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- news
- events
- discussions
- search

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West Roxbury Y starts 2d fund-raising effort to upgrade, expand facility

Posted by Matt Rocheleau December 9, 2011 01:50 PM

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(Courtesy: West Roxbury YMCA)

Pictured, The Martha's Vineyard YMCA, is an example of what the new West Roxbury Y will look like after its planned renovation and expansion project.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A neighborhood businessman announced this week he will donate \$50,000 to kick-start the latest fund-raising campaign to pay for a \$13-million plan to overhaul and nearly double the size of the 60-year-old West Roxbury YMCA.

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The financial pledge from Alan MacKinnon, owner of The Gardens at Gethsemane cemetery and 13-year board member of the West Roxbury Y, will help launch an effort by the community center and day care provider to raise \$1.5 million from neighborhood-area donors for upgrades to the aging, cramped facility on Bellevue Street, Y leaders said.

“We’re off to a good start,” West Roxbury Y executive director Marion Kelly said by phone, adding that Blue Hills Bank and Cooperative Bank have each pledged \$100,000 toward the fund-raising campaign, while other individuals have made verbal donation commitments that are expected to be finalized this month. “We’re very fortunate because people are very excited about the project.”

The start of the two-phase and expansion project will depend on the pace of fund-raising. Once the Y reaches its goal of \$1.5 million, construction is expected to begin shortly thereafter and additional fund-raising that will cover the cost of the project’s second phase will launch, said Kelly.

The existing 23,000 square-foot facility, where more than 6,500 people are active members, will grow to 40,000 square feet, according to the community center. Upgrades will include a state-of-the-art health and wellness center and gymnasium, a new aquatics center with two pools, expanded child care areas, a landscaped pavilion on Centre Street for public events, increased parking and full handicap accessibility.

Work will be done section by section so that the center will continue to operate throughout the project’s duration, which expected is to last about one-and-a-half-years.

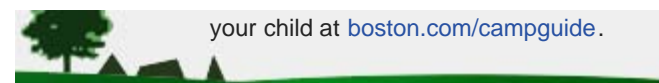
“We have plans in place so that there won’t be any disruption of services for the members,” Kelly said.

Following a first, 12-month phase of \$9 million of work, the project’s final component -- \$4-million in pool renovations -- will take about six to eight months to complete, she said.

The nonprofit [YMCA of Greater Boston](#), which operates 13 area Y branches including West Roxbury’s, will help fund the project through an ongoing effort to separately raise \$3 million more from donors beyond the West Roxbury area, according to Y officials.

Previous fund-raising efforts have already collected \$4.5 million for the project that has been in planning stages several years, Kelly said.

Original plans to redesign the center were altered last spring, she said. The latest proposal consists of fewer hallways and connectors so more of the facility’s square footage will offer “usable space” for programming.



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“We are maxed out of space in West Roxbury,” said a statement from YMCA of Greater Boston CEO Kevin Washington. “Our facilities are not up-to-date with the needs of our 60,000 nearby households. We must prepare the Y for its next generation of vital services to our community.”

The planned overhaul will increase the number of programs the community center will be able to run for children, teens, adults and seniors, officials said. And, MacKinnon said the renovated center will help bring the community together.

“The Y is the lifeblood of this community,” he said in a statement. “The Y’s programs for children are giving them structure, education and a safe place to be. The programs for seniors provide independence, socialization and wellness. It makes the community whole. I am proud that I can make this investment in our community.”

To support the capital campaign contact Marion Kelly, executive director of the West Roxbury YMCA, at 617-323-3200 or mkelly@ymcaboston.org, or Kathryn Davids at 617-927-8199 or kdavids@ymcaboston.org.

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com.

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