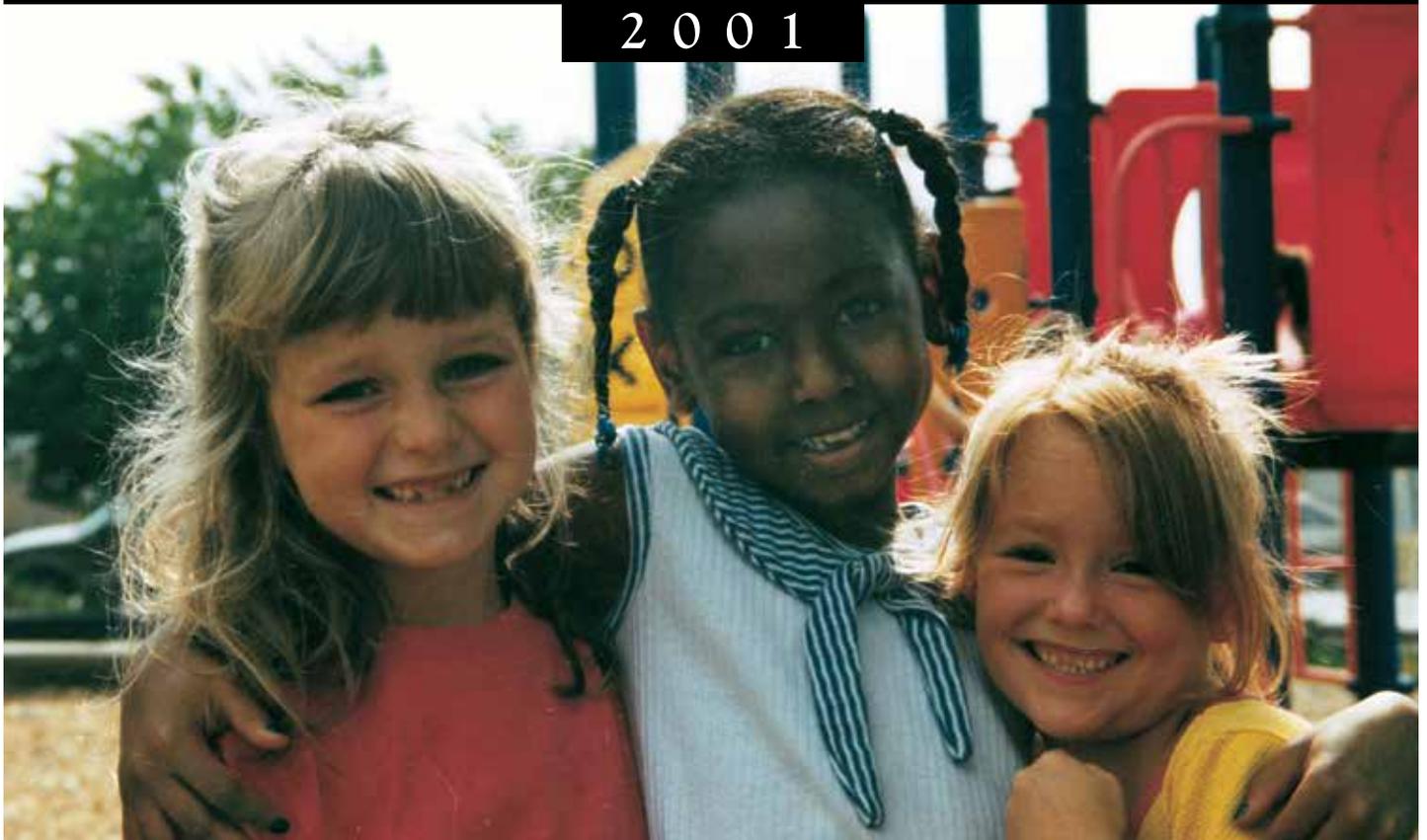




The logo for YWCA Topeka is centered in the image. It features a red stylized 'Y' with radiating lines above the text 'YWCA' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below 'YWCA' is the word 'Topeka' in a smaller font. At the bottom of the logo box, the years '1887' and '2001' are stacked vertically, separated by a horizontal line.



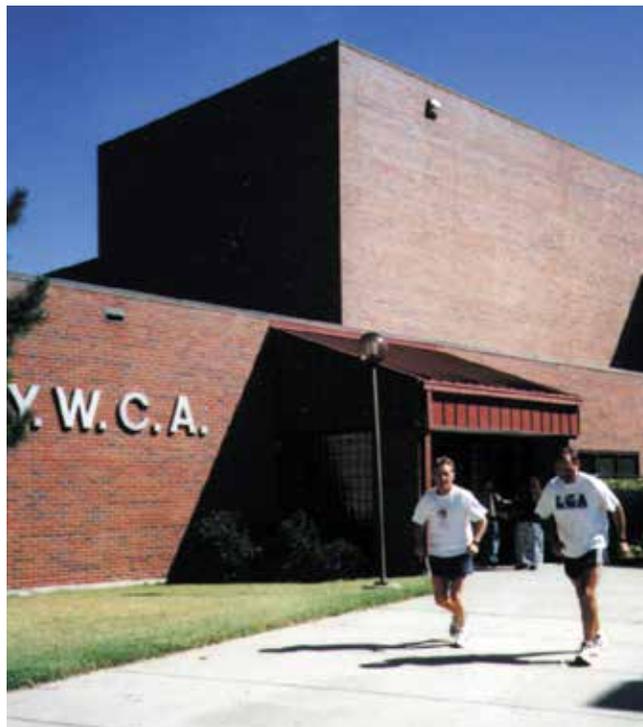
# GROWING DOWNTOWN

*“...to create opportunities for women’s growth, leadership, and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people.”*

**Y**WCA Topeka joined the growing YWCA movement in 1887. Its current day mission “to create opportunities for women’s growth, leadership, and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people” was expressed even at the turn of the century, with practical expressions of support — affordable residential rooms, inexpensive meals, and a job referral service for young women.

By 1909, growth of YWCA Topeka led to the need for a building large enough to house all the services provided by the organization. In 1911 the first YWCA Topeka was opened at 7th and VanBuren. The three-story house included a swimming pool in the basement — the only location where women could swim, in a time when men and women could not share swimming facilities.

Through the years YWCA Topeka adapted to the changing needs of women and families. In the 1920s, with women entering more diverse jobs and professions, the YWCA led the formation



of groups such as the Business Girls League, the Young Matrons, the Negro Business and Professional Women’s Club, the Girl Reserves, and the Senioritas Club.

When the Depression hit in the 1930s, the organization provided a soup kitchen for the community, a women’s unemployment bureau, and services for families dislo-

cated by economic loss. In 1953, a year prior to the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, YWCA Topeka fully adopted integrated policies and welcomed all members of the community into the YWCA family.

Decades of change created new challenges for women and the YWCA programs adapted with the change. By the mid 80s, childcare,

health and wellness, and services to victims of domestic violence were now important YWCA programs. In 11 satellite locations around the city, the YWCA continued the mission it began over a century before.

In 1996, the YWCA Topeka Board of Directors adopted a more defined vision statement: YWCA Topeka shall be the women’s leadership center within the greater Shawnee County community with the financial, facility, and other resources necessary to support all approved programs that empower girls and women to achieve leadership positions within their homes, employment, and community.

Attaining the goal would require extensive renovations to its main site at West 12th Street (the organization had long outgrown its 7th Street beginnings). The 41,507-square foot building downtown was currently housing a childcare center, a teen pregnancy prevention area, domestic violence and sexual assault programs, health and fitness programs, and administrative offices. “In our experience, the YWCA Topeka clearly has one of the most

comprehensive series of women's programs of any group," offered Bob Hartsook, consultant for the group's Downtown Capital Campaign.

As early as 1995, Board and staff recognized a need to expand and renovate its building. Constructed in 1976, the 12th Street facility was due for some remodeling. Mechanical systems were inefficient, the roof needed attention, and office and meeting space was at a premium. Fulfilling the vision of becoming a "center" for services to women and families would require a capital campaign of significant proportions.

In the spring of 1997, the organization was approached by a retirement community and offered a gift of land. The reciprocal gift was that the YWCA agree to build a health and fitness center open to the community and accessible to the retirement residents. The proposal had potential for mutual merit, but the question at hand was whether the YWCA could stretch its mission beyond the downtown area and take on the responsibility of another facility.

A year was spent internally considering this possibility. After much discussion, a clear answer was still elusive. Said Kay Coles, YWCA Topeka's executive director, "We really believed an external assessment was necessary to make this decision. After searching for a consultant to oversee this process, we retained the firm of Hartsook Companies in the fall of 1998. The study was based on a premise that we would undertake a \$5 million capital campaign for the new building in the southwest part of the city as well as remodel the downtown facility. Hartsook Companies conducted the assessment and reported



back to the Board that there was not enough support to expand to the southwest. There was, however, strong support to expand and renovate downtown.

In November 1998 the Board voted to proceed with a campaign for \$2.5 million, which included a \$250,000 endowment. An impressive line up of leadership offered a hint of the success this campaign could expect. "We were fortunate to recruit four of the top CEOs in the area, as well as the State Attorney General, Carla Stovall," Coles said.

"Then we had an important event occur in the summer of 1999. Security Benefit Group of Companies, one of the largest companies in Topeka, was building a new facility and interested in selling its existing one to the State of Kansas. I read an article about this in the newspaper back in February of '99. The article indicated that the state was not interested in buying Security Benefit's childcare building. The company had an interesting history with YWCA. Coincidentally, the city's first YWCA building had been razed to put in Security Benefit's parking lot. The company had supported YWCA and the CEO, Howard Fricke, was an

Honorary Co-chair for the campaign steering committee. I called Howard and mentioned the article. I asked him if Security Benefit Group was interested in donating the childcare center to a worthy organization. 'Why,' he asked – well aware of my intentions – 'Do you have a worthy organization in mind?'"

The rest is new history for YWCA and Security Benefit Group. The company generously donated the free stand-



ing childcare building to YWCA Topeka (valued at \$1 million with furnishings). With this gift, the steering committee recommended and the Board agreed in August to adjust the cam-

paign goal up from \$2.5 to \$3.5 million. This was a major milestone in the campaign and it greatly increased momentum for the remainder of the effort.

The donated building, located about six blocks from YWCA's downtown facility, put the campaign "on the map." By the fall of 1999, YWCA received Board member gifts, with 100% financial participation. "Hartsook Companies laid out a strategic plan that involved grants, corporate gifts and a State of Kansas community service income tax credit piece, which we applied for in the summer of '99. From this, we received \$300,000 tax credits for cash gifts," said Coles.

Major corporations began giving toward the campaign at a fairly rapid clip. Impressive grant gifts also highlighted the YWCA campaign. In November 1999, Coles and a team of steering committee members traveled to the Mabee Foundation in Tulsa. Presenting the case

for renovations to the downtown facility, YWCA was notified in January 2000 that the organization had received a \$525,000 Mabee Challenge Grant.



It's pretty special in this community to receive \$750,000 from out of state. This would not have occurred without the coaching (and prodding) from Bob."

For over a century, YWCA Topeka has been instrumental in the community – matching the needs of women and families with high-quality, accessible programs and support. With the additions and renovations provided through the Downtown Capital Campaign, YWCA is building a strong center of support for another century of service.

In September of 2000, YWCA received a Kresge Grant for \$225,000. Many corporations that donated to the campaign at the leadership level (\$25,000 and above) gave the largest gifts they had ever given in Topeka. AmVestors Financial, Inc. and Hallmark Cards each gave \$150,000. Hallmark, with a plant in Topeka, pledged a gift double their previous high gift to any Topeka organization, to the YWCA campaign.

"Our steering committee really opened doors in the community. It is very unusual to get four highly visible CEOs on a steering committee. We knew this put us in good shape from the beginning. Also, YWCA has a long history in Topeka — and a good reputation for running quality programs and responding to community needs. One thing we realized over the course of the campaign was that the YWCA had tremendous community support. You believe your programs are excellent and your work is important, but people are just too busy to

spontaneously stop and show appreciation for what you do. The campaign created a public awareness of our work and provided a natural opportunity for the community to show its appreciation. The campaign was very energizing for our staff. We received positive and demonstrated feedback and support from the community through the campaign process," Coles said.

Additions and renovations to the downtown facility will come in three phases: one, a 14,000-square foot Battered Women Task Force Center, and Health Arena, scheduled for April 2001; two, 2,000-square foot area for the Girls to Girls program, as well as swimming pools and locker rooms, scheduled for December 2001; and three, minor renovations to the new YWCA childcare academy acquired from Security Benefit Group of Companies, to be completed by June 2002.

"Kay Coles ran this campaign from start to finish. For someone who might not



consider herself a fundraiser by nature or by experience, Kay did a masterful job of getting YWCA's story before the right people and making this campaign a real success," offered Bob Hartsook.

"Actually, Hartsook Companies was our partner from the very beginning of this campaign. They helped us lay out the strategy and gave essential guidance on how to secure the gifts. If it had not been for their direct assistance and constant, relentless prodding – I mean encouragement – we would not have been as successful.

*For more information about YWCA Topeka call 785.233.1750 or visit [www.ywcatopeka.org](http://www.ywcatopeka.org).*

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Denise Rhoades is a free-lance writer living in Newton, Kansas. Denise has worked on several projects for Hartsook Companies and regularly writes campaign case statements and articles for Hartsook clients.*

*For more information about Hartsook Companies call 316.630.9992 or visit [www.hartsookcompanies.com](http://www.hartsookcompanies.com).*

