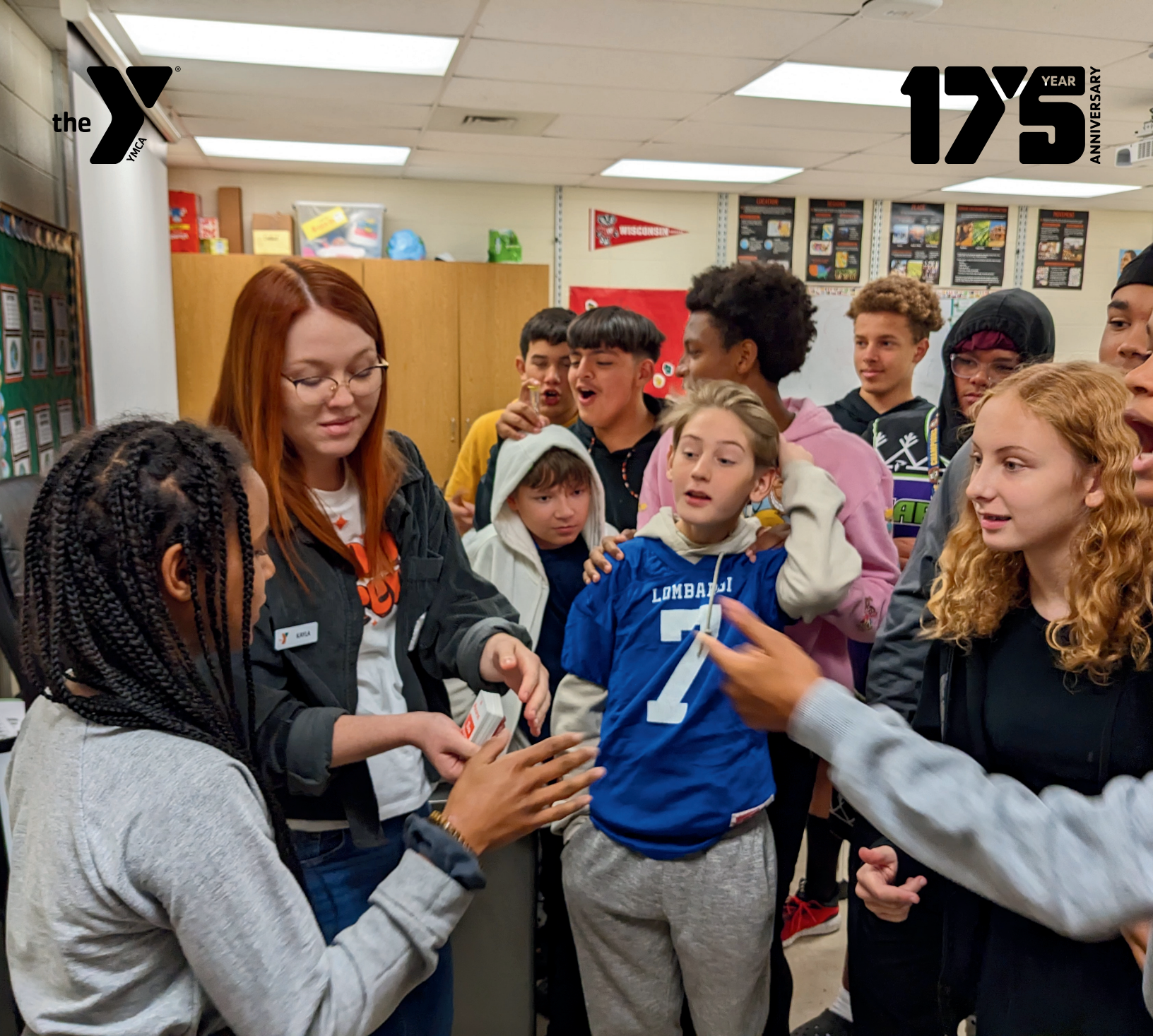




2026-2027

Y ACHIEVERS

GREATER GREEN BAY YMCA

PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

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ABOUT Y ACHIEVERS

DISCOVER. GROW. ACHIEVE.

Y ACHIEVERS

The Y Achievers program motivates youth to succeed by helping young people discover their strengths, explore their possibilities, and create a roadmap for their future.

Y Achievers is a national YMCA program designed to support the development of youth in grades 6-12. The program was created to help address the Achievement Gap while nurturing the potential of every young person.

Through life skill development, career exploration, leadership opportunities, improved self-image, and positive peer and adult relationships, Y Achievers helps young people build the skills, confidence, and knowledge they need to pursue success.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Provide role models and mentors whose experiences and knowledge inspire youth.
- Expose youth to diverse career, education, and life opportunities.
- Encourage academic achievement and strengthen college and career readiness.
- Help youth develop a positive sense of self and confidence in their abilities.
- Build character and strengthen positive assets in young people.
- Help youth connect the actions and choices they make today with the goals they have for tomorrow.

THE PROSPECTIVE ACHIEVER

Achievers are young people who may benefit from additional support and resources in areas such as academics, social interactions, emotional skills, self-esteem, or future planning.

Participants are referred to Y Achievers through school staff and are expected to demonstrate a willingness to grow, build new skills, participate in the program, and discover what is possible for their future.

PARTICIPATING SITES (2026-2027)

Bay Port, Bay View, Edison, Franklin, Green Bay East, Green Bay West, Lombardi, Preble, Red Smith, Southwest, St. Thomas More, Washington, and The Greater Green Bay YMCA

YOUTH OUTREACH AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW

YOUTH OUTREACH VISION & OUTCOMES

Authentically connect and meet young people where they are while inspiring a positive and accepting fellowship. Participants will gain a greater sense of purpose, belonging, mentorship, experience, and self-discovery.

Y ACHIEVERS PROGRAM GOALS & COMPONENTS

Y Achievers is designed to assist teens in establishing and pursuing high academic, career, and personal goals.

The program focuses on character development, positive assets, self-esteem, leadership, communication, and decision-making. Participants are encouraged to strengthen caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and teamwork while developing the confidence to lead healthy and productive lives.

Y Achievers connects young people with caring adults and professionals who serve as role models, mentors, and guides.

PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

Career exploration, college and career readiness, leadership development, communication and self-presentation, goal setting, resume and professional skill development, academic support, mentorship, team-building activities, community and cultural experiences, career and college workshops.

Y ACHIEVERS WORKSHOPS

Beginning in October 2026, monthly Saturday Workshops will be held at the Ferguson Family YMCA. Students will explore career pathways and college opportunities through experiences led by professionals. Workshops will take place on the second Saturday of each month from October 2026 through May 2027.

EACH WORKSHOP INCLUDES

Career and college exploration, guest professionals from local companies and colleges, games and team-building activities, snacks, opportunities to ask questions and build connections, and hands-on learning experiences.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ENROLLMENT CRITERIA

All participants are referred through a school, school district, parent, or guardian. Y Achievers is not an open-enrollment program.

The program is designed to support students who would benefit from additional resources, encouragement, and opportunities for growth.

Individuals who know a student who may benefit from the program should contact the program leaders at their school.

Participants are responsible for ensuring registration information is accurate and current. Parents and guardians should notify program leaders of any changes to contact information.

COST

Y Achievers is a FREE program.

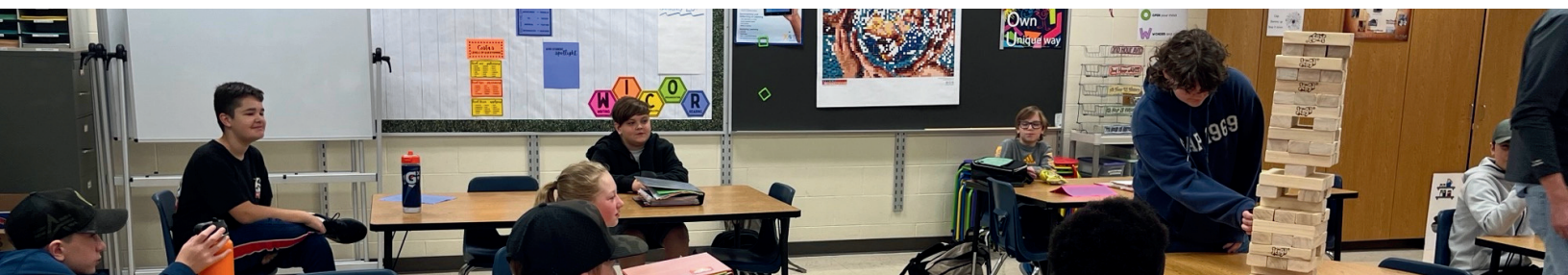
Program experiences, workshops, supplies, snacks, and facilities are provided through the support of the YMCA and community partners.

OPERATIONAL HOURS

Programming begins in October 2026 and concludes in May 2027.

Sessions generally occur bi-weekly at participating schools, along with additional workshops and special events.

Specific schedules, locations, and requirements will be communicated to participants and families.



MEET THE STAFF



BEN GUNDERSON

Director of Youth Development

Ben began his YMCA career in 2006 at the Eagan YMCA while in college, where he earned degrees in Political Science and Theatre/Dance. He held leadership roles at five Minnesota YMCAs before moving to Wausau in 2017 to work in Learning and Development with Footlocker, training more than 1,700 employees annually. Passionate about empowering teens, Ben has returned to the YMCA to lead youth programs. He also serves on the board of Teens Networking Together, is Media Specialist for the Y's Youth in Government Program, sits on the Downtown Green Bay Kiwanis Club board, and serves as Division 10's Lt. Governor for the WI/UM Kiwanis District. In his free time, Ben enjoys family time, playing games, and attending live concerts.



JJ BUTLER

Youth Outreach Specialist

JJ has been part of the Y community his entire life starting with parent-child swim lessons as a baby and continuing through his first job at the Y at age 15. Today, he brings that lifelong connection full circle in his roles as a Youth Outreach team member and lifeguard. JJ is passionate about creating an environment where young people feel safe, supported, and empowered to grow. Outside of work, he enjoys spending time with his two cats, Willy and Leo, shopping at thrift stores, and traveling.

ATTENDANCE, COMMUNICATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE

Participants are invited to attend bi-weekly sessions which provide access to events, trips, and YMCA membership benefits.

Participants are expected to maintain regular attendance with no more than 25% unexcused absences unless alternate arrangements have been made with program staff.

COMMUNICATION

Email is the primary communication method between Y Achievers staff and parents or guardians.

Parents and guardians may use email to:

- Report absences
- Ask questions about sessions or events
- Share important participant information
- Communicate concerns
- Learn about program opportunities

Families should communicate information as early as possible when attendance or participation may be affected.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ben Gunderson

Phone: 920-436-9540

Email: Ben.Gunderson@GreenBayYMCA.org

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Y Achievers is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, positive, and supervised environment.

Staff use positive discipline methods that support:

- Self-control
- Self-direction
- Self-esteem
- Cooperation
- Respect for others

Participants are expected to be:

- Respectful
- Responsible
- Kind
- Inclusive
- Safe

The program also promotes the YMCA character values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and teamwork.



GUIDE TO APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

Staff use preventive strategies such as:

- Proactive intervention
- Active teaching and modeling
- Recognition of positive behavior
- Consistent consequences

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS (CONTINUED)

BEHAVIORS NOT TOLERATED

- Destruction or theft of property
- Repeated disrespectful or defiant behavior
- Foul language or inappropriate conversations
- Harassment or bullying
- Physical or emotional harm to others
- Failure to maintain self-control

Behavior incidents will be documented.

Repeated incidents or serious concerns may require meetings with staff, parents or guardians, and participants.



PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

1. One-day suspension.
2. One-week suspension.
3. Program termination.

The YMCA reserves the right to immediately terminate participation when behavior creates a significant safety risk.

YOUTH INCENTIVES, FOOD & SPECIAL EVENTS

YMCA MEMBERSHIP

Registered Y Achievers receive a YMCA membership at no cost.

The membership provides opportunities to:

- Stay active
- Explore YMCA programs, camps, and facilities
- Build positive relationships
- Develop healthy habits
- Spend time in a welcoming environment outside school
- Access additional YMCA opportunities

SNACKS & MEALS

Snacks and meals may be incorporated into sessions, workshops, and special events. Parents and guardians will be notified when a full meal will be provided. Program staff should be informed of food allergies, dietary restrictions, or other nutritional needs.

Y ACHIEVERS WORKSHOPS

LOCATION:

Ferguson Family YMCA

235 N. Jefferson St.

Green Bay, WI

SCHEDULE:

Second Saturday of each month

October 2026 through May 2027



REGISTER HERE!



YOUTH INCENTIVES, FOOD & SPECIAL EVENTS (CONTINUED)

WORKSHOP BENEFITS

- Explore career pathways
- Learn about college and post-secondary options
- Meet professionals
- Build connections
- Gain practical knowledge
- Build confidence
- Participate in team-building activities
- Enjoy snacks and social time

SPECIAL EVENTS

Additional special events and out-of-school experiences may be offered throughout the year.

Families will receive advance information regarding schedules, transportation, and requirements.

