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YMCA Alliance Honored As the Main South Dakota Tree at Christmas at the Capitol 2024

South Dakota YMCAs combine efforts and decorate a live tree to increase awareness of state-wide programs and services.

RAPID CITY, SD November 26, 2024 – Christmas comes alive at the annual Christmas at the Capitol event in Pierre being held Tuesday, November 26 thru Thursday, December 26, 2024. This display includes nearly 100 trees decorated by volunteers from communities, schools, churches, nonprofit organizations and state government offices. Each year a group is chosen to decorate the largest tree in the rotunda.

This year the YMCA Alliance of South Dakota was excited to be selected for this honor. A combined effort among all eight South Dakota YMCA locations (Aberdeen, Box Elder, Custer, Dupree, Edgemont, Pierre, Rapid City and Sioux Falls), Y staff spent hours making handmade ornaments, designing a tree topper, sewing the tree skirt and decorating the tree with the theme “*Through A Child’s Eyes*”. Throughout 2024, the YMCAs of South Dakota have served:

- 594 children in Early Learning/Childcare Programs (ages 0-5)
- 1,724 children in School-Age Afterschool Programs (ages 6-12)
- 619 teens through Teen Programs (ages 12-17)
- 5,699 children through a Summer Camp experience
- 5,717 children in Youth Sports Programming

A Grand Lighting Ceremony will take place in the Capitol rotunda Tuesday, November 26, at 7pm and daily music is scheduled starting November 29th through December 26th.

“Christmas is a time of celebration and reflection,” states Keiz Larson, CEO of the YMCA of Rapid City. “The YMCA brings community together, and we’re thrilled to be honored in the rotunda to represent our commitment to youth development in fostering the core YMCA values of Honesty, Caring, Respect and Responsibility at this event. This event brings people together as a symbol of holiday joy and community spirit recognizing that our children are the future.”

Each year, over 20,000 visitors enjoy the beautifully adorned live trees that decorate South Dakota’s State Capitol. The 2024 display is open to the public daily from 8am-10pm. Admission is free.

Questions? Please contact the Y at 605-718-9622 or visit www.christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov

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About the Rapid City Y

Driven by its founding mission, the Rapid City Y has served as a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community for more than 76 years. The Y empowers everyone, no matter who they are or where they’re from, by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives

and generations, the Y's goal is to improve overall health and well-being, ignite youth empowerment and demonstrate the importance of connections in and across 10,000 communities nationwide. Learn more at rcymca.org