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**The YMCA of Metropolitan Washington Is All in on Pickleball.**

Hundreds of people are participating in this sport that promotes social emotional health, inclusiveness, safety and fun

**WASHINGTON – May 11, 2021 –-**The YMCA of Metropolitan Washington will launch what will become one of the region’s largest Pickleball programs. The Y’s Pickleball program will open with more than 20 courts throughout the region this year and twice that number by the end of 2022. Pickleball will be offered at most Y locations beginning with YMCA Bethesda-Chevy Chase, YMCA Silver Spring and YMCA Arlington Tennis and Squash Center. Participants can look forward to free open houses, demonstrations, tournaments, clinics and opportunities for volunteers to serve as league ambassadors.

The Grand Opening Festival for members will be held at YMCA Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Silver Spring on May 15th from Noon to 3:00pm and at YMCA Silver Spring on Sunday, May 16th from Noon to 3:00pm. The Grand Opening Festival will include giveaways and drawings, coaches to demonstrate the basics of Pickleball, drills, clinics and round robin plays. This is a members-only event in which community events being offered later in the month. Pickleball was created in 1965 by Congressman Joel Pritchard, Barney McCallum and Bill Bell during a summer vacation. It was an attempt to entertain bored children using whatever equipment came to hand. Now, decades later the sport has grown across the nation. Pickleball combines elements of badminton, tennis, and ping-pong. It can be played using relatively inexpensive paddles and plastic balls, on existing tennis courts (although the courts are outlined for Pickleball, which are badminton-sized.)

“The response to Pickleball has been overwhelming by our membership. Pickleball is an inclusive and social sport that allows players to get outdoors, have fun and work out. We are proud that the Y will have a dedicated spaces that allows for individuals to meet other people and families to connect more. Pickleball is the perfect pandemic sport since people can still socially distance and get great exercise both outdoors and indoors at an extremely affordable price” said Pamela Curran, Executive Vice President and COO for the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington.

According to [USA Pickleball](https://usapickleball.org/about-us/organizational-docs/pickleball-fact-sheet/), the sport is now played by over 3.3 million people. The Y’s Pickleball monthly calendar of events will be released in a few weeks and more information will be available at www.ymcadc.org/pickleball.

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**About YMCA of Metropolitan Washington**
The YMCA of Metropolitan Washington is a non-profit 501(c)3 charity organization that has been serving the communities and families of Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, for nearly 168 years. Through opportunities in wellness, aquatics, youth sports, summer camps, childcare and more, the Y engages more than 250,000 individuals and families. Visit [www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org) for more information. Members are asked to stay with the Y during this critical time to maintain charitable services for every community.