Short Look at YWCA Rhode Island’s Long History
1867 - 2017

1867 – Providence Women’s Christian Association was formed.

1867 – Cottages were opened in Conimicut Park as a summer resort for working women.

1879 – Providence Women’s Christian Association merged with the Providence Evangelist Young Women’s Christian Association, which added an employment bureau, and junior and industrial departments.

1888 – With a greater emphasis on younger women, the organization’s name was formally changed to the Young Women’s Christian Association.

1894 – YWCA Founded Traveler’s Aid, later to become Crossroads, RI.

1921 – YWCA of Providence founded the International Institute of Rhode Island, later to merge with Dorcas Place.

1923 – YWCA of Woonsocket was formed and becomes the 1st YWCA in the country to allow membership to all women regardless of religious affiliation.

1932 – YWCA of Woonsocket opens a preschool.

1965 – Providence and Pawtucket/Central Falls YWCA’s merged, forming the YWCA of Greater Rhode Island. Programming focus moves from recreational to social services and political activity.

1973 – YWCA Greater Rhode Island founded the Rhode Island Rape Crisis Center, later to become Day One. Program scope expanded to include eliminating racism, crime intervention, rape counseling and child abuse services.

1980 – YWCA Greater Rhode Island and Women’s Center founded the Blackstone Shelter for Battered Women.

1984 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island creates Parenting in Progress, a GED program with wrap around services for teen mothers.

1993 – YWCA Greater Rhode Island founded “The Way Out” a weekly support group for LGBTQQ youth, which later became Youth Pride Inc.

1996 – YWCA began offering ENCOREplus®, a breast and cervical education and support program for low-income women.

1997 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island leads the way bringing The Silent Witness Project Rhode Island a national initiative that honors and remembers victims of domestic murder.

2001 – YWCA Greater Rhode Island initiated HIV outreach and education for at risk women.

2004 – The Sarah Francis Grant Homestead was opened, providing housing for homeless women with disabilities.

2005 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island creates She Shines™ Magazine, a statewide multimedia publication celebrating the aspirations and accomplishments of women.

2005 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island hosts 1st Women of Achievement Awards.

2009 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island hosts 1st Women Holding Office Celebration.

2010 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island takes leadership role in creating The Rhode Island Alliance (RIA), a statewide collaborative effort dedicated to reducing teen pregnancy and empowering pregnant and parenting teens.

2011 – YWCA Northern Rhode Island and partner organizations, host 1st Race Against Racism.

2012 – YWCA Greater Rhode Island and YWCA Northern Rhode Island merge to form a single statewide organization - YWCA Rhode Island.


2012 – YWCA Rhode Island sponsored Sheila “Skip” Nowell Leadership Academy, a public charter high school, is granted preliminary approval by the Rhode Island Department of Education to serve 360 at-risk youth.

2013 – YWCA offers Rosie’s Girls non-traditional trade skills programming.

2013 – YWCA offers Fantasy Girltastic Code Company coding skills programming.

2014 – YWCA purchases assets of Nickerson Community Center in Providence.

2014 – YWCA provides transitional housing program serving over 100 veterans annually.

2015 – YWCA intensified its racial justice efforts training educators, community workers, and others on historical context of race in our country and effective ways to build resiliency in girls of color.

2017 – YWCA purchases assets of Apeiron Institute for Sustainable Living.

2017 – YWCA celebrates its 150th anniversary with Senator Donna Nesselbush (District 15, Pawtucket, North Providence) and Providence City Council President Sabina Matos serving as honorary co-chairs.

YWCA IS ON A MISSION