



CLIMBING  HIGHER

A VISIONARY CAMPAIGN FOR YMCA OF THE ROCKIES

Climbing Higher is the most transformational philanthropic undertaking in YMCA of the Rockies' history, building on more than a century of generosity.

VISION

- ▶ **Climbing Higher will help our mission-based hospitality soar to the next level, with more intentional programs, updated spaces and opportunities to impact youth, families and groups in spirit, mind and body.**

But we need your support.

This effort will impact hundreds of thousands of future guests and elevate the spaces and programs we offer for family bonding and connection with one another.

Investing \$50 million in capital improvements, programming and operations across the YMCA's two Rocky Mountain campuses and overnight youth camp will help us indeed climb higher.



“Our entire family has been inspired and formed through YMCA of the Rockies over the past 50 years. We are privileged to lead Climbing Higher, lifting up a mission that has inspired individuals and families for over 100 years and build upon that legacy to transform multiple generations of families, youth and groups through the next century.”

**DOUG AND CAROLYN
DANNEN**

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP
COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS

Rocky Mountain Leadership Council*

Climbing Higher is led by the volunteer Rocky Mountain Leadership Council. These people are deeply committed to our mission and have agreed to serve as its emissaries in communities throughout the nation.



**Doug and
Carolyn Dannen**
COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS



Rick Johnson
HONORARY COUNCIL CHAIR



Graham Bennett



**Louise
Gaylord Bennett**



Amanda Foster



**Steve and
Bette Goldman**



Annette Hallock



Steve Moomau
BOARD CHAIR



Gary Schlessman



Lauren Watel

*Rocky Mountain Leadership Council as of July 1, 2024.

OUR STORY



▶ Our properties spans to over 5,800 acres in the majestic Rocky Mountains, with two retreat and conference centers – Estes Park Center and Snow Mountain Ranch – and an overnight youth camp, Camp Chief Ouray.



For over a century, YMCA of the Rockies has committed to building a healthy spirit, mind and body.

This dream began in 1907 when six hikers set out to find the ideal location for an inspirational YMCA staff training center.



After an alpine trek, the group landed at what was then known as the Wind River Lodge near Estes Park, Colo., which was isolated from an increasingly demanding and noisy world.

Complete with an unrivaled view of Mount Ypsilon, this place became the much-loved YMCA of the Rockies' Estes Park Center. In 1969, we opened a second stunning location in Granby, Colo. Snow Mountain Ranch is now recognized internationally for its Rocky Mountain splendor, Nordic skiing, mountain biking and unique outdoor activities. It is also home to Camp Chief Ouray, Colorado's longest-running summer camp.

YMCA of the Rockies is the largest YMCA camp and conference center in the world — serving over 200,000 people annually —and continues to provide respite, connection and places to find focus.



TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Our world is rapidly changing. Natural disasters, social unrest and a national epidemic of loneliness are just a few of the extraordinary challenges facing our society.

In this evolving landscape, with shifts in travel trends and transformations in family and community dynamics, people are seeking connection and purpose.

A broader audience of families, groups and youth (in record-breaking numbers) are searching for welcoming spaces and life-giving, mountaintop experiences. The YMCA is here to meet those needs.

Yet, many of our most used and cherished facilities, programs and services need upgrades to provide a more accommodating getaway and deliver on all aspects of our mission.

Given the current challenges, the history and readiness of YMCA of the Rockies, along with the commitment of the Rocky Mountain Leadership Council, make this moment vitally important for the future of our mission.

Climbing Higher will empower YMCA of the Rockies to transcend our traditional programs and services to become a catalyst for genuine transformation, rejuvenation and meaningful influence on contemporary families, youth and groups.



**Spending just 20 minutes
connecting with nature can help
lower stress hormone levels.**

FRONTIERS IN PSYCHOLOGY, 2019



WHY YMCA OF THE ROCKIES

Our unique properties and programs continue to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds. Families and friends come for reunion and recreation. Youth come for excitement, growth and adventure. Professionals come for conferences and rejuvenation.

Hundreds of thousands of guest testimonials reveal that time spent at YMCA of the Rockies brings with it a sense of wonder, well-being, belonging and connection to nature, along with a greater sense of purpose.

We facilitate gatherings for people of all backgrounds while putting Christian principles into practice – through our programs, staff and facilities – in an environment that builds a healthy spirit, mind and body for ALL.

We are now poised for a giant leap forward.

Climbing Higher Investment: \$50 Million Dollars

- ▶ **Snow Mountain Ranch:** Strengthen the foundation by enhancing and growing the capacity of facilities, staff and programs.
- ▶ **Estes Park Center:** Nurture the legacy and adapt to better serve staff and guests today and tomorrow.
- ▶ **Camp Chief Ouray:** Expand our ability to foster independence, confidence and resilience in youth as one of Colorado's best-in-class resident camps.

▶ Few organizations offer such a unifying purpose, prized locations, diverse audience and unique ability to impact such wide cross-sections of society.



The Estes Park Center Administration Building renovations will serve families better with a focus on hospitality, historic beauty and energy conservation.



A new Nordic Center at Snow Mountain Ranch will be a multi-season, dedicated space with improved amenities and will better serve Nordic skiers of all levels.



Our trip was for me and my daughter to get away from the stress and toxic world, to regroup ourselves and get back to nature. We loved all the activities and it was a magical experience waking up to snow in the Rocky Mountains. I have been having issues of stress and anxiety and this was exactly what I needed to get me back.”

JACQUELYN H.

YMCA OF THE ROCKIES 2022 GUEST



Camp Chief Ouray will add facilities and programs to accommodate growing demand.



OUR PRIORITIES

Our strategic plan identifies five distinct areas where we can do the most to deepen our impact on youth, families, staff and guests for future generations:



1. Develop Tomorrow's Leaders

We will invest in camp scholarships and preschool programming so more kids can gain confidence and resilience, so they become future leaders. Climbing Higher will enhance post-high school leadership and workforce development opportunities, empowering a more engaged and diverse workforce.

2. Reimagine Outdoor Recreation

The campaign will facilitate a new Nordic Center where all levels of athletes – novice to seasoned – can be transformed by breathtaking scenery and world-class trails. A ski rental center, comfortable eatery, warm fireplace and Wi-Fi will all be provided at a fraction of the cost of alpine skiing. We will expand family outdoor recreation offerings with a family adventure park and challenge courses, with access for those who may not typically experience outdoor activities.





3. Inspire Creativity and Spiritual Well-Being

We will encourage mental and spiritual wellness (a foundation from our beginning) through engaging ministry programs, a modernized and accessible outdoor chapel site, artist-in-residency programs, enhanced performing arts, outdoor yoga spaces and a new Center for Well-Being.

4. Provide Transformational Hospitality

By providing exceptional hospitality, family-friendly food services with beautiful views and state-of-the-art amenities, we will ensure that visitors can prioritize bonding and enjoyment. Climbing Higher will also fund enhanced Wi-Fi, delivering a more seamless experience for guests to connect when and where they want.



5. Lead in Social and Environmental Responsibility

We will foster environmental engagement through an ambitious sustainability plan. Facilities will be modernized for energy efficiency and we will pilot sustainable building techniques and renewable technologies.

Environmental stewardship and nature appreciation programming will expand. With a focus on youth as the future caretakers of the world, we will invest in more school scholarships to grow our environmental education capacity. We serve an average of 7,500 outdoor education students every year. Climbing Higher will increase our annual impact to 11,000 students by 2028.

We will prioritize inclusion and access through increased support for areas such as mental health, donor-sponsored getaways and welcoming Indigenous communities to reconnect with their ancestral lands in the Rocky Mountains.



“What we offer is in short supply in our world. As a former board member, I’ve had the honor to participate in stewarding these properties into a place of transformation and could not be more committed to helping the next generation through the advancement of Climbing Higher.”

STEPHEN GOLDMANN

YMCA OF THE ROCKIES DIRECTOR EMERITUS AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEMBER

RESPONDING TO TODAY'S NEEDS

Checkmark ✓ indicates fully funded projects.

Develop Tomorrow's Leaders

All Locations

- Camper Scholarships
- Seasonal Staff Experience
- Staff Scholarship Fund for Educational and Vocational Training

Snow Mountain Ranch

- Day Camp

Estes Park Center

- ✓ Day Camp Playground
- ✓ Outpost for Teens
- ✓ Preschool Start-Up Costs and Endowment

Camp Chief Ouray

- Character and Leadership Development
- Health Center
- Wilderness Village

Reimagine Outdoor Recreation

All Locations

- ✓ Aerial Challenge Courses

Snow Mountain Ranch

- Family Adventure Park
- Gaylord Reservoir
- Nordic Center and Program

Estes Park Center

- ✓ Archery and Axe Throwing
- Hiking Program
- Recreation Field

Commitments through endowments, planned gifts and the annual fund will strategically support each priority above.

Project scope as of July 1, 2024. Philanthropic projects include but are not limited to the areas listed above.

Inspire Creativity and Spiritual Well-Being

All Locations

- Faith Programming

Snow Mountain Ranch

- Arts and Crafts Center and Program
- ✓ Columbine Point

Estes Park Center

- Arts at Altitude
- ✓ Center for Well-Being

Provide Transformational Hospitality

All Locations

- Cabin Adoption
- Wi-Fi Expansion

Estes Park Center

- Administration Building
- ✓ Roller Rink Improvements
- Sweet Memorial Program Building

Camp Chief Ouray

- Camp Administration Building
- Flagpole Gathering Area
- Iconic Sculpture, Entry Sign and Luggage Drop Service

Lead in Social and Environmental Responsibility

All Locations

- Annual Fund/ Donor-Sponsored Getaways
- Indigenous Access
- Mental Health Support
- Nature Appreciation/ Stewardship Programming
- Outdoor Education Access and Expansion
- Renewable Energy Projects

Snow Mountain Ranch

- ✓ Utility Infrastructure

Camp Chief Ouray

- Access Initiatives
- Gear Closet

Your Invitation to Climb Higher

BE PART OF THE ASCENT

As we embark upon this \$50 million transformational campaign, we are strengthened by the passion of those who blazed the trail in the early 1900s, such as William A. Sweet and his hiking companions who founded, funded and expanded YMCA of the Rockies.

Our new group of visionaries is making a modern-day alpine trek to thoughtfully approach the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. The Rocky Mountain Leadership Council invites you to be a part of the ascent.



“We invite you to join this ambitious endeavor. Together, our investment will provide life-changing impact to hundreds of thousands of youth, families and groups for generations to come.

Thank you for dreaming and climbing with us to lead the next 100 years of transformation at YMCA of the Rockies.”

DOUG AND CAROLYN DANNEN

ROCKY MOUNTAIN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL CO-CHAIRS



CLIMBING  HIGHER

YMCA OF THE ROCKIES

Estes Park Center
Snow Mountain Ranch
Camp Chief Ouray

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