



LIVESTRONG®

FOUNDATION

# TAKING ACTION, CHANGING ODDS

LIVESTRONG® AT THE YMCA

## Fact Sheet: September 2015

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is an evidence-based program that helps adult cancer survivors reclaim their health and well-being following a cancer diagnosis. Participating YMCAs create a welcoming community in which survivors can improve their strength and physical fitness, diminish the severity of therapy side effects, develop supportive relationships, and improve their quality of life. Since 2007, the LIVESTRONG Foundation has been the YMCA's partner in developing and delivering LIVESTRONG at the YMCA.

### DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

- Small group, supportive environment
- 12-week program with two 90-minute sessions per week
- Includes cardiovascular conditioning, strength training, balance, and flexibility exercises
- Held in YMCA "Wellness Centers"
- Evaluation includes Functional and Quality of Life assessments before and after participation
- Facilitated by YMCA-certified Instructors

### WHO QUALIFIES?

Any adult 18 years old or older who is living with or beyond cancer treatment.

### PROGRAM REACH:

- More than **33,116 SURVIVORS SERVED**
- More than **2,426 STAFF CERTIFIED** as Instructors
- Offered by 174 Y associations in more than **453 COMMUNITIES IN 37 STATES**

### PROGRAM IMPACT:

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA has to proven to:

- help survivors **MEET OR EXCEED** the recommended amount of physical activity
- help survivors **SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE** their cardiovascular endurance
- **IMPROVE** cancer survivors' overall quality of life and **DECREASE** their cancer-related fatigue.

### PARTICIPANTS REPORT:

- High levels of **SATISFACTION**
- **STRONG CONNECTIONS** with other group members
- **PLANS TO CONTINUE EXERCISE** after the program

# PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Michelle Lavitt participated in the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program at the Huntington YMCA in Huntington, NY. Read how she thanked Y director Tina Graziose:

"Dear Tina,

Thank you so very much for offering the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program here in Huntington... Less than a year ago, I was a healthy, somewhat fit 38-year-old living a perfectly normal life. I was happily married with two kids, living in the suburbs. One day I noticed a lump in my breast, and then my life turned upside down. I had Stage 2 breast cancer and needed a double mastectomy. And chemotherapy. And radiation. And hormone therapy. And more surgery. So I went through all of the treatments as I was instructed to do. And they were miserable, as everyone knows they are. During this time, I kept telling myself that when everything was over, I'd start exercising again (I used to go to an aerobics class two times a week) and I would get my health back. Only it wasn't, or should I say, isn't that simple. I gained 10 pounds during chemotherapy, which actually is quite common. But the treatments slowed down my metabolism, so losing weight is extra difficult. When I started to get my strength back from the chemo, I started radiation, which knocked me back down again. The cumulative effect of not using my muscles took its toll. There were so many daily activities that I wasn't doing. Like standing. Forget about exercising, I needed strength to get through the day and take care of my kids. I was constantly saying to my family and friends, "I can't do that, because it is too much for me." I tried to go back to my aerobics class, but it was



difficult. Two minutes into the warm-up, my heart was pounding and my muscles burning. I did what I could, which wasn't much. It was so frustrating and scary that I spent most of the classes fighting back tears. I frequently overdid it, and felt sick as a result. Then a friend told me about LIVESTRONG at the YMCA.

I am halfway through the program now, and already I feel like a different person. I have the energy to make it through the day without napping. I can make it up a flight of stairs without stopping to rest. I can carry my daughter again. And I feel confident that I am strong enough to do these things, because I am getting back in shape in a very safe way. The

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA instructors took time to show me how to gradually build up my strength without overdoing it. They showed me how to safely work the part of my body where I had lost muscle during my surgery. They taught me different types of exercises, stretches and training techniques. Instead of being frustrated about what I cannot do, I am proud of what I can do. The instructors are all patient, kind, and understanding, and the survivors in the group all are very warm and

friendly. It is an extremely enthusiastic and encouraging group of people. LIVESTRONG at the YMCA has made an incredible difference in my recovery from breast cancer. I can't thank you enough for offering it, and I hope you continue this program so that others can heal.

Sincerely,

Michelle Lavitt"

## PLANS FOR PROGRAM GROWTH

YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) has pledged to expand its support of LIVESTRONG at the YMCA in its 2014-2017 strategic plan, "Delivering our Cause" and is working to accomplish four strategic objectives to ensure the program's growth and quality:

### 1. INCREASE NUMBER OF ASSOCIATIONS OFFERING THE PROGRAM

Currently **174** corporate associations offer the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program, and we are striving to reach **250** by 2017. In 2015, **34** new Ys were selected to become providers and new opportunities for growth are expected for 2016.

### 2. INCREASE NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

As cancer treatments improve, the number of people living beyond a cancer diagnosis continues to grow rapidly. With our presence in more than 10,000 communities, the Y is uniquely positioned to support this growing population and has pledged to increase the number of cancer survivors served to at least **10,000 per year**. To do so, we are preparing new YMCA Associations to implement the program while encouraging current providers to recruit more participants and spread the program to additional branches.

### 3. INCREASE PERCENTAGE OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS WHO BECOME Y MEMBERS

Participation in LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is often a cancer survivor's first step in the journey toward recovery. Y membership can provide the support a survivor needs to continue their pursuit of health and wellness. Y-USA is working to identify and deploy strategies and tools to help Ys increase the number of program participants who become Y members.

### 4. ENSURE PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

In order to become a LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program site, Ys go through a rigorous but transformational organizational capacity-building process to help them serve cancer survivors with knowledge, empathy and skill. Staff who seek to become certified Instructors for the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA exercise program must complete over 16 hours of training on cancer, communication skills, exercise modification and safety to ensure that the program experience is effectively tailored to the abilities and personal goals of each participant. A recent research study demonstrated that these efforts are working: cancer survivors who participated in the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA exercise program exhibited improvements in physical activity, fitness and quality of life.

**TO LEARN MORE:**  
Contact [livestrongattheyymca@ymca.net](mailto:livestrongattheyymca@ymca.net)

# PROGRAM PROVIDERS

## ALABAMA

Birmingham Metropolitan YMCA, Birmingham

## CALIFORNIA

Channel Islands YMCA, Santa Barbara  
YMCA of Greater Long Beach, Long Beach

## COLORADO

Ed & Ruth Lehman YMCA, Longmont  
YMCA of the Pikes Peak Region, Colorado Springs

## CONNECTICUT

Greater Waterbury YMCA, Waterbury  
New Canaan Community YMCA, New Canaan  
Southington-Cheshire YMCA, Southington  
Wallingford YMCA, Wallingford  
Wilton Family YMCA, Inc., Wilton  
YMCA of Greater Hartford, Hartford

## FLORIDA

Central Florida Metro YMCA, Orlando  
SKY Family YMCA, Venice  
Tampa YMCA, Tampa  
Volusia/Flagler YMCA, DeLand,  
YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg, St. Petersburg  
YMCA of the Suncoast, Clearwater  
YMCA of West Central Florida, Lakeland

## GEORGIA

Metropolitan Augusta YMCA, Augusta  
Moultrie YMCA, Moultrie  
Tiftarea YMCA, Inc., Tifton  
YMCA of Coastal Georgia, Savannah

## IOWA

Burlington Area Community YMCA-YWCA, Burlington  
Scott County Family YMCA, Davenport  
YMCA of Greater Des Moines, Des Moines  
YMCA of Marshalltown, Marshalltown  
Cedar Rapids Metro YMCA, Cedar Rapids

## IDAHO

Treasure Valley YMCA, Boise

## ILLINOIS

Kishwaukee Family YMCA, Sycamore  
Prairie Valley YMCA, Elgin  
Two Rivers YMCA, Moline  
YMCA of Berwyn-Cicero, Berwyn  
YMCA of Rock River Valley, Rockford

## INDIANA

YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne  
YMCA of Greater Indianapolis, Indianapolis  
YMCA of Michiana, Inc., South Bend  
YMCA of Southern Indiana, New Albany  
YMCA of Valparaiso Indiana, Inc., Valparaiso

## KANSAS

YMCA of Southwest Kansas, Garden City  
YMCA of Wichita, Wichita

## KENTUCKY

YMCA of Central Kentucky, Lexington  
YMCA of Greater Louisville, Louisville

## LOUISIANA

YMCA of Greater New Orleans, New Orleans

## MASSACHUSETTS

Athol Area YMCA, Athol  
Cape Cod YMCA, West Barnstable  
Hockomock YMCA, North Attleboro  
MetroWest YMCA, Framingham  
Old Colony YMCA, Brockton  
Tri-Community YMCA of Southbridge, Southbridge  
YMCA of Attleboro, Attleboro  
YMCA of Central Massachusetts, Worcester  
YMCA of Greater Boston, Boston  
YMCA of Greater Springfield, Springfield  
YMCA of Metro North, Peabody  
YMCA of the North Shore, Beverly  
YMCA of the Southcoast, New Bedford

## MAINE

Bath Area Family YMCA, Bath  
YMCA of Southern Maine, Portland  
Kennebec Valley YMCA, Augusta  
Boothbay Regional YMCA, Boothbay Harbor  
Mount Desert Island YMCA, Bar Harbor  
Penobscot Bay YMCA, Rockport

## MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor YMCA, Ann Arbor  
Greater Marinette-Menominee YMCA, Menominee  
Niles-Buchanan YMCA, Niles  
YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids  
YMCA of Greater Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo  
YMCA of Marquette County, Marquette

## MINNESOTA

Itasca County Family YMCA, Grand Rapids  
YMCA of Mankato, Mankato  
YMCA of Rochester, Rochester  
YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities, Minneapolis

## MISSOURI

Greater St. Louis YMCA, St. Louis  
Jefferson City Area YMCA\*, Jefferson City  
Ozarks Regional YMCA, Springfield  
Tri-State Family YMCA, Neosho  
YMCA of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City

## MONTANA

Billings Family YMCA, Billings

## NORTH CAROLINA

Blue Ridge Assembly YMCA, Black Mountain  
Cleveland County YMCA, Shelby  
Gaston County YMCA, Gastonia  
Greensboro YMCA, Greensboro  
Stanly County Family YMCA, Albemarle  
YMCA of Greater Charlotte, Charlotte  
YMCA of Northwest North Carolina, Winston-Salem  
YMCA of the Triangle, Raleigh  
YMCA of Western North Carolina, Asheville  
YMCA of Wilmington, Wilmington

# PROGRAM PROVIDERS con't

## NORTH DAKOTA

Grand Forks YMCA Family Center, Grand Forks  
Missouri Valley Family YMCA, Bismarck  
YMCA of Cass & Clay Counties, Fargo

## NEBRASKA

Siouxland YMCA, Sioux City  
YMCA of Greater Omaha, Omaha

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

YMCA of Greater Manchester, Manchester  
YMCA of Greater Nashua, Merrimack

## NEW JERSEY

Burlington County YMCA, Mt. Laurel  
Cumberland Cape Atlantic YMCA, Vineland  
Gateway Family YMCA, Elizabeth  
Hunterdon County YMCA, Annandale  
Princeton Family YMCA, Princeton  
Somerset Hills YMCA, Somerville  
The Community YMCA, Shrewsbury  
YMCA of Fanwood-Scotch Plains, Scotch Plains  
YMCA of Madison NJ, Inc., Madison  
YMCA of Metuchen, Metuchen  
YMCA of Summit NJ, Summit

## NEW YORK

Frost Valley YMCA, Claryville  
Greater Syracuse YMCA, Syracuse  
Saratoga Regional YMCA, Saratoga Springs  
YMCA of Broome County, Binghamton  
YMCA of Buffalo Niagara, Buffalo  
YMCA of the Capital District, Albany  
YMCA of Greater New York, New York  
YMCA of Greater Rochester, Rochester  
YMCA of Long Island, Glen Cove  
YMCA of Rye NY, Rye

## OHIO

Family YMCA of Lancaster & Fairfield County,  
Lancaster  
Greater Miami Valley YMCA, Hamilton  
Marion Family YMCA, Marion  
YMCA of Central Ohio, Columbus  
YMCA of Greater Cleveland, Cleveland  
YMCA of Greater Dayton, Dayton  
YMCA of Greater Toledo, Toledo  
YMCA of Mansfield, Mansfield  
YMCA of Youngstown, Youngstown

## OKLAHOMA

YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City, Oklahoma City  
YMCA of Greater Tulsa, Tulsa

## PENNSYLVANIA

Community YMCA of Eastern Delaware County,  
Landsdowne  
Greater Scranton YMCA, Scranton  
North Penn YMCA, Colmar  
Wilkes-Barre Family YMCA, Wilkes-Barre  
YMCA of Warren County, Warren

York and York County YMCA, York

## RHODE ISLAND

Providence Metropolitan YMCA, Providence

## SOUTH CAROLINA

YMCA of Columbia South Carolina, Columbia

## TENNESSEE

YMCA of Bristol, Bristol  
YMCA of Memphis and the Mid-South, Memphis  
YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga,  
Chattanooga

## TEXAS

Austin Metropolitan YMCA, Austin  
YMCA of Arlington, Arlington

YMCA of Central Texas, Waco  
YMCA Greater El Paso, El Paso  
YMCA of Greater San Antonio, San Antonio  
YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas, Dallas  
YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth, Fort Worth  
YMCA of the Greater Houston Area, Houston

## VIRGINIA

Peninsula Metro YMCA, Newport News  
Southside Virginia Family YMCA, Farmville

## VERMONT

Greater Burlington YMCA, Burlington

## WASHINGTON

Skagit Valley Family YMCA, Mount Vernon  
South Sound YMCA, Olympia  
YMCA of Greater Seattle, Seattle  
YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties, Tacoma  
YMCA of Snohomish County, Everett  
YMCA of the Inland Northwest, Spokane

## WISCONSIN

Door County YMCA, Sturgeon Bay  
Greater Green Bay YMCA, Inc., Green Bay  
Kettle Moraine YMCA, West Bend  
La Crosse Area Family YMCA, La Crosse  
Manitowoc-Two Rivers YMCA, Manitowoc  
Oshkosh Community YMCA, Oshkosh  
Racine Family YMCA, Racine  
Sheboygan County YMCA, Sheboygan  
South Wood County YMCA, Port Edwards  
Stateline Family YMCA of Beloit, Inc., Beloit  
Stevens Point Area YMCA, Stevens Point  
Wausau-Woodson YMCA, Wausau  
YMCA of Dane County, Madison  
YMCA of Eau Claire, Eau Claire  
YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee, Milwaukee  
YMCA of the Fox Cities, Appleton  
YMCA of the Northwoods, Rhinelander

## WYOMING

Sheridan County YMCA, Sheridan