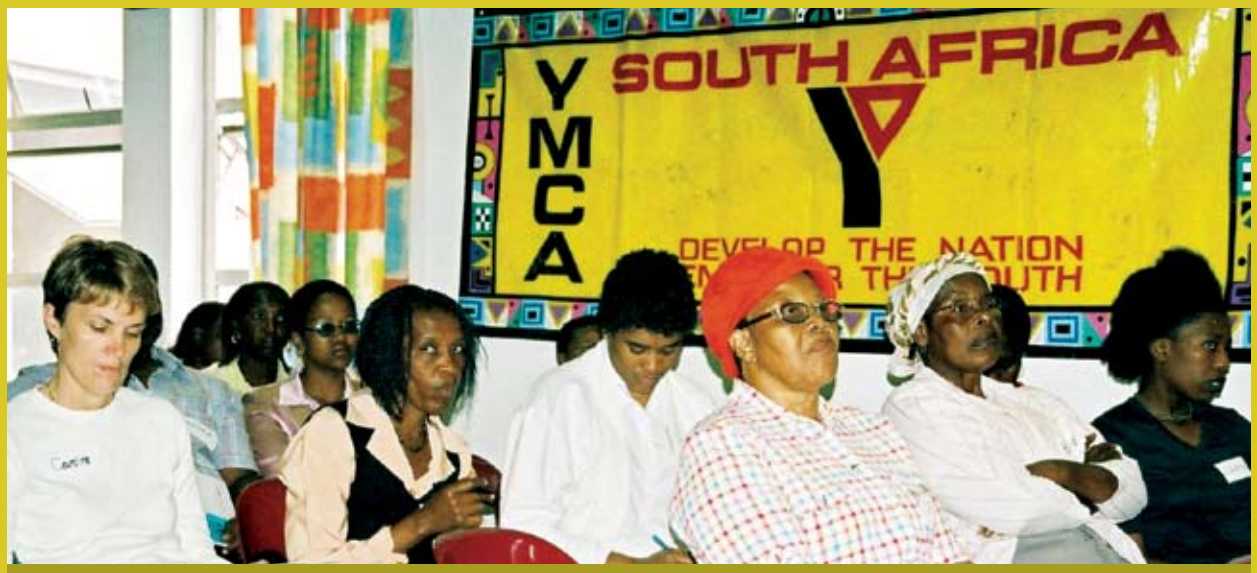

April *Member News*

Strengthening YMCAs Worldwide

Building Stronger Communities

The YMCA is known internationally as an organization that strives to meet the unique needs of each community in which it operates. Because they are led by local staff and volunteers, YMCAs are in tune with the critical issues that their communities face. In the U.S., this means encouraging healthy behavior, providing important childcare services, or reaching out to underserved children and families in low-income neighborhoods. In South Africa, it means educating young people about HIV/Aids; in Bangladesh, it means supporting small business initiatives led by women; and in Nicaragua, it means working with gang members. Each Y finds itself leading unique programs, but all YMCAs work towards the same goal: building better and stronger communities.

Building Stronger YMCAs

For YMCAs to be effective, they must be strong organizations. The best way for a YMCA to remain strong is to learn from and share with other Ys around the globe that have demonstrated great success in serving their communities. Recognizing this need, the World Alliance of YMCAs in Geneva, Switzerland, has led the effort to help connect Ys from different nations to share their expertise. The plan helps all YMCAs focus on 3 key areas:

1. **Understanding and fulfilling their YMCA mission**
2. **Providing services that meet the community needs**
3. **Ensuring that the YMCA is available for future generations**

YMCAs around the world, through the simple exchange of ideas and talents, will grow stronger, serve more people, change children's lives, and continue to be a refuge of hope for many people of various nations. ▼

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