



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## MOVING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES FORWARD

### YMCA Christchurch responding to devastating earthquake

March 2011 – Since the devastating earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand, last month, Ys across the U.S. and around the world have expressed solidarity for YMCA New Zealand and those impacted by the disaster. Thankfully, the YMCA staff and hostel tenants were safely evacuated and accounted for. As is often the case during times of crisis, the Y has adapted to address critical community needs while providing individuals (especially children) with a sense of stability. In the two weeks since the earthquake, the Y has resumed limited operations at their facilities that were not significantly damaged. Y staff members have also engaged in community outreach activities such as providing support to local schools. **Josie Ogden Schroeder, Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA Christchurch**, reported:

*Two weeks since the earthquake on February 22nd and the time has gone by in a whirl. So much to do and many of my staff team have been putting in a lot of hours to get some ordinary operations going while also engaging with the community in ways that are entirely new for us and resultant of the significant stress many people in our city are under. Paradoxically, there have also been a fair number of our staff who are no doubt feeling helpless and under-utilised. It is an interesting challenge to get the balance right: some areas of our operation are closed down and there has been little to do until they are open again. Other areas have been full steam ahead from within days of the earthquake, with increased demand but decreased manpower.*

*I am very proud of the effort that the Christchurch Y staff have put in to date and very aware of decreasing energy levels. We are "showing our spirit" every day and one thing that keeps us all going is optimism that all of the Y operations will be returned to full capacity in the not too distant future, and that jobs are therefore secure. We are also heartened by the support we have received from our wider YMCA family, within NZ and the rest of the world. In particular, I wish to acknowledge the amazing support we have received from Australia – it has been awesome and humbling.*

In addition,

*Education programmes are continuing albeit on the move and all over town and in a fairly youth-worky manner rather than a classroom manner! The students are all very positive, resilient and mostly coping very well. Some of their home situations are extremely dire however. The Education staff are doing a great job staying in touch with them, particularly when many of them live on the East side of town and have domestic challenges of their own.*

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*Bishopdale YMCA is a hive of activity. Gym members are swarming the place, preschool started again today, and the stadium activities – basketball, dance, gymnastics etc. – are all back to normal schedules today too. We have the NZ Police headquarters based in the Bishopdale building too – as well as nearly all the city Y staff. It is not lonely at Bishopdale.*

*All in all we are getting on with business, one day at a time. Thanks again for all of your support.*

To read the complete update, visit the YMCA New Zealand web site at <http://ymca.org.nz/home>.

As a leading nonprofit for strengthening community, the Y strives to be at the center of giving people and communities the support needed to thrive – especially in times of great need. If you would like to **make a donation**, please send funds directly to YMCA New Zealand using the information below.

**Send funds via a wire transfer:**

YMCA New Zealand  
Bank Name: National Bank  
Account Number: 060501-0058534-04  
Swift Code: ANZBNZ22

OR

**Mail a check to:**

YMCA New Zealand  
PO Box 39 274  
Wellington Mail Centre  
New Zealand 5045

For the **latest updates** or to **post a message** of support, visit YMCA New Zealand's web site at <http://ymca.org.nz/home> or their Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/YMCANewZealand>.

Thank you for your continued support of the global YMCA Movement.

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YMCA of the USA