March 14, 2020

Dear Valued Members and Families:

With the closing of schools across isd181 and the need to provide the most essential services for the most vulnerable amongst us, we are confronted with a moment of truth. When schools close, children need a safe place to learn, grow and thrive while their parents work and provide services throughout our community. For low income families, the cost of quality care can be the difference of putting food on the table or not. Likewise, hundreds of parents depend upon us for early education and before and after-school care. For these families, the services we offer are essential.

In light of the uncertainty created by the closure of schools and the increased threat of the Coronavirus, we must focus our resources of time, talent and treasure on those amongst who are at the greatest risk – our children. We have, therefore, elected to close all areas and non-essential programs at our Y (except for licensed child care and our ‘emergency’ kids camp) on Wednesday, March 18, and utilize our facilities to care for the youth in the community we serve. This means that we will not have group fitness classes, sport leagues, swimming, open gym, etc.

We will encourage families to keep their children at home; however, it goes without saying that some parents must work and some parents are first responder and “essential” employees who must work to protect us. These families need safe and reliable places for their children. We will engage a strategy that enabled us to serve these children. In the coming weeks, the need for services for children will increase exponentially. We must step up and act consistently with our legacy.

Since our inception as a Railroad YMCA in 1887, we have always been an organization that walked in the direction of a challenge. Today, we are being asked to make a choice; either we close our Y entirely in order to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus or we care for children while taking the calculated risk that we can protect them from exposure to the virus. We cannot stand by and permit children and parents to be impacted by their lack of options.

We ask that you join us in the effort. We ask that you continue to pay your membership fee so that we can use this revenue to “do good” during the time of uncertainty. Naturally, we will put your membership on hold if you request, but we hope that you will feel compelled to join us in service to others, and we invite you to join us. Your membership is meaningful to us and that “meaning” lies in the relationships you have built at the Y. Those relationships are based upon the humanity you share with others. We are asking you to support us in service of “our” children. The Coronavirus has created enormous uncertainty; however, how we manage it is in...
our control. Join us in creating a history that demonstrates how we came together and served those who needed us the most. Let us tell the story of the “meaningful” ways in which we responded. Let that be the story that is told.

As members, we do not want you to think we do not care about you and your health and wellness. In fact, we will be releasing the opportunity for on-demand workouts within the next couple of days. This will enable you and your family to exercise together from home. Needless to say, we will reopen at first chance, and hope that you will find it in your heart to continue to support us.

In your humble service,

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