



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



SHAPING A STRONGER TOMORROW

2024 -2027 Strategic Plan

YMCA OF FLORIDA'S FIRST COAST

HELLO

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Letter from the President and Chairman

At the Y, we believe that to strengthen communities, we must understand the current issues and anticipate the future needs of the children, adults, and families we serve. That’s why strategic planning is a necessary activity.

Our process spans several months and involves a dedicated committee of volunteers and staff at both the association and branch levels. We assess our organization’s internal strengths, weaknesses, and current impact. We listen to community feedback about opportunities and unmet needs. Our emerging ideas are then tested against a strategy screen to ensure we select the most meaningful and mission-driven work.

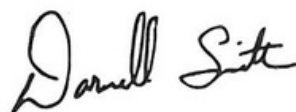
The Y’s new strategic plan, “Shaping a Stronger Tomorrow”, will be a powerful tool to assist in our decision-making as we prioritize ways to grow our impact on the First Coast. Over the next three years, this roadmap will guide us as we:

- serve as a connector and convener to unite people across differences
- implement new initiatives to improve mental health
- help military families manage unique challenges
- strengthen our branch advisory boards
- ensure our employees feel valued and empowered
- boost efficiency and effectiveness through innovative solutions
- secure our financial sustainability while broadening our reach

Our team is dedicated to creating positive, long-lasting change for the First Coast. Although there is much work ahead, we are enthusiastic about pushing forward and making a difference.



Eric K. Mann
President and CEO
YMCA of Florida’s First Coast



Darnell Smith
Chairman
Metropolitan Board of Directors



THE Y'S MISSION

TO PUT CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT BUILD HEALTHY SPIRIT, MIND AND BODY FOR ALL.



Letter from the Planning Chair

The YMCA is *the* leading nonprofit committed to strengthening individuals and communities across the country. Serving the First Coast for more than 115 years, we have never wavered in our commitment to ensure every member – no matter who they are or where they come from – has access to the support they need for achieving health goals, gaining confidence, making connections, and feeling secure at every stage of their life.

At the Y, we know this basic truth: in order to shape a stronger tomorrow for our community and transform the lives of those who call the First Coast home, we must first think, act and communicate with greater intention. After months of research, reflection and engagement with dozens of community members, leaders, partners, employees and volunteers, it is with great excitement and gratitude that I present the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan.

Our three-year roadmap focuses on these priorities:

- A) Providing proactive solutions for our neighbors’ most pressing needs;
 - B) Creating pathways for our volunteers and partners to engage more meaningfully with our mission;
- and,
- C) Tackling organizational challenges while continuing to embrace new growth opportunities.

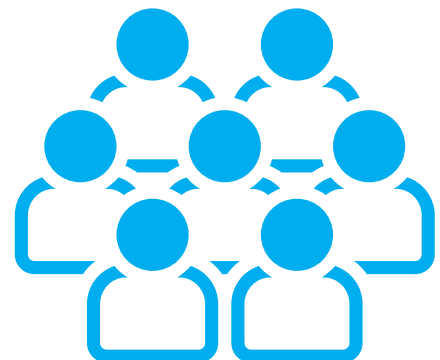
I want to express my deep appreciation to the volunteer members of the Strategic Planning Committee, the executive leadership team including President and CEO Eric Mann, our Senior Consultant George Babish, and most importantly, all of the dedicated employees who contribute their time and expertise to this process and its future, successful implementation.

Our team is eagerly anticipating the journey ahead, and we cannot wait to share how we are fulfilling our purpose.

Warm Regards,



Davis Berg
Chair, Strategic Planning Committee



Metropolitan Board of Directors

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Gary Norcross, Vice Chair
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Keith Tickell
Edward (Ed) W. White, Jr.

Strategic Planning Committee

Chair

Davis Berg

Volunteer Members

Sarah Bermudez
Mike Biagini
Shelly Boynton
Henry Brown
Shantel Davis
Josh Harrison
Gary Norcross
Darnell Smith
Pam Smith

Leadership

Eric Mann
Penny Zuber
Tammy Miller
Michelle Moore
Nekita Nesmith
Charlie Chacos
Ericia Moore
Melissa Yuchasz

Senior Consultant

George Babish

OUR VALUES

CARING—show sincere concern for others

HONESTY—be truthful in what you say and do

RESPECT—treat each other as we all would like to be treated

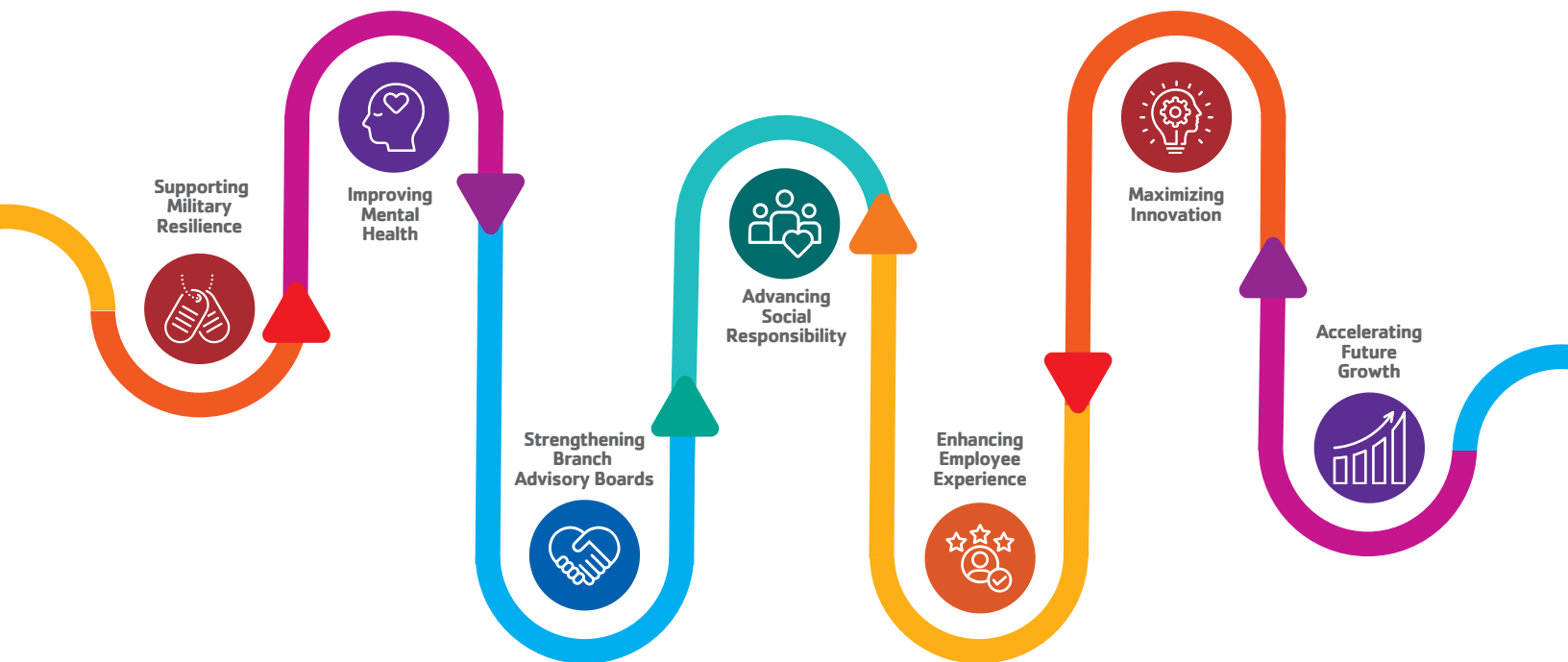
RESPONSIBILITY—be accountable for your promises and actions

OUR PURPOSE

We strengthen community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose and each other to deliver impact in three areas:

- YOUTH DEVELOPMENT—empowering young people to reach their full potential
- HEALTHY LIVING—improving individual and community well-being
- SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY—providing support and inspiring action in our communities

OUR STRATEGIES



ADVIGATOR

To ensure the successful implementation of specific strategies and overcome any potential obstacles that may arise, the First Coast YMCA designates a senior-level staff member as the "Advigator".

1

Advancing Social Responsibility

Leaders: Eleanor Blair, John Lyon, Erica Moore, Quincy Wimberly
Senior Advigator: Michelle Moore

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

At the Y, we're proud of our legacy of welcoming, connecting and supporting people from all backgrounds, generations, and perspectives. We are stronger when our doors are open to all. Now more than ever, the Y must develop intentional strategies to build bridges across our organization and the communities we serve to ensure everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Recent research shows:

- 77% of Americans are not satisfied with their quality of life (Gallup)
- 50% of Americans are lonely (U.S. Surgeon General Advisory)
- 60% of Americans are pessimistic about society's ability to overcome polarization (BridgeUSA)
- \$451 billion spent annually on the cost of racial and ethnic health inequities (National Institutes of Health)

The Y believes it is our social responsibility to nurture our civic health by ensuring inclusivity in our own policies and practices, creating opportunities to unite people across differences, developing a framework to bring resources within everyone's reach, and inspiring others to join us in taking action.

INITIATIVES

TRANSFORM OTHERNESS INTO TOGETHERNESS

- Increase community involvement in Together Against Hate initiative with Jewish Community Alliance
- Lead equity and inclusion learning experiences for boards
- Collaborate with Employee Resource Groups to increase participation in local equity and inclusion activities
- Align with UN Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030 empowering communities and young people to build a just, sustainable, equitable and inclusive world

ADVANCE BRAND POSITIONING AND CHANGE PUBLIC PERCEPTION

- Develop integrated marketing plan to increase public visibility of charitable impact
- Collaborate with corporate partners in delivering positive messaging via mass media

CULTIVATE ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF BELONGING

- Launch Employee Resource Groups
- Implement Workplace Inclusion Training Series
- Develop accountability system to ensure existing and future employee policies meet standards for inclusivity

BUILD BLUEPRINT FOR RESOURCING COMMUNITY NEED

- Collaborate with branch staff and volunteer leaders to fully understand unique community needs
- Develop branch roadmap to resource community need
- Implement annual evaluation process to identify ongoing opportunities for all service areas

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are staying true to our priorities?
- How are our efforts affecting employee satisfaction?
- How are our efforts affecting branch response to community needs?
- How are our effects affecting individuals openness to bridge building?
- How are our communities perceiving our collective impact?



2

Improving Mental Health and Well-being

Leaders: Charlie Chacos, Melinda Lewis, Connie Smith, Shermayne Reynolds
Senior Advigator: Eric Mann

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

While 2023 County Health Rankings show four of the five Northeast Florida counties we serve are healthier than most in the state, mental health is worse than the average for all of them. Individuals in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties report their mental health is not good at least five days out of the month.

The Y has always been an organization that prioritizes healthy living in spirit, mind and body. We provide nurturing spaces where people feel welcome and comfortable reaching out for help. To encourage and increase healthy behaviors, protective factors, and resilience, we're committed to enhancing mental health support at our Ys.

Through specialized education, partnerships and engagement activities, we can reduce the risk and impact of mental illness, provide early intervention, and support the process of healing and recovery.

INITIATIVES

IMPROVE YOUTH & TEEN WELL-BEING

- Establish a Youth and Teen Well-being program that includes self-care education
- Integrate Teen Well-being curriculum in the Y

ENCOURAGE EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

- Overlay Mental Health self-care education and practices to include all employees
- Launch Mental Health First Aid Training for all employees

EMBRACE SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

- Expand connectedness programs to impact all populations in our service area
- Develop an integrated Mental Health community roadmap

EXPAND SPACES FOR WELL-BEING & MINDFULNESS

- Create Well-being and Mindfulness spaces in our Healthy Living offerings
- Implement a Mindfulness Education Series

LEVERAGE AND GROW PARTNERSHIPS

- Leverage current partnerships to provide Community Support Services in our Ys
- Collaborate with medical partners in delivering an evidence-based mental health program for members and the community

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are we staying true to our priorities?
- How are our efforts affecting the mental health of the youth we serve?
- How is the community perceiving our impact on their well-being?
- How are our efforts affecting employee wellbeing?
- How are our efforts affecting the health of the communities we serve?



3

Supporting Military Members and Their Families

Leaders: Eric Hernandez, Dana Troeger, Melissa Yuchasz
Senior Advigator: Eleanor Blair

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Jacksonville is home to multiple military facilities, and with Kings Bay Naval Submarine nearby, the First Coast has the third largest military presence in the country. Nearly 170,000 veterans also call Northeast Florida home.

Military life has unique challenges. According to the Blue Star Families Military Family Lifestyle Survey:

- One in three active-duty family respondents reported their child experienced bullying at school
- Time away from family is a top five issue for active-duty, National Guard, and Reserve family respondents
- Sports & recreation for children and families, health care, and social support are the top three resources needed for military families

As the only Armed Services YMCA affiliate in Florida, and with locations across five counties, our Y is a perfectly positioned and trusted organization to provide military personnel, veterans and their families the additional support they need.

INITIATIVES

ENHANCE MILITARY FAMILY DESTINATION

- Serve 3,000+ in Operation Salute Back to School Bash and other family time events
- Provide 2,000+ weeks of summer camp scholarships
- Serve 500+ children in Operation Little Learners and Operation Hero after school and camp resiliency program

EXPAND EFFORTS FOR FORCE & FAMILY READINESS

- Serve 125 teens, 60 recruits/active duty service members and 50 families in Operation Strong & Ready (OSR) wellness and resiliency program
- Establish small groups to help families connect & find support through deployments and transfers

STRENGTHEN & GROW MILITARY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Increase Funding Partners to 12 organizations per year
- Secure a Veterans Service Officer or other military community leader on all branch boards
- Assist other YMCAs in launching military outreach

IMPROVE VETERAN MENTAL & PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Grow Military Outdoor Adventures and Overnight Retreat outings for veterans
- Train and maintain 50% of First Coast YMCA staff in veteran suicide in partnership with The Fire Watch Council
- Expand Operation Strong & Ready for Veterans to all counties in service area

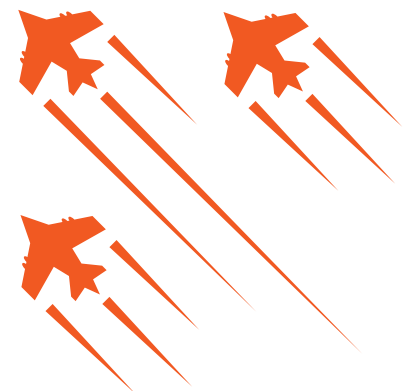
IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR UNDERSERVED FAMILIES IN CAMDEN COUNTY

- Lead 10 food distributions at or near base housing
- Secure space to expand Operation Hero, Operation Little Learners and Operation Strong & Ready

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are we staying true to our priorities?
- How are our efforts affecting military families living on the First Coast?
- How are our efforts affecting the physical and mental well-being of participants in our military programs?
- How are our efforts positively supporting the Camden County community?
- How are our efforts creating lasting support for our veteran community?



4

Strengthening Branch Advisory Boards

Leaders: Tim Burrows, Cindy Grassi, Sarah Schmitt
Senior Advigator: Nekita Nesmith

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

At the Y, we believe in the transformative power of volunteer leadership. It has been at the core of our organization since our 1844 founding when George Williams realized his vision of helping troubled young men thrive. Nearly 180 years later, we continue to recognize the significant role these passionate and committed people play in helping us achieve our goals.

Volunteer leaders make up our branch advisory boards. Their support enables our branch leadership to make informed decisions and stay accountable to their goals. They also serve as influential advocates for the Y, actively sharing our impact and encouraging others to help us make a positive and lasting impact on the communities we serve.

To strengthen our branch advisory boards, we must commit to intentional practices to equip, educate, engage our branch and volunteer leaders and ensure our boards are representative of the communities we serve.

INITIATIVES

ENGAGE NEW/EXISTING ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

- Encourage Advisory Board member attendance/volunteerism at minimum three First Coast YMCA association events and attendance at one other branch Advisory Board meeting
- Drive 100% Advisory Board giving in Annual Campaign

DIVERSIFY ADVISORY BOARD RECRUITMENT

- Re-examine the branch Advisory Board matrices to identify gaps and opportunities
- Re-examine processes and current tools to identify Board Member performance
- Revise and re-launch Advisory Board experience survey twice a year

EQUIP BRANCH LEADERS WITH BOARD DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

- Identify what branch leadership needs to be successful
- Create toolkit of internal capacity resources to track board development success

EDUCATE NEW/EXISTING BOARD MEMBERS ON FIRST COAST YMCA ADVISORY BOARD CULTURE

- Host quarterly association Advisory Board development workshops and new Advisory Board member orientations
- Host annual First Coast YMCA Advisory Board retreat

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are we staying true to our priorities?
- How are our efforts affecting Advisory Board involvement in meetings, workshops and events?
- How are our efforts affecting Advisory Board giving?
- How are our efforts affecting Advisory Board recruitment?
- How are our efforts affecting branch community impact?



5

Enhancing Employee Experience

Leaders: Tina Allen, Donna Pass, Kyle Vinduska
Senior Advigator: Penny Zuber – Simcox

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on staffing and professional development at our Y. In addition to furloughs and layoffs due to modified operations, we reduced our training and professional development operations. Today, as people have returned to daily routines, our Ys are busier than ever. The labor market has rebounded too, and with the intensified competition for talent, we continue to face staffing challenges. Enhancing staff recruitment and engagement while building a future-focused training and professional development system is a top priority.

To attract, engage, develop, inspire, and retain a diverse workforce that is happy to work at the Y and connect to its purpose, this strategy will focus on four key areas of employee engagement: Celebrate, Support, Thrive and Inspire.

INITIATIVES

CELEBRATE

- Develop recognition program that honors employee performance throughout the year
- Host annual recognition celebration event
- Expand employee recognition spotlights across branches and association digital channels
- Develop rewards program that incentivizes key behaviors

SUPPORT

- Create communication plan for awareness and visibility for employee Mental Health resources
- Identify key staff and implement Mental Health First Aid Training & Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Strengthen benefit offerings for part-time staff
- Create scholarship fund

THRIVE

- Revamp & reignite new-hire orientation with focus on mission connection and Y policies/best practices
- Drive successful and intentional career mapping paths with strong focus on learning journeys
- Develop Leadership Mentoring Program
- Reimagine employee training portal

INSPIRE

- Establish a peer-to-peer coaching program.
- Post quarterly cause-driven videos showcasing career paths of a long-term employees
- Infuse cause-driven recruitment messaging in job postings

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are staying true to our priorities?
- How are our efforts affecting employee recruitment?
- How are our efforts affecting employee retention?
- How are our efforts affecting employee involvement?
- How are our efforts affecting branch and community impact?



6

Maximizing Innovation

Leaders: Kathy Cannon, Seth Gonzalez, Rachel Mills
Senior Advigator: Tammy Miller

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Innovation is a critical component for our organization’s long-term success. Studies show that innovative organizations tend to have higher revenue growth rates, greater market share, & increased profitability compared to their less innovative counterparts. McKinsey & Company found that companies in the top quartile of innovation performance had 2.7 times the growth in revenue, compared to those in the bottom quartile. In that same study, the Y was ranked the least innovative of all the brands surveyed.

By fostering a culture of innovation, employees will be empowered to think creatively and share new ideas for programs, services, improving processes, and creating superior experiences. Objectives for this strategy include enhancing impact and service, improving efficiency and effectiveness, staying ahead of emerging trends and adapting to changing market conditions.

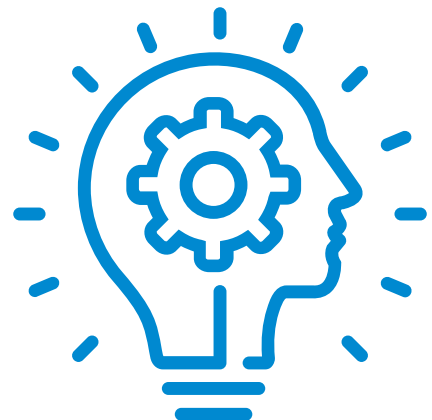
INITIATIVES

- **INCORPORATE TECHNOLOGY TO SECURE SEAMLESS TRANSACTIONS & ADHERE TO MODERN STANDARDS TO WOW OUR CUSTOMERS**
- **ESTABLISH A BASIS FOR INNOVATIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE Y AND OTHER LIKEMINDED ORGANIZATIONS TO FORM IMPACTFUL NEW PROGRAMS FOR OUR COMMUNITY**
- **BUILD AND SUSTAIN AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENSURES AN ORGANIC CULTURE OF INNOVATION WITHIN OUR ORGANIZATION**
- **TRANSFORM THE Y EXPERIENCE TO PROMOTE GROWTH THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION**

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are staying true to our priorities?
- How are our efforts enhancing impact and service?
- How are our efforts improving efficiency and effectiveness?
- How are we adapting to changing market conditions?



7

Accelerating Future Growth

Leader: Penny Zuber-Simcox

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The First Coast YMCA has a long and proud history of serving families and individuals in Northeast Florida. Our service here officially began in 1908, when YUSA approved a charter for the YMCA of Florida's First Coast. In 1909, a seven-story YMCA opened at the corner of Laura and Duval Streets with a membership of 12 men. Camp Immokalee was established in Keystone Heights the same year. The Davis Street branch, now the James Weldon Johnson Family YMCA, opened in 1948 to serve the Northside community. The YMCA in Riverside, later the Yates and now the Winston Family YMCA, opened in 1955.

Fast forward through the decades and we now serve more than 150,000 people annually in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns counties. Our operations include 13 wellness branches, dozens of camp and after school sites, a charter school, two facilities for adults with disabilities, a virtual Y and two program centers. By evolving with our communities' changing needs, the Y is fulfilling its purpose to ensure that every individual has access to opportunities to reach their full potential.

Here on the First Coast, keeping up with our region's growth is a top priority. The 2020 Census put our region's population at nearly two million and we're welcoming more than 100 new residents a day. To build upon the foundation we established 115 years ago, deliver on our promises to today's individuals and families, and be sustainable to serve future generations, we must be guided by a comprehensive growth strategy that focuses on financial strength, expanding footprint and market share, developing emerging leaders, and maximizing technology.

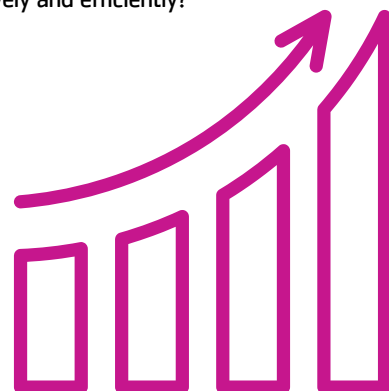
INITIATIVES

- **STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL HEALTH**
- **EXPAND FOOTPRINT AND MARKET SHARE**
 - New YMCA in Arlington (in partnership with Jacksonville University)
 - New Peyton Family YMCA in Durbin Park (in partnership with Gate Land and UF Health St. Johns)
 - Expansion of Camp Immokalee
 - Expansion of YMCA at Nocatee
 - Regional Sports Complexes
 - West Augustine
- **CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN LEADERSHIP BENCH**
- **USE TECHNOLOGY TO RUN ORGANIZATION EFFICIENTLY**

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

These questions will guide our actions to ensure we are making forward progress while achieving organizational commitments and community outcomes.

- Are we staying true to our priorities?
- Is our financial position resilient in challenging times?
- Are our facilities delivering exceptional experiences to all who would benefit from them?
- Are we acquiring and retaining talent to prepare for growth?
- Are we maximizing the use of technology to deliver services effectively and efficiently?



FOLLOW OUR PROGRESS



View the Strategic Plan
online at FCYMCA.org





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