2019	Sarah Tunall	2011	Lance Moring	2005	Joe Rodts	1998	Sarah McFarlane
2018	Sarah Weyer	2011	Johana Voss	2005	Jamie Eager	1997	Christopher Seals
2017	Lynn Eck	2010	Cari Christoff	2004	Susie Engle	1996	Colleen Dempsey

PROGRAM EXCELLENCE AWARD

The Program Excellence Award celebrates Y programs that are innovative and making a difference in communities across the state of Illinois.

Program Excellence Award Recipients:

2025

Youth Advocacy Academy - Illinois YMCA Youth and Government

2024

Memory Keeper's Chorus - Decatur Family YMCA
Emerging Leaders - YMCA of Rock River Valley

2023

Cafe Voca - North Suburban YMCA
Y on the Fly - Stephens Family YMCA
Y Winners - Two Rivers YMCA

2022

Illinois YMCA Youth and Government
Saturday Strikers - YMCA of Springfield
JOYNT Program - YMCA of the Rock River Valley

2019

Nourish - Two Rivers YMCA
The Matthew Project - YMCA of Springfield
2 Seconds 2 Long - North Suburban YMCA

2018

Camp Power - Kishwaukee Family YMCA
Special Olympics Swim Team - North Suburban YMCA
Go Blue - Water Safety - C.W. Avery YMCA
Kids Marathon - Sage YMCA

DIG AWARD

The DIG Award recognizes a leader in the movement whose efforts focus on outreach to diverse and under-served communities and driving program innovation so that everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has an opportunity to reach their full potential. This leader is intentional on integrating inclusion strategies across the diversity wheel. Peer Communities: Diversity, Inclusion, & Global Initiatives

DIG Award Recipients:

2020 Daisy Moran

2019 Lynsey Wehrenberg

2018 Agneis Koenitz-Hudac

ALLIANCE COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD (STAFF AND/OR VOLUNTEER) OF THE YEAR

The Community Impact Award recognizes staff or volunteers who have made extraordinary contributions to the Y in their community and/or through the State Alliance. At the heart of every YMCA there are select staff and volunteers who give incredible amounts of time and energy to advance the Y's cause.

Alliance Community Impact Award Staff and/or Volunteer Recipients:

2024	Carmen Ruh	2007	Benno Friedrich	1995	Karma Niemeyer	1983	Evelyn Schum
2023	Kelsey Barnick	2006	Pete Franciskovich	1994	The McCartys	1982	Art Swanson
2022	Dori Fugate	2005	Alice Doyle	1993	Gary King	1981	Carol Argires
2020	Eric Hanson	2004	Mark Woods	1992	Russell Hartigan	1980	Rich Mueller
2019	Mike Broski	2003	Ray Kimbell	1991	Lee Anderson	1979	Ed Warren
2018	Gary Evans	2002	Dick Larson	1990	Jack Greenberg	1978	Kent Arney
2016	Cheryl Settle	2001	John Asan	1989	Bill Brock	1977	Ernie McKinnon
2015	Bill Gavin	2000	Allan Adducci	1988	David Hajek	1976	Jean P. Kaine
2012	Tim Johnson	1999	George Kolovos	1987	Lew Maulter	1975	Charles Matheny
2011	Rick Penn	1998	Mary Winters	1986	Robert Talitsch	1974	Helen Johnson
2010	Angie Scraedle	1997	Marge Kielgznski	1985	Ray Newman	1973	Elmer Geissler
2009	Rita Trent	1996	Roy Olson	1984	Max Zollner		

ALLIANCE IMPACT PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This NEW award recognizes a community or statewide partner who has supported your YMCA or Alliance over the past year by engaging as a meaningful partner in a program, an initiative or advocacy.

Alliance Partner Award Recipients:

- 2024 Illinois Bone & Joint Institute
- 2023 Kiwanis Club of Joliet
- 2022 Plainfield School District, C.W. Avery Family YMCA

YPN PEER COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

The YPN Peer Community Leadership Award recognizes an active prime Chapter 45 YPN member that has displayed outstanding achievements leading their peer community by taking a proactive approach in bringing people together from across the state to share best practices in their area of focus.

YPN Peer Community Leadership Award Recipients:

- 2019 Kaia Dutler
- 2018 Jill Steiner

YPN LEADER OF THE YEAR (FORMERLY AYP OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AWARD)

The YPN Outstanding Leadership Award recognizes an active Prime Chapter 45 YPN member for effective leadership. The outstanding leader is a champion of the YPN mission and focused on professional development, leadership development, networking, and innovation.

YPN Leader of the Year / AYP Outstanding Leadership Award Recipients:

- 2020 Lisa Behounek
- 2019 Jill Doerner
- 2018 Darin Williams
- 2017 Carolyn Hamilton
- 2016 Kaleena Escallier
- 2015 Cory Harrison
- 2014 Katrina Luetkebuenger
- 2013 R.J. Bartels

YPN EMERGING LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD

- 2016 Brooke Hall
- 2015 Debbie Madeley
- 2014 Marian Slahor