

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

SPRING 2025



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TC Energy

race to end racism
eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

Thursday, APRIL 24
YWCA Center for Community Enrichment
Packet Pickup & Cultural Celebration
4:00 PM

SATURDAY, APRIL 26
Kanawha Boulevard West
5K Run/1 Mile Walk
9:00 AM

9th Annual Race to End Racism to be held April 26

The YWCA Charleston will hold its ninth annual Race to End Racism on Saturday, April 26 through Charleston's West Side.

The race, a powerful initiative aimed at raising awareness and inspiring change in our community, brings together members of the community to participate in a 5K run or 1 mile walk. The race brings people together to take a stand against racism and promote inclusivity, equality, and justice for all. All proceeds benefit the YWCA Community Enrichment Program.

The program is housed in the new YWCA Charleston Center for Community Enrichment, which

is located at 412 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV 25301.

Executive Director Shanté Ellis works closely with our Community Enrichment Committee which comprises members of diverse faiths, ethnicities, races, ages, socio-economic statuses, and professions.

Sign up at
ywcacharleston.org/race

"The program continues to experience strong growth and accomplishments year after year," Ellis said.

This event is not just about running—it's about making a

statement. Participants of all ages and backgrounds will join forces to show that we are united in the fight against racism. Whether you're running, walking, or cheering from the sidelines, your participation will help shine a light on this critical issue and contribute to a movement of positive change.

Please join us on this mission and register to participate in our ninth annual Race to End Racism on April 26, 2025 across from Magic Island along Kanawha Boulevard West.

Registration is now open, so don't miss your chance to be part of this impactful event.

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 **Huntington**
Women of Achievement | 2025
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YWCA Honors a Diverse Class of Leading Ladies at Women of Achievement Luncheon

More than 600 people celebrated the 2024 YWCA Women of Achievement on International Women's Day at Embassy Suites, sponsored by Huntington National Bank. The honorees this year included:

Angela Mayfield - *"Woman of Achievement"*
Rebecca McPhail - *"Woman of Achievement"*
Sharon Istfan - *"Posthumous Woman of Achievement"*
Betty Spencer - *"Lifetime Achievement"*
Taylor Jones - *"Encova Empowerment Award"*

Since 1997, YWCA Charleston has celebrated the accomplishments of more than 100 trailblazing women in our community. The "Empowerment Honoree" category was added in 2006 to recognize former YWCA program participants that powered through their struggles and transformed their lives. The YWCA Women of Achievement Awards highlight not only professional excellence by also personal perseverance. We were honored to present this year's Women of Achievement luncheon at Embassy Suites Hotel, and give these honorees the recognition that they deserve.

It was a pleasure to celebrate the Class of 2024. We look forward to our Breakfast with Champions event held at West Virginia State University, where we will partner the honorees with 5th grade girls from our downtown elementary schools. If you know someone who should be honored in the Class of 2026, visit ywcacharleston.org/woa. Nominations are due July 15.



Maisha Staples truly exemplifies the values of compassion, dedication, and selflessness. Her skillsets and experience from over 17 years at Appalachian Power Company make her the perfect volunteer for the YWCA. She knows the power of dedication and the true meaning of community. And to think our relationship with Maisha all started from a Day of Caring match. A perfect match it was indeed! Since then, Maisha has helped organize monthly volunteer projects for YWCA programs, coordinated volunteers from her employer, and orchestrated a donation drive for YWCA Shanklin Center for Senior Enrichment. Her volunteerism didn't start here though, she has been giving back to her community for over 10 years, specifically at local senior centers, food banks, and awareness events.



Maisha's initial interest in continuing her volunteering efforts for the YWCA stemmed from our commitment to empowering women and eliminating racism. "My experiences with YWCA Charleston have deepened my appreciation for their mission and the impact they have on their community. Their comprehensive programs and services, which address critical issues such as domestic violence, economic empowerment, and racial justice has resonated with me." stated Maisha.

Although YWCA Charleston has many programs, one holds a special place in Maisha's heart. YWCA Shanklin Center for Senior Enrichment was a match made in heaven. She enjoys volunteering there, working alongside the phenomenal women who work there and engaging in conversation with the women who call Shanklin home. Her favorite volunteer activity is decorating Shanklin Center for the holidays with Appalachian Power employees.

The future is bright for Maisha as she continues her volunteerism at YWCA Charleston. Maisha says "I envision my future with YWCA expanding in several impactful ways: strengthening partnerships to foster stronger collaborations between the YWCA and local businesses, to support their initiatives and amplify their reach and to become an active committee member." We look forward to everything she sets her sites to and appreciate all she does for the YWCA Charleston and our community.

YWCA Charleston Names New CEO



We are thrilled to announce the appointment of Sonya Hairston as YWCA Charleston's new Chief Executive Officer. Hairston comes to Charleston from Nashville, Tennessee. She discovered the CEO position at YWCA Charleston through her network and support of the local YWCA in Nashville.

Prior to this new role, Hairston has served as the Executive Director at the Ridley Scholarship Program at the University of Virginia Alumni Association, as well as serving in various executive roles for a number of other non-profits and organizations.


Hairston is honored to be stepping into the role of CEO at YWCA Charleston and is ready to continue to lead this organization that has been a beacon of hope and has met a great need in our community.


With an impressive track record of leadership and a deep commitment to our mission, Hairston brings a wealth of experience and fresh vision to guide our organization into an exciting new chapter.

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can continue to serve the most
vulnerable in our communities.
Together, we work to promote peace,
justice, freedom, and dignity for all.*

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