



YWCA of Alton Invites the Community to Assess Social Justice Issues

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The YWCA national mission states: *The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.* “That’s exactly what we intend to do,” said Mary Pat Venardos, YWCA of Alton Board President. The YWCA of Alton Board of Directors has taken a strategic new direction to institute programming that promotes and upholds the mission. A primary objective is to engage the community and ask for feedback to help define the issues that most effect social justice in the Riverbend community.

The survey will collect information about citizens’ access to education, employment, transportation, law enforcement, health care and housing. It will also provide a picture of the public’s perception of the YWCA of Alton and its work. Dr. Sean Hill, Associate Professor at Lewis and Clark Community College, designed the needs assessment survey with assistance from YWCA staff and the Racial Justice and Women’s Empowerment Advisory Committees.

The results from the survey will guide the YWCA of Alton and community partner organizations to develop programs, services and new initiatives that address specific community needs identified in the survey. These programs and services will be established under the guidance of the newly established *Center for Racial Justice and Dignity* and the *Women’s Empowerment Center*.

The survey takes about three minutes and is easily accessible on-line at www.altonywca.com. “We are asking the community to take a moment, share their ideas and demonstrate their support for the YWCA and social issues facing the community,” Ms. Venardos stated.

Those who complete the survey by March 5 and join the YWCA are eligible for a drawing of an e-reader. The drawing will be held on March 16. YWCA memberships or associate memberships are available for just \$50 annually.

The YWCA of Alton, established in 1918, is part of the largest and oldest women's organization in the world and a member of the United Way of Greater St. Louis. From the YWCA's founding in 1858, the organization has taken a leadership role in civil and human rights issues. For more information visit the YWCA of Alton, at 304 E. 3rd St., Alton, IL; (618) 465-7774, info@altonywca.com or www.altonywca.com.