

YMCA Thessaloniki

A way of life for a lifetime

Greeting from the Board of Directors

Since it was founded in 1921, YMCA Thessaloniki has shaped the character of almost four generations of citizens. With uncompromising values and a vision that springs from the selfless and constant assistance it offers, it has evolved over time while staying true to its principles and firmly focused on young people. It represents one of the most historic chapters of both the city of Thessaloniki and the country as a whole. It is an organisation that has been present during times of social change and radical overturning of social structures, as well as during times of creativity and growth.

YMCA Thessaloniki is part of the global YMCA volunteer movement. Its constant challenge is to fight for the mental, spiritual and physical development of young people as a way of achieving personal fulfilment, and to help them grow into active and aware citizens who will in turn fight for a society without discrimination. With the tireless efforts and loving care of its volunteers, it still stands today at the same location, a landmark of life in Thessaloniki.

It has its own modern facilities and is active beyond the city limits of Thessaloniki, through its branches in Kalamaria and Asvestohori. Through its summer camp programmes, its presence extends to Pelion, Chalkidiki, Pindos, Nymfaio and the Northern Sporades islands.

After a nearly 100-year history, YMCA Thessaloniki today is a symbol and an active embodiment of human values, serving as a companion throughout the life of each of its members. With a strong sense of responsibility built on the foundation of its history, YMCA Thessaloniki renews its commitment to foster the growth of young people, to lead the way and to help shape a “way of life for a lifetime”, as well as to support less fortunate social groups.

After nearly 100 years of active progress, YMCA Thessaloniki remains ever-present; a corner stone of responsibility standing worthy of its history, its social imprint and the truth it promotes for Greece.

About us

During the turbulent period in history following the Industrial Revolution, 12 workers in London, headed by George Williams, in 1844 founded the YMCA, the largest and most historic world organisation for young people. Nowadays, the YMCA is headquartered in Geneva, as it continues its volunteer work in 119 countries with more than 58 million members.

In Thessaloniki, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Thessaloniki was founded in 1921. It is a charitable, non-profit association that through the National Council of YMCAs of Greece is also a member of the European Alliance of YMCAs and the World Alliance of YMCAs. It is an important chapter in both athletics and culture in Greece.

Its presence to date has been vitally important to the city. YMCA Thessaloniki is housed in one of the city's historic buildings and a landmark in its urban development. It is located between the White Tower and the new City Hall. The building is home to the administrative offices and serves as a venue for the Association's sporting and educational activities. It includes outdoor athletic facilities and a modern sports centre with a covered court, fitness studios, and the first Basketball Museum in Greece. The organisation is active in the broader area through two branches, in Kalamaria and Asvestohori, as well as through its organised summer camps in Pelion, Chalkidiki, Pindos, Nymfaio and the Northern Sporades islands.

YMCA-Th has more than 1,000 regular and 12,000 ad hoc members who take part in its programmes and activities. It is managed by 24 volunteers (regular members) and the members of the Board of Directors (elected), who are assisted by 250 volunteer members serving on special committees to advise and make recommendations to the Board to enhance the functions of the Association in its various activities. YMCA-Th's regular functions are supported by 45 regular staff members, 185 occasional employees, and 50 seasonal employees. Through sports, education, exercise, camps, social contribution and action, based largely on volunteer work, the Association aims at a balanced development of young people's spirit, mind, body and sociability. These goals are reflected in the YMCA-Th logo - an equilateral triangle bisected by a line of equal length.

The organisation's actions promote fundamental human values, highlight customs and traditions, culture, athletics and the importance of a healthy mind and body, while strengthening the educational process through experiential programmes for all ages aimed at empowering people.

Our Vision

YMCA Thessaloniki's vision is to be an inclusive, participatory and democratic organisation centred around young people and their care. With respect for tradition, while steadily focused on innovation, the aim of YMCA-Th is that its members contribute as volunteers and serve its purposes through the actions and programmes it implements.

With an open and creative spirit, and faith in the universal principles of practising Christianity without dogmatism, it promotes justice and supports a complete society, with dialogue and respect for diversity, a society of equality and love without discrimination.

Our mission

The aim and steadfast concern of YMCA Thessaloniki is for children and young people.

Its priority is to contribute to society by strengthening character and cultivating a culture of volunteerism amongst youth.

The Association endeavours, through actions and hands-on programmes, to help young people believe in themselves, to develop their potential, to prepare to take on positions of responsibility, and to become active and useful citizens.

Consistently fostering a balanced growth of mind, body, spirit and sociability of children and young people.

Our principles
Dignity
Solidarity, love, support
Honesty and integrity in our relationships with others
Responsibility
Care and respect for human beings
Closeness to nature and protection of the environment
Desire to contribute and a strong sense of volunteerism

Unravelling the thread of history

YMCA Thessaloniki's long history dates back almost a century, when in 1918, volunteers from YMCAs in the US arrived in the city to set up "Soldiers' Homes": houses that would meet the needs for meals and entertainment of Greek and Allied armed forces fighting along the Macedonian Front.

A short while later, members of the American YMCA introduced the game of basketball and volleyball to Greece. The games had been invented at YMCA colleges in Massachusetts in 1891 and 1895 respectively.

In 1921, conditions were ripe for leading figures of the city, such as Thessaloniki Metropolitan Gennadios and Prefect N. Paraskevopoulos, to establish YMCA Thessaloniki. The organisation's human face was apparent from the start.

YMCA-Th continued along its course over the ensuing years, in spite of hard times and socio-political transitions. It came to touch the lives of increasingly more people, as it developed organised structures for those in need. At the same time, its energetic actions inspired a sense of security throughout the local community. The Metaxas dictatorship interrupted the work of YMCA-Th. In 1946, it was reformed and once again set its sights on making an important contribution. Along the way, it called to action thousands of Thessaloniki citizens and it expanded its work through branches and summer camps.

With transparency and trustworthiness, reliability and constancy, it managed to lead the ordinary lives of the local community and the young people of the city into a new era.

The fact is that the history of YMCA-Th is its people.

YMCA THESSALONIKI TODAY

For YMCA Thessaloniki, its daily objective is, through the actions it plans and implements, to offer support to each and every member, any time, any day, and throughout their lives. That is the way in which the Association supports human development and contributes to adopting a healthy lifestyle for every person who is or feels young.

To achieve its objective, YMCA-Th is in touch with modern-day needs and, through its organised programmes, is able to play an important role in helping its members grow and develop at multiple levels. The actions are planned and implemented along four pillars that serve as the foundation for its presence in the life of the city and manifest its vision for the holistic development of all those who choose to take advantage of every opportunity.

PILLARS	TELEPHONE (+30)	E-MAIL
SPORTS & WELL-BEING	2316 001 000 Int. tel No 810 & 811	teams@ymca.gr
EDUCATION & CULTURE	2316 001 000 Int. tel No 831, 832, 854	education@ymca.gr , sxstelexon@ymca.gr
CAMPS & ENVIRONMENT	2316 001 000 Int. tel No 850-854 & 840	camps@ymca.gr
PEOPLE & SOCIETY	2316 001 000 Int. tel No 841 & 842	socialaction@ymca.gr

SPORTS & WELL-BEING

Sports teams and academies

Having a long tradition in sporting activities, YMCA Thessaloniki fosters teams in a wide range of sports, exclusively and strictly oriented to amateur athletics. As a sports organisation, it is a founding member of SEGAS Athletics Federation and most other athletic federations. At the same time, YMCA-Th runs sports academies to develop future generations of athletes. With a deeply held belief in the sporting culture, it provides all of the necessary infrastructure, while its specially trained athletic staff is constantly at the side of young people at their every step, bringing out their skills and strengthening their competitive development by applying best athletic practices.

Currently taking part in the 10 competitive teams supported by YMCA-Th are 800 registered athletes.

More than 1,300 children take part in the 14 sports academies run by the Association each year, learning about the individual sports and about the sporting ideals. Aside from the sports academies which operate throughout the school year, athletic camps are also held at the YMCA-Th facilities throughout the summer to teach other sports, along with specialised camps for basketball, football and swimming.

SPORTS TEAMS	ACADEMIES
Basketball	Basketball
Water polo	Water polo
Handball	Handball
Volleyball	Volleyball
Judo	Judo
Table tennis	Table tennis
Swimming	Swimming
Tae Kwon Do	Tae Kwon Do
Chess	Chess
Football	Football
	Tennis
	Archery
	Fencing
	Squash

Fitness programmes

For YMCA Thessaloniki, a healthy mind together with physical exercise constitute the ideal recipe for a good, healthy way of life. Everyone has a right to well-being, and can take part in the groups and organised sports, even if they do not exercise regularly.

That is why the experienced trainers at YMCA-Th seek out modern methods of fitness training and explore new trends, each year bringing even more total fitness programmes to the city for children, teens and adults.

In this way, all citizens can choose their own fitness “mix”, depending on their personal needs.

About 2,500 adults and 500 children take part in these programmes annually. The pool classes are particularly popular, as the Thessaloniki public can use the only indoor heated pool in the centre of the city, housed in the YMCA-Th listed building, for free swimming or swimming and water fitness classes. The Association’s full menu of programmes also includes modern classes for fitness and alternative exercise, as well as activities tailored to pre-school aged children.

Amongst the classes preferred mainly by young girls and women are those teaching various styles of dance and ballet, while weekly artistic dance workshops are held during the summer. Along with the activities that YMCA-Th offers, it also stages or hosts seminars and events on its premises that are relevant to its own objectives.

SUMMER SPORTS PROGRAMMES
Sports Camp
Basketball Camp
Football Camp
Swim Camp
Artistic Dance Workshop
PRE-SCHOOL AGE
Ballet
Pre-ballet Music and Movement
Rhythmic Gymnastics
Move & Play
ADULTS
Dance
Alternative Exercise
Fitness
Swimming pool
Martial Arts
CHILDREN & TEENS
Hip-hop
Modern dance
Capoeira
Aikido-Kendo
Kickboxing
Junior Modern Dance
Rhythmic Gymnastics
Acrobatics
Latin & Zumba Fun
Fit & Dance
Ballet

EDUCATION & CULTURE

For YMCA Thessaloniki, education and culture is much more than recycling knowledge. They are the foundations of a society of equal citizens, and set the parameters for cultivating and enriching human potential.

Through a wide range of activities, with a steady focus on youth, YMCA-Th aims to strengthen the innate talents of its members and give them the cultural and educational tools that attach the highest priority to values and a healthy attitude towards all of society. In a society of many divergent elements, YMCA-Th embraces the diversity of people and sends a message of change, as it charts a steadfast course that originates from its vision. Along these axes, YMCA-Th's actions are reflected through a variety of activities that cover every aspect of education.

BASKETBALL MUSEUM
YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING SCHOOL
KINDERGARTEN NURSERY SCHOOL
FOLK DANCE CLUB
THEATRE
DRAWING-PAINTING
PHOTOGRAPHY
CENTRE FOR EDUCATION AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING
MUSIC
ART WORKSHOPS
SEMINARS
CULTURE
SCHOOL VISITS
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES
SUMMER CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES
EASTER CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES
CHRISTMAS CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMES

BASKETBALL MUSEUM

The first Basketball Museum in Greece and the fourth in the world is located right where basketball was first played in Greece in 1919. American volunteers brought the new sport to Greece and taught it to those eager to learn. Since then, YMCA Thessaloniki has played a major role in making it a highly popular sport in Greece.

The Basketball Museum was founded in 2013 with funding from the cross-border Cooperation Programme INTERREG V-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2007-2013", as part of the "Youth Mobilisation - Cultural Heritage and Athletic Valorisation" programme. The purpose of the Basketball Museum is to familiarise visitors with the history and major milestones of the sport in Greece. It also aims to highlight the important role of the Association in the development and dissemination of a sport that has become an inseparable part of Greek athletic and cultural heritage. The museum draws the interest of thousands of citizens and well-known figures in Greece. More than 4,000 students tour the exhibits of the Basketball Museum each year to learn about how the sport grew in Greece over the years.

At the same time, all young visitors have the opportunity to learn and train in sports at the Association's athletic facilities. Additionally, more than 800 kindergarten-aged children take part in educational programmes specially designed for pre-schoolers and led by trained teachers.

The museum's collection is constantly enriched with new exhibits. YMCA-Th, as part of the new cross-border Interreg programme, hopes to expand the museum and rebuild its outdoor sports facilities.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING SCHOOL

Since 1990, YMCA Thessaloniki has been running a three-year, informal training school for staff and young volunteers (Youth Leadership Training School).

The programme is aimed at teens aged 14 to 16 who are trained in cooperation, leadership, responsibility and initiative through team-building games and activities. A hands-on, experiential approach is used for teen training. Through dynamic and creative experiences, and continuous encouragement and guidance from their teachers, the participants are able to unlock their potential. Play is a key teaching tool, through which participants gain knowledge and valuable experiences.

Amongst other things, the Training School endeavours to develop a healthy way of thinking about and responding to young people's everyday life and to help develop the participants' personality so they can function effectively and productively, initially as part of a team and later as members of society.

Once they finish their training, the young volunteers are able to assume positions of responsibility at camps and in social action programmes offered by YMCA-Th or other charitable organisations. Each year, 600 trainees take part in the Training School, under the guidance of 80 volunteer trainers aged 18 to 30. The programme is organised by a team of young volunteers supervised by experienced professionals.

In the last 10 years, YMCA-Th has held its training programme in Athens, Volos and at its Asvestohori Branch.

KINDERGARTEN & NURSERY SCHOOL

YMCA Thessaloniki is present from the very early stages of an individual's socialisation.

As part of this effort, YMCA-Th has operated since 1965 a nursery school and kindergarten where it follows a model programme. Children aged 2½ to 6 have the opportunity to engage in activities outside their home for the first time.

In a pleasant and friendly environment designed in accordance with modern specifications, children from throughout the city, and under the guidance of trained teachers, make new friends, practice their language skills and develop rational thought through a number of educational activities.

At the same time, as part of attending the nursery school and kindergarten at YMCA-Th, they can take part in clubs for music, English and dance, learn about team sports and swimming with specialised trainers at the Association's facilities or take part in a special educational programme at the Basketball Museum.

WALKS THROUGH THE CITY

Recognising a need for citizens to learn more about the monuments, historical sites and cultural events that take place in the city and the greater area, YMCA Thessaloniki in 1991 developed the "Walks through the City" programme. This ground-breaking initiative is successfully offered in cooperation with the Hellenic Society for the Environment and Cultural Heritage.

By following routes through the city in which they live and work, YMCA-Th members learn about Thessaloniki's history and culture experientially, through tours led by knowledgeable experts. The tour explores aspects of local history related to both the city's own heritage as well as the intangible heritage of the country, and helps participants gain a deeper understanding of the city while raising their awareness of issues related to protecting its cultural heritage.

FOLK DANCE CLUB

Since its start in 1983, the YMCA Thessaloniki Folk Dance Club aspires to preserve the music and dance traditions and customs of Greece. As part of its scope, the Folk Dance Club runs classes to teach and showcase traditional dances along with a traditional chorus. Hundreds of citizens take part in the groups which cultivate citizens' relationship to such cultural elements and we endeavour to develop actions that strengthen their ties to the cultural life and events that take place in the city and its environs.

SEMINARS

History of art

Creative writing

ART WORKSHOPS

Dress-making
Sewing
Fashion design
Make-up
Macramé
Origami
Knitting
Nail art
Metal jewellery
Decoupage
Robotics
Soap-making - natural cosmetics

Each school year, YMCA Thessaloniki develops and implements a number of educational seminars for people of all ages. Acquiring new knowledge becomes a daily goal and those taking part can cultivate their interests and make creative use of their free time. They also have the option of earning a certificate in innovative and targeted programmes through the Centre for Education and Life-long Learning.

Theatre workshops for children and adults, workshops in art, music lessons in various instruments, crafts and photography classes are just a few of the programmes offered.

Amongst other things, the people at YMCA-Th conduct a large number of activities for children as young as 6 months, in which they initially take part with their parents, and later on their own, in small groups. In these smaller groups, the children learn to socialise and interact, to share and work as a team.

The YMCA-Th auditorium (small Avlaia Theatre) becomes a venue for shadow puppet and hand-puppet shows every weekend for the public, and on weekdays for schools. In addition, constructive summer activity programmes are offered weekly during school holiday periods.

CAMPS & ENVIRONMENT

With a long tradition in operating summer camp programmes, YMCA Thessaloniki offers young people and adults the opportunity to participate in unique experiences that foster individual growth, independence and socialisation, develop friendships and support team efforts. For more than 90 years, YMCA-Th has promoted, through comprehensive camp programmes, the idea of organisation and co-existence as part of a team in nature.

The variety of stimuli and activities available provide campers with a chance to discover and develop their talents and skills. The camps are ideal for practising decision-making without being told what to do and how to do it, as everyone there must negotiate their needs and wants not only with their peers, but with other adults.

Generations of citizens from Thessaloniki and all of Greece have passed through the YMCA-Th camps, where all of its members come together and where the friendships created there last a lifetime. It is not surprising that the repeat attendance of children taking part in the YMCA-Th camp programmes is 80%. Of all of the YMCA-Th programmes, the summer camps are where the succession of generations is most evident. Today's campers stay in the same tents as their parents and grandparents before them.

YMCA-Th activities complement each other, impacting every aspect of life and every need for human expression, while satisfying the thirst for knowledge and growth in complete balance with health and physical well-being.

YMCA-Th was first in Greece to introduce the summer camp institution, starting in 1922 with a day camp programme in Agia Triada, Thessaloniki. It was the establishment of the camp in Agios Ioannis, Pelion, that marked the introduction of the first organised, extended-stay children's summer camp in Greece. The same drive led to establishing other summer camp programmes in Chalkidiki, Nymfaio, Pindos and the Northern Sporades islands.

The purpose of the camp programmes is to bring campers of all ages close to nature and encourage experiences through which they can explore their skills, develop their personality and create close bonds of friendship.

PELION

The YMCA camp at Pelion was established in 1924 and was the first organised camp for children in Greece.

It was very forward-thinking for its time, and incorporated innovative programmes for youth. Amongst others leading the effort to set up the camp were Louis Reese, the man who brought basketball to Greece through the YMCA, and one of the first directors, the head of Physical Education at YMCA-Th, Apostolos Nikolaidis.

Through its long history, it welcomed tens of thousands of Greek children to its tents, as well as campers from all over the world, as its operation gained a national reputation and became a point of reference for all camps in Greece. It is located in the seaside village of Agios Ioannis, in the Municipality of Zagora-Mouresi, and extends over 20,000 m², in a lush natural setting shaded by age-old plane trees.

Every summer, 3 camp sessions of 23 days each welcome a total of 800 campers and 150 staff. Other themed programmes are held after the end of the camp season. In years observing a 5- or 10-year anniversary of the camp, the celebrations are sensational. The events and performances held have gone down in history and they are often occasions for hundreds of former campers and friends of the camp from around the world to come together once again.

CHALKIDIKI

The camp at Chalkidiki opened in 1972.

It is located 110 km from Thessaloniki at Agios Nikolaos, in the middle leg of Chalkidiki - the Sithonia peninsula. The camp extends over a pine-covered, privately owned slope of 12 hectares, leading to the sea and a beach of 350 m.

Three 23-day sessions are held each summer, each attended by about 1,600 children. For nearly 25 years, the third camp session is the only programme in Greece for children with diabetes, with close medical supervision by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki's 3rd University Paediatric Department. A family camp programme takes place at the end of each summer, along with an athletic camp marking the beginning of preparation for YMCA-Th's sports teams.

The Chalkidiki camp includes an additional water sports programme, with small sail boats and canoes, and also features a unique Adventure Trail.

The Chalkidiki camp operates year-round, as it has heated spaces with capacity for housing a small number of guests.

It welcomes small groups, mainly of YMCA-Th trainees, and other educational excursions.

ADVENTURE IN PINDOS

Since 1980, YMCA Thessaloniki has implemented a unique backpacking programme of 12 days in nature along the Pindos mountains, for 35 teenage participants.

It comprises a number of activities combining an educational programme with hiking. Some of the routes covered include the climb to Drakolimni (Dragon Lake) and the peak of Mount Smolikas (2,637 m), traversing the Vikos Gorge, rafting along the Voidomatis River, a trek near the waterfalls of Iliochori and swimming in the Aoos River. Participants sleep in tents, cook outdoors and spend the evenings around the camp fire.

Through these programmes which take them away from routine activities, the youths strengthen their bonds and create memories for a lifetime.

NYMFAIO CAMP CENTRE

Nymfaio is one of the 10 most beautiful villages in Europe, according to UNESCO. The mountain village is built on Vitsi Mountain at an altitude of 1,350 m. In 1978, it was listed as a traditional settlement and is one of the most popular tourist destinations on a global scale. The traditional village with the cobblestone paths and stone-built houses is surrounded by a beech forest. The tracks leading through the woods are ideal for adventure lovers. Due to the wealth of its flora and fauna, Nymfaio is part of the Natura 2000 network. It was in this historical and naturally beautiful place that in 1990 YMCA Thessaloniki decided to launch its camp educational programme. Since 1995, it has been operating on a privately owned site of 4 hectares. All of the facilities are in harmony with the natural environment, respecting the traditional architecture of the region.

The education centre programme includes horse riding, mountain biking, lake activities, visits to the Arcturos wildlife refuge and to the Nikeios School, cleaning actions in the settlement of Nymfaio and environmental activities. It has been designed to help children become knowledgeable about the natural environment and the need to protect it, through experiential education.

Three sessions of 15 days are held each summer for YMCA-Th trainee camp counsellors and host a total of about 200 teens.

Before the start and after the end of these educational sessions, the mountain centre hosts a number of programmes, such as a chess camp, a programme for refugees, a Balkan camp and a music camp.

SAILING ADVENTURE

In 2012, YMCA Thessaloniki introduced a special innovative programme to add a fresh perspective to the meaning of camp:

a programme for teens on sail boats in the Northern Sporades region.

It actively engages the participants in navigating the boat, and provides formal training in nautical and sailing theory, safety on the water, astronomy, fishing, environmental education, visits to historical and tourist sites and, of course, a great deal of fun.

The new activity has been enthusiastically received by young people and often includes participants from abroad.

ADVENTURE IN PELION

Since 2014, YMCA Thessaloniki has offered a backpacking camp programme in north-east Pelion. A group of teens sets out to explore the mythical mountain of the Centaurs as they hike for 12 days along trails and cobblestone paths.

Starting out from the historic camp and headed to the northern-most point of east Pelion, campers walk past the Flamouri Monastery, stunning beaches, the cave of Chiron the Centaur, the Rigas Feraios school, and take a trip by catamaran to the caves of Poseidon.

It is a unique experience for young people who want to immerse themselves in nature, test their resilience, enjoy special moments in beautiful surroundings as part of a group and collect memories that will remain with them forever.

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

YMCA Thessaloniki is committed to respecting the uniqueness of each and every person. To that end, it designs programmes that promote the productive exchange of ideas, the joint planning of initiatives and the broad-based assistance to fellow citizens in need - all through organised volunteer actions.

Helping young people to strengthen their social skills is one of the Association's key priorities. By focusing on activities for the individual and society, it encourages youth to learn to work together for the benefit of the common good.

At YMCA Thessaloniki, volunteerism acquires a different dimension. Through dozens of programmes adapted to the needs of the times, it trains its volunteers both in offering solidarity and assistance to fellow citizens in need, and in actions and interventions that highlight the positive aspects of every city district, contribute to the urban environment and culture, and encourage the adoption of a responsible way of life as active citizens.

YMCA-Th places equal emphasis on issues of concern to individuals. By implementing actions aimed at providing essential support, it stands beside every participant in a meaningful way. Talks on psychoeducation, counselling centres and presentations of specific interest help individuals to rise to modern-day challenges.

For YMCA-Th, its members' way of life reflects the Association's truth, its philosophy and its impact on society as a whole.

Respecting the right of children to equal opportunities in education, sports and recreation, it provides dozens of scholarships for its programmes to children from institutions and social organisations, and youngsters from vulnerable social groups.

Single-parent families needing support, refugees seeking a new home, the unemployed and the elderly find welcoming arms at YMCA-Th, providing assistance, integration and engagement. At the same time, aware of the shortage of necessities that thousands fellow citizens face, YMCA-Th supports social organisations and the Municipality of Thessaloniki's Social Grocery and Food Bank.

A modern-day story of contribution

True to our commitment to support all those in need by contributing to socialisation and sharing our philosophy for balanced social development, YMCA Thessaloniki continues to this day along a course of providing meaningful assistance to all those who arrive in Greece as refugees. Association volunteers respond to the refugee issue, a phenomenon with deep social roots that concerns us all, through action and engagement. Since 2015, a team of YMCA-Th volunteers has worked at the hotspot in Eidomeni and at the refugee facility in Diavata to organise and carry out creative activity programmes for children of refugees.

Since 2016, it has supported refugees fleeing the war in Syria who are living in reception and accommodation centres in Thessaloniki, as well as families being housed in city flats.

Meanwhile, the Association participates in the UNHCR's REACT programme as a member of a coalition of associations headed by the Municipality of Thessaloniki to offer creative and sports activities to children and teens. Refugee children aged 6 to 16 currently living in the municipalities of Thessaloniki, Sykies and Kalamaria take part in programmes offering theatre, art and sporting activities which take place at the YMCA-Th facilities. Aware of the real need for integration and communication, daily classes teaching English, Greek, Spanish and German are run through the React for Life programme and other reliable NGOs, taught by volunteers. These classes are aimed at parents of refugee programme beneficiaries. Also as part of React for Life, YMCA-Th organises film showings aimed at strengthening solidarity and helping to smoothly integrate refugees into the city of Thessaloniki.

Our branches

YMCA Thessaloniki - Kalamaria Branch

About YMCA-Th in Kalamaria

The YMCA-Th branch in Kalamaria has been an important part of the city's community for almost 70 years. Through the programmes and actions representing all aspects of the Association's pillars, it embodies the principles of YMCA-Th as it transmits the message for balanced development of the individual and the importance of contribution and growth. Its members have earned distinctions at multiple levels and in all areas of Kalamaria's social life.

Since its founding, it has been at the core of social, cultural and athletic activity. The YMCA-Th Kalamaria Branch has made its own mark on sporting events, since it was on its own courts that the YMCA-Th handball programme began in the 1980s. It has since evolved to competing in the highest national categories. The Kalamaria Branch also systematically promotes competitive chess in a specially designed hall with numerous tables and with extensive participation in national championships.

Hundreds of children, teens and families take part in the life of the branch and become members of the extended YMCA-Th family. Even today, with its abundant sporting, social and cultural efforts and the energy of its members, it is the heartbeat in the lives of Kalamaria residents.

Kalamaria Branch: 12 Mourouzidon St. | GR-55132 | Kalamaria | T (+30) 2310 454700

YMCA Thessaloniki - Asvestohori Branch

About YMCA-Th in Asvestohori

The YMCA branch at Asvestohori has been a dynamic presence in the area since early 1989, when local residents invited YMCA-Th to bring its pioneering programmes there.

By implementing modern programmes and incorporating the values of YMCA-Th, the branch has come to be identified by the local community with innovation and cultural development.

The presence of the Asvestohori Branch is undeniable proof that YMCA-Th evolves, grows and is welcomed by more and more people throughout Thessaloniki day by day. Through a variety of activities falling under the Association's four pillars, the Asvestohori Branch puts into practice the truths of YMCA-Th, instilling in its members the importance of developing a balanced mind, body, spirit and sociability, from the youngest to the oldest ages.

Asvestohori Branch: 2 Andrea Papandreou St. | GR- 57010 | Asvestohori | T. (+30) 2310 357171 & (+30) 2310 357800

YMCA Thessaloniki

A way of life for a lifetime

1 N. Germanou St. | YMCA-Th XANTH Square
GR- 54621 | Thessaloniki
T. (+30) 2316 001 000 | F. (+30) 2310 264 502
www.ymca.gr