YMCA of GEORGIA

Georgia

Along with many of the other members of the former Soviet Union, Georgia gained independence in 1991. Georgia, which is about the size of South Carolina, is home to 4.6 million people. The country is bordered by the Black Sea to the West, the Caucus Mountains and Russia to the north and the countries of Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the South and East. This mineral-rich nation has been influenced by the Roman, Turkish, Arab and Mongol empires, contributing to its unique culture and traditions.

The YMCA of Georgia

YMCA programs began in 1991, but the YMCA was officially chartered on October 14, 1992, within a year of Georgia's independence. Through the hard work of the professional staff and more than 100 volunteers, the YMCA is able to serve more than 3,600 beneficiaries and program participants at four critical sites in Georgia.

Core programs for the YMCA include civic engagement, sports programs, camping and leadership development through arts and culture. However, each of the four Ys are employing these programs in different ways to serve their diverse communities. The Batumi YMCA, for example, works closely with refugee children, while the Tbilisi YMCA runs sports programs for youth of all backgrounds, including those from orphanages. Thanks to the YMCA, new sports such as baseball and street basketball have been introduced to Georgian society—and have exploded in popularity. The Georgia YMCA baseball team participated in the Little League World Series in the United States, showing that they mastered the game quickly.

While Georgia has gained its independence, it still faces unrest along its borders. These conflicts have led to nearly 300,000 internally displaced persons, including many youth served by the YMCA. Through the efforts of the YMCA, the young people have an opportunity to become involved in programs rather than pursuing risky behavior such as drug abuse or petty crimes. As Georgia emerges as a new nation, the YMCA grows with it—committed to the development of the next generation of young Georgian leaders. ▼

Partnerships: YMCA of Metropolitan Atlanta

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