YMCA PRACTICUM

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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I. Introduction:

The Muncie Family YMCA is a thriving organization in Delaware County. It reaches the lives of thousands around the county and provides safe and well structured ways to improve body, mind, and spirit. This is one of the reasons I chose to do my senior project working at the YMCA as Assistant to the Director of Communications. Another reason is that I had worked in the Ball State Better Business Bureau and wished to study a functioning non-profit organization. Through this work experience I gained valuable practical experience in the field of Public Relations (PR), which accentuates my fields of study, Telecommunications and Marketing.

During my work experience I performed various PR duties such as: photography, giving tours of the YMCA during open house, designing and assembling bulletin boards, and general office responsibilities. The jobs I performed were varied according to the time of year and what the YMCA was doing for the community at that time. To better understand today's YMCA, we must first understand some of the history of the YMCA.

II. The Beginnings

The Young Men's Christian Association was founded in 1884 by twelve young men. These men met in a small room above a local drapery establishment in St. Paul's Churchyard in London. George Williams is considered to be the true founder of the organization. He had a single philosophy for the Young Men's Christian Association which can be summed up in a single quote to Edward Beaumont, another founding member: "Teddy, are you prepared to make a sacrifice for Christ?" (Morse, 5).

The type of sacrifice Williams had in mind was that of Christian service to all his fellow young men. Even beyond helping those young men, he
envisioned an institution that promoted both public and community well-being. But, the first and utmost thing on his mind was to transform young men’s lives by converting them to Christianity with Jesus Christ as savior. From this basic mission came the name ‘Young Men’s Christian Association’.

Two things must be remembered about this first Young Men’s Christian Association: First, the Association was exclusively for young men, and second, only for men either belonging to a Christian church (regardless of denomination) or have given evidence of being converted in character. This could be seen in the first constitution of the YMCA.

"1. That this society be called the ‘Young Men’s Christian Association’.
2. That the objectives of this association shall be the improvement of the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery and other trades, by the introduction of religious services among them.
3. That the affairs of the Association be in the hands of a committee of management comprising a President, Vice President, a Treasurer, Two Secretaries and Committeeemen, with the power to add to their number, seven to form a quorum.
4. That the Committee meet once a month (or oftener if required), for the dispatch of general business.
5. That two social tea meetings be held in the year (the time of such meetings to be left to the discretion of the committee), at which a report of the Society’s proceedings shall be read.
6. That a general meeting be held once a fortnight (or oftener if required), for the purpose of hearing reports from members of the progress of the work of God in the various establishments, and for such other purposes as the committee shall see fit to determine, and that all meetings shall be open for members and those friends whom they may consider proper persons to bring and to those who shall receive invitations form the committee.
7. That the chairman of all general meetings be proposed by the committee, and elected by a majority of the members, and that all meetings shall begin and end with a prayer.
8. That no person shall be considered eligible to become a member of this Association, unless he be a member of a Christian church, or there be sufficient evidence of his being a converted character" (Doggett, 40-41).
III. Expansion

As time wore on, the rooms used by the Association were too small to accommodate all its members, and a large room was secured at the Radlys Hotel. This was the first large meeting hall facility to be used by the YMCA. At this time, the main thrust of the organization was to promote prayer meetings and hold Bible study classes. Their were some social events though, mainly the biannual social teas.

At the first ever social tea, the YMCA had only 70 members, but these were all hand selected men that were devout followers of the movement and the Associations beliefs. This practice, however, was soon amended and young men who were not professed Christians could, for a fee, become "associates" to the YMCA and were allowed all the privileges of membership except for holding a management position. The leaders believed that this would give them the opportunity to reach and to exercise an influence over a much larger group of men without having to lower their standards of membership.

This action greatly helped the spread of the YMCA and the popularity which accompanied it. The Association slowly began to spread across Europe, and finally reached the United States. In December of 1851, Boston Massachusetts became the host of the first American Young Men's Christian Association. The Boston Society had special significance in the role of the American YMCA due to the fact that most Associations in the United States and Canada modeled their constitution after the Boston Associations. The object of this first American YMCA was "the improvement of the spiritual and mental condition of young men" (Morse, 15). Already the YMCA was experiencing changes in their purpose and goals.
IV. Changes to the Purpose of the YMCA:

The changes in the YMCA were slow in coming about, and the first changes were in the membership rules. As already stated, non professed laymen could become associates of the YMCA, and only church members could have management positions. The Boston Association constitution changed this practice. The new rule required all active voting members to be part of an Evangelical church. This was done not only to strengthen ties with the church but to promote the spread of Christianity through the YMCA.

Another closely related field to religious work was the task of helping young men find their way in a strange city. The Boston Association once again set the standards. Boston began the practice of listing all the respectable boarding houses available as well as helping young men obtain employment. This service was especially helpful in the winter months along with its community relief projects for the “destitute poor of our city” (Hopkins, 29). This was a special boon to many during the Depression when the YMCA distributed over 60,000 bushels of coal and fed and clothed destitute and orphaned children.

During this same time, the Association began to communicate more freely with one another. The visit of R. C. McCormick to Europe as a delegate from the United States inspired many to open communications. There was a feeling of “common origin, a common purpose, and a common need of each others sympathy” (Doggett, 127). The Washington Association moved ahead with the idea to such an extent that written into its constitution was a clause allowing members of other Associations the privileges of the Washington organization. With such goodwill evident, it seemed probable that a confederation of YMCA’s could occur.
In 1854, seventeen United States Associations adopted resolutions to provide for a confederation:

"Resolved, I. That this convention recommend to the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces the formation of a voluntary confederation for their mutual encouragement, co-operation, and usefulness, and that they recommend that when 22 Associations shall concur in the plan hereafter suggested that the said confederation shall go into operation" (Doggett, 136).

By January 15, 1855, 22 Associations had given their support and the confederation became a reality. But, there was still the separation of the United States Associations and most of the rest of the world. This separation would soon be overcome.

The "first conference of Associations of all lands held...at Paris during the Industrial Exhibition of 1855" (Doggett, 127) created the first world alliance of Young Men’s Christian Associations. The conference created three main points that the alliance would adhere to:

"First: That any difference of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, but not embraced by the specific designs of the Association, shall not interfere with the harmonious relation of the confederated societies.

Second: That a traveling certificate of membership be designed by which members of the confederate societies shall be entitled to the privileges of any other society belonging to this confederation and to the personal attention of all members.

Third: That the system of correspondence adopted by this conference shall apply to the societies of this confederation" (Morse, 41).

The signing of the Paris Basis of 1855 denotes the end of unconsolidated work by individual YMCA's and starts an era of combined effort and thrust throughout the world.

V. The Secular Movement

The first secular program to be adopted by all the YMCA's was the library. The Association began to recognize the need for social and
intellectual activity and interaction as well as spiritual guidance. This became the second part of the whole individual that is an important area of concern for the YMCA. The YMCA accumulated over thirty newspapers and magazines which they provided for all members and associates to read. The reading rooms of the YMCA began to draw in more and more people due to the fact that such facilities weren't generally available to the public. Soon, though, the YMCA began to recognize even more diverse needs of the individual.

The first implications of physical training came from Reverend Henry Porter in an address to the national convention in which he stressed "the whole man" (Hopkins, 246). As physical education became more prevalent, specialized departments were organized to fill all the needs. By 1860 the National Convention gave approval to the establishment of gymnasiums. It was also during this time that the YMCA began its great swimming and lifesaving program where hundreds of thousands learned to swim. The YMCA can also be noted for its contributions to organized sports. The YMCA began applying the idea of insisting on medical exams as the basis for individualized training and fitness. Volleyball was invented in 1891 by a YMCA instructor Dr. James Naismith. Basketball was invented in 1895 at Holyoke, Massachusetts by William Morgan. The physical aspect completed the concept of unity by Luther Gulik, visualized by a "triangle-body, mind and spirit" (Eddy,48).

VI. Diversified Groups

As time went on, the YMCA began to realize the potential in reaching young boys. At first the extent of boys activities were Sunday School and Bible classes (along with charity work). In 1881 Miss Ellen Brown began teaching boys in her YMCA night class where they learned spelling.
arithmetic, grammar and geography. She taught the class to boys for twenty one years and is considered the first boys work secretary. The next step after the classroom work was camping and by 1902 the camps were beginning to gather some momentum.

Other groups besides boys profited from the YMCA. After the Civil War the first segregated YMCA's were established when “God had smitten slavery unto death” (Hopkins, 211). In 1887 the first Negro secretary, William Hunton, was appointed and given a salary of $1,100. Although some few YMCA's were integrated from the beginning, it was almost universally segregated and would be a long time in obtaining integration.

Also in 1887 the Intercollegiate YMCA was organized and the Student Department was developed. By 1915 almost 800 student Associations existed, and many of the members became famous missionaries: Horace Pitkin and 100 students martyred in the Boxer uprising, Frank Keller (who opened Christian missions in Hunan), Henry Luce (helped build Yenching University in Peking), and Edward Lovestine and Fletcher Brochman in China (Eddy,83). But, after the Depression and WWI, the Student Associations dropped dramatically. The reasons included: renewed interest in materialism, indifference to religious ideals, and the many extra-curricular activities that the colleges now began to offer.

VII. The Turning Point

1944 marked an end of a century of work by the YMCA. Even in 1944 the outlook of the YMCA's future was coming into question. The leaders began to worry about becoming too secularized. It was during this time that the YMCA made twelve assertions regarding the policy of the YMCA so as to continue its basic mission in the future:

“I. The spiritual purpose of the Young Men's Christian Association must motivate, dominate, and permeate the whole movement.
2. The breadth and sweep of the associations manifold work must aim at abundant life for the individual and for society as a whole.
3. The Association must have a bold and comprehensive program, based upon the needs and valid interests of youth of men and boys of the community and the nation.
4. The Association must attend to its primary task and concentrate upon youth.
5. The Association must preserve sound but bold financing, seeking to avoid both debts and deficits.
6. The Young Men's Christian Association must preserve and jealously guard the treasured partnership it has achieved between lay and professionally trained staff leadership.
7. The Association must continue to erect and modernize adequate buildings, but above all it must have a comprehensive community wide program.
8. The American Associations should be interdenominational, interconfessional, and ecumenical in their church relationships and loyalties.
9. Every Association secretary and every layman in any responsible position must be a real leader - that is, he must know the road, he must keep ahead, and he must be able to get others to follow him.
10. The Association has unmistakably been called to a unique world service.
11. The Association should furnish leadership in social vision and action.
12. Summing up all these principles, the final objective of the Association is to seek first the Kingdom of God, and then to extend the rule of God in the lives of young men and boys in the community, the country, and the world at large" (Eddy 134-151).

In the years following 1944, the YMCA experienced a vast array of changes, not the least of which were integration and the admittance of women and girls into the organization. The expansions of the YMCA around the world grew exponentially and the YMCA changed as it grew.

VIII. Practicum Experience:

I was employed by the Muncie Family YMCA fall semester of 1990. During that period I obtained some insight into the modern workings of a non-profit organization and into the type of work being done for the community by the YMCA. As Assistant to the Director of
Communications, Kathie Samuelson. I was helping to fulfill the mission of the modern YMCA and gain valuable experience in public relations management.

IX. Mission Statement

"The mission of the Muncie Family YMCA is to provide quality leadership, instruction, and facilities for exercise, sports and skill development leading to improved health of body, mind, and spirit for men, women and children of all ages residing in Delaware County, and to improve the quality of life in Delaware County" (Program 1990, General Information). This mission is very different from the very first constitution written George Williams in 1844, but in many ways it has expanded upon the work that was originally done by making it possible to better the lives of all people who seek help. The times have changed and although the original purpose underlies all that the YMCA does, that fact does not as effectively draw people together from the community. The YMCA does still in many ways openly embrace the original purpose of its founder, but many more subtle methods are used to better the lives of all people.

X. Purpose & Goal

"Since 1880, the Muncie Family YMCA has sought to fulfill this missions in all its aspects. The goal of each of our programs is to stimulate individual growth and to provide a constructive, wholesome atmosphere conducive to the development of the whole person. We stress the development of character and the teaching of values in all our efforts" (Program 1990, General Information).

XI. Target Market:

As stated in the mission statement, the YMCA wishes to serve all men,
women and children in Delaware County. This means that the services of
the YMCA should be accessible to all persons of the community regardless of
race, sex, religion, or even ability to pay for a membership. Anyone who
cannot afford the membership but would benefit from the YMCA can apply
for financial assistance (in the form of scholarships). The assisted
memberships are funded by the United Way and Sustaining Members of the
YMCA. The Muncie Family YMCA also has specialized programs for youth,
senior citizens, and handicapped individuals. During the year over 4,000
youth are served in some way by the YMCA.

XII. Ethics & Culture

The very nature of the YMCA prescribes the ethics and culture that
dominates it. Working in a religious and charitable organization, the
personnel must believe in what they are doing and enjoy it because non-
profit organizations, as a rule, cannot pay as well as profitable businesses.
The people at the YMCA are friendly, nice and courteous. Part of this comes
naturally, but the YMCA has taken long measures in training their personnel
to be friendly and handle stressful situations. One method of training is a
series of video tapes (which I professionally dubbed for them). The YMCA
also has a close group of workers (at least within each building or area of
work). This makes working conditions favorable and you are made to feel at
home right away.

XIII. Leadership & Personnel

The two leaders that I worked with most closely at the Muncie Family
YMCA were Donald Stetson, President, and Kathie Samuelson, Director of
Communications and Senior Program Director. From them I learned about
what the YMCA had to offer and what is expected of YMCA employees. Both
had many duties to perform and neither were above doing some of the dirty
work. I showed this aspect in the ad I designed for the YMCA showing Don helping load food for a canned food drive (see Appendix A). I was fortunate enough to attend a state wide convention hosted by the Muncie YMCA at the Radisson. There I learned something about the workings of the YMCA and about raising money donations. Although all these leaders play an extremely important part in the YMCA, it could not function without its other dedicated employees and board members from around the community. I have included a list of the YMCA staff here in Muncie (see Appendix B).

XIV. General Information-Personal Work And Comments

As assistant to Ms. Samuelson, my job involved a number of duties including: taking photographs, buying supplies and running errands, and designing flyers. I also wrote press releases which appeared in the Muncie newspaper. I had personal contact with prospective new members during the YMCA open house. During these, I gave tours to help them understand and appreciate the activities and facilities available at the YMCA. I also was able to explain some of the classes and other leagues offered. I wrote various advertisements for the YMCA which ran in the Advertiser, as well as on WIPB and WBST. I also was in charge of many in house projects such as bulletin boards and posters. In these I tried to instill the life and vitality of the YMCA while creating an image of something new. I used the marketing method of AIDA to try to convey the proper message to the viewer. I also was in charge of showing the users of the YMCA some of the fiscal figures which affected the facilities they used. In all of the duties I performed, I used the knowledge I gained from my Telecommunications and Marketing classes to provide the most innovative and exciting solutions possible. The experience in public relations was comparable to many that are available in profitable organizations. I would like to encourage anyone interested in
working for a charitable organization to do so. It is worthwhile and rewarding, and you might make a little money.

If you are thinking of becoming a member of the YMCA, I feel you should give it serious consideration. The YMCA offers a wide variety of programs for young and old alike. Programs include: sports leagues, physical fitness, aquatics, preschool, arts, camps, dance, theater, day care, massage, martial arts, racquetball, wellness, and clubs. There are many classes available at all skill levels in these areas and others that I haven’t covered.

The YMCA has changed along with society. Whether or not the YMCA follows the prescriptions set down in 1944 is a matter of opinion. But what can be said for certain about the YMCA is that is now provides quality service and facilities at a reasonable price and provides service to the community. George Williams may not have envisioned what the Muncie Family YMCA has become, but I think he would approve of the work and community service that is being done.

**XV. Afterward:**

On the following pages I have included a small number of pictures showing some of the responsibilities that I had. Each of these pictures represents a small portion of the types and total duties I had during my work experience. During this experience, I learned more about real life PR in a non-profit organization than can be learned in the textbooks. One of the things I learned is that there is a lot more “cut and paste” jobs than I ever imagined. I also learned about management styles during this time. Kathie was a very laid back type of manager and didn’t structure the work. She left the creative aspect to me and only told me what needed to be done in general. In many other types of work the management style is very
structured; This was even true in other departments of the YMCA. I also learned that working within a budget can be difficult on a wide scale. I learned to prioritize not only with my time but with the money I spent because the YMCA's resources were so limited and the responsibilities so varied. That about wraps up my thoughts concerning my work at the YMCA. I hope that I have given some insight into the workings of a non-profit organization.
Appendixes
YMCA

CANNED FOOD DRIVE

Thanksgiving is just around the corner and some of us have a lot to be thankful for. But there are some who are less fortunate. Help those less fortunate this Thanksgiving by bringing in $10 worth of canned food with the receipt, and we will waive the initiation fee on any YMCA membership. Food will be given to the Fraternal Order of Police (F.O.P.) for distribution.

Offer ends 11-17-90

YMCA

500 S. Mulberry • Muncie
(317) 286-4448
SERVING YOU: YOUR YMCA STAFF

Program Staff:
President .......................................................... Donald R. Stetson
Assistant Executive & Camp Crosley Director ................. Terry Jones
Assistant Camp Crosley Director .............................. Rich Hayes
Creative Arts Center Director ................................... Shonet Lambert-Martind
Chadam Lane Site Manager & Racquetball Director .......... Anna Shunk
Assistant Site Manager ........................................... Harry Waldmoe
Tennis Director ...................................................... Steve Behrman
Sports Center Directors .......................................... Jay Scott, Dawn Todd
Senior Program Director - Wellness, Physical Ed .............. Becky Braham
Wellness Director .................................................... Regina Austin
Assistant Wellness Director ..................................... Pat Fontana
Aquatic Coordinator .............................................. Lydia Goodpaster
Service Desk Manager ............................................ Chris Conn
Senior Program Director - Child Care ......................... Robin Odle
Youth, Teen and Family Program Director ................. Janette Stumborg, Ann Welch
Day Care .......................................................... Jan Copcock
Red Apple Drop-In Center ...................................... Jan Copdock
Senior Program & Communications Director ........... Jan Copdock
Maintenance / Building & Grounds Director .................. Jan Copdock
Maintenance Assistant ......................................... Ray Gibson
Maintenance Assistant ......................................... Roger VanSkoyck
Maintenance Assistant ......................................... Jack Trent
Camp Crosley Buildings & Grounds ......................... Mike Beaver, Sam Lundy

Business Office:
Administrative Assistant ....................................... Evelyn Tolliver
Membership Director .............................................. Vicki Clabby, Lynn Lambert
Secretary ........................................................... Debbie Rutherford, Jennie Collins
Front Desk Downtown ............................................. Pam Jones, Lori Stanley, Suetta Burns
Service Desk Downtown .......................................... Kim Smith, Dick Ward
Racquetball ......................................................... Lynda Jackson
Massage ............................................................. Jack Baker,
Bus Drivers ......................................................... Richard Wait, Rita Wait

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
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Vice Chairman ..................................................... Stefan S. Anderson
Secretary/Treasurer .............................................. Michael Cox

Edmund F. Ball
Richard Ringoem  Thomas DeWeese
Frank Ball  Jim Schreengost

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Robert Haas  David Heeter  Darwin Keypn
Frank Krause  Tim Kuzma  Tom Leard
Mike Lunsford  Sam Reed  Joan Ringoem
Robert Robinson  William Skinner
Scott Shockley  William Summers
Fred Wengter  Carl Williams

CAMP CROSLY COMMITTEE
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Leland Brown  Michael Cox  Tom DeWeese
W H Fillie  John Fisher  John Hampton
Larry Helms  Frank Krause  Ron Martin
Verdell Parker  Joan Reed  Joan Ringoem
J. Robert Taylor  Robert Walsh  Sparky Walsh
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