



YMCA officials and invited guests are ready with gold hammers in hand to mark construct Street facility. The YMCA is getting a facelift and expanded capacity.

## Pittsfield YMCA Launches \$12.4M Renovation of North Street Facility

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PITTSFIELD, Mass. — The Berkshire Family YMCA broke ground Wednesday on its \$12.4 million overhaul that expands its child-care program, improves the athletic facilities, and updates its facade.

"When we look at projects, and when we look at opportunities, it's always about the people the

[YMCA] serves," CEO and Executive Director Jessica Rumlow said.

"How can we do better? How can we support more families and kids? How can we fulfill the [YMCA]'s mission of putting caring honesty, respect, and responsibility into programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all? I can tell you we will be able to do so much more, better, and effectively once this project is completed."



**Executive Director Jessica Rumlow says the YMCA is always looking at how it can serve the community better.**

The project is expected to take 15 to 18 months and still has a way to go with fundraising. So far, the YMCA has been able to raise roughly \$7.5 million of the over \$12 million price tag. Planning for the project began in 2017.

It has been awarded a \$1 million child-care facility grant from the Early Education and Out of School Time (EOST) Capital Fund, \$250,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds, lending from MassDevelopment, and \$3.2 million in equity from the Community Reinvestment Fund and US Bank.

The renovation has also received \$600,000 in historic tax credits from the state.

Key improvements are focused on child care, updated athletic facilities, and facade improvements. Allegrone Companies is the project's general contractor.

An expanded child-care facility will provide 25 additional spots for children. There will be a new infant room and additional toddler room as well as an expanded pre-school area.

The new child-care section will also include a science, technology, arts, and math (STEM) space and a gross motor skills space.

The first community-based indoor walking and running track in Berkshire County will be a part of the fitness improvements along with a new basketball court that will house the 300 children who participate in the Catholic Youth Center basketball league.

The court will also provide space for other programs and activities for all ages.

Structural and facade improvements will be made to the 1909 building that has not seen an update since the 1980s expansion. These include large, energy-efficient glass windows to replace the front brick wall and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements throughout the building.

The makeover is intended to contribute to the cultural landscape of North Street, which was deemed a Downtown Creative District in the last year.

Mayor Linda Tyer has been a supporter of this project from day one.

"People who need housing, have found a home here at all ages, from infancy to our seniors have made the YMCA a place where they can experience health, well being and make friends and find joy," she said. "There is nothing more important than that in the strength of a community and the strength of our communities depends on the strength of our nonprofits like the YMCA."

U.S. Rep. Richie Neal attended the groundbreaking, his second of the day after participating in \$60 million Eagle Mill launch in Lee. He has been a member of the Springfield YMCA for more than 50 years and sees this project as a great investment.

He pointed out that the \$3 million in extra equity translates to \$12 million in New Market tax credits under the heading of a tax expenditure, which is how the tax code is used to allocate investment in initiatives that are seen as worthwhile.

Neal, who chairs the powerful Ways and Means Committee, spoke on the committee's authority with the ARPA funds and how the monies impact projects like this. The committee was responsible for allocating \$1 trillion of the \$1.8 trillion bill.

"How about that child credit, we have cut poverty in half just in the last nine months for children. How about the dependent care credit, for using facilities like the [YMCA] for child care?" he said.

"The number of women that had to leave the job market because when schools shut down they had to choose between their job or child care, but we intend to generously boost those opportunities as well for the American people."

State Sen. Adam Hinds was recognized as a champion of the project, jumping on board to make it happen immediately after having it proposed to him by board member and Capital Campaign Committee Chairman Matthew Scarafoni.

"It's because it just checks so many boxes, I mean, the exterior part of how we keep redeveloping downtown Pittsfield is making sure building by building that we have these beautiful landmarks and making sure that that complements the new major investments across the street in the Hotel on North," he said. "And everything that this

does for child care, and in the like, the mobility, a place for everyone to go no matter what your age, it's exactly what we need, bringing more people downtown."

Also in attendance at the groundbreaking were state Rep. Tricia Farley Bouvier and Councilor at Large Earl Persip III.

Over the next two years, the Berkshire YMCA will be fundraising and applying for grants to fill the \$4 million gap in funding that is needed to complete the project.

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