YMCA Chile

The Republic of Chile, a long, ribbon-like coastal strip of land in South America, is wedged between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, which forms the country's entire western border of more than 6,435 kilometers. Chile encompasses a variety of landscapes and climates, ranging from the world's driest desert, the Atacama, in the north, to a snow-prone alpine climate in the south.

Currently, Chile is one of South America's most stable and prosperous nations. Within Latin America, Chile leads other nations in terms of quality of life, political stability, economic freedom, low perception of corruption and comparatively low poverty rates. It also ranks high regionally in freedom of the press and human development.

The YMCA of Chile

The first YMCA association in Chile was founded in Valparaiso on Sept. 2, 1912, by English and German residents. The movement later expanded into Santiago (1920), Concepcion (1927), Antofagasta (1962), Iquique (1981) and, most recently, to Temuco in the south of Chile. The local YMCAs are coordinated by the Chilean Federation, founded in 1952, located in Valparaiso.

Currently the Chilean YMCA movement reaches 12,000 members, with Santiago serving 30 percent of them. The YMCA's main programs relate to physical education—fitness, sports, camps and school recreation. Community work includes treatment and rehabilitation for drug-addicted youth.

The YMCA of Valparaiso, by virtue of its long presence, is an institution respected and recognized by the community. Its emphasis is on the formation of youth leaders. An essential program for the YMCA of Valparaiso is the Jorge Williams School, founded in 1995. The school's objective is to is to bring education to children not able to attend the established educational system because of family or economic circumstances.

The school plays a vital role for the young people in Valparaiso. In the last 10 years, 1,350 children from kindergarten to eighth grade have been educated at the school, and three generations of adolescents have successfully continued on to secondary education. ▼

YWORLD™

110822 06/08