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Member Notice: Non-Discrimination and the YMCA of the Inland Northwest

January 26, 2016

Dear YMCA Members and Friends:

I wanted to reach out to you, our valued member, in order to clarify a law concerning all public organizations and companies within Washington State. As a values-based organization, I believe it is important that you hear from me directly.

I know many of you have heard of the recent adoption by the Human Rights Commission of their implementation and recognition (WAC 162-32-060) of the Washington State Freedom from Discrimination law (RCW 49.60.030). To clarify, this is not a new YMCA policy; it is a state law which has been in place since 2006 but which has just recently come to our attention and become a broader topic of conversation in the community. As such, compliance with the law is not optional.

The law states that individuals may use the rest room or locker room of the gender with which they identify; and additionally, identifying individuals may not be asked to use private spaces.

Let me be clear. Locker rooms are not unisex. This law in no way changes the locker room experience. Just like before, if anyone has a concern for any reason, staff are alerted and the concern is addressed immediately. We will continue to provide the safe experience we always have and our staff is clear about what is, and is not, compliant with the law. Last year we had over one million gate visits to the Y with no incidents.

I have spoken with some parents and individuals who are concerned. Not so much at the YMCA, but for the potential of abuse. I understand. We are, and will continue to be, a welcoming, inclusive organization which is about service for all. That does not mean we will tolerate any abuse of the law.

Recently, we have sought counsel from a number of experts to assist us in better understanding the implications of the law and how it may impact our YMCA operations. We have done this all in an effort to understand the implications, concerns, support and recommendations from involved parties.

YMCA OF THE INLAND NORTHWEST

Corporate | Camp Reed | RSVP

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How we move forward

- YMCA staff will continue to move through locker rooms frequently throughout the hours of operation.
- As always, if any of you experience any inappropriate behavior or notice anything that concerns you, it will be immediately addressed by our staff.
- Each of our local YMCAs (Central, North and Valley) has private changing rooms. These are available for anyone's use.
- Signage is in progress to alert members in locker rooms of our compliance with the law.

Please know my team and I will continue to do our very best to provide the quality YMCA experience you expect, while complying with this and all laws. We are, and will continue to be, an inclusive, welcoming organization and believe that everyone should have the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive at the Y. As the community conversation on this law evolves and continues, we will provide you with updates.

Please reach out to me, or a member of my leadership team, if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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