



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FOR A BETTER US.

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY 2015
YMCA of Greater Erie

The YMCA of Greater Erie is a positive force in this community. Everything we do is focused on making our community better. And keeping our community great is a full-time job. Y staff, volunteers, donors and partners make life-changing work possible.

After 156 years of serving the community, the Y knows what we need to be our best selves. So, it gives us a place to play, learn, to be healthy, to eat well and give back. It gives us all a safe and welcoming place to go.

Everything the Y does is in service of making us better.

For a better you.
For a better community.
For a better country.
For a better us.



FOR MEALS FOR KIDS

Twelve-year-old Cavari Miller says she knows kids in her neighborhood who don't eat every day.

receive. But, digging deeper, the *Meals for Kids* program is providing a safe place, full of caring adults.

McNeill. "It's the food that brings the kids off the streets into a safe space — where for the time they are with us, kids can be kids."

When their meal is served, they sit family style — forming a family of sorts among themselves — an element that they long for.

Sheldon goes on to say that he chose this job because he believes by helping these kids through small problems they think are big, they'll learn how to fix it the right way — not through violence. "You have to treat these kids like they're your own."

In Erie County, one in five kids lives with food insecurity. For years, the Y has been serving up free food as part of our *Meals for Kids* program funded by the Walmart Foundation. In 2015, the Y and our partners began to creatively renovate a 72-passenger bus into a mobile meals site — complete with a customized kitchen and café-style seating — in order to take meals into neighborhoods where food is a concern for kids. The Food + Fun bus takes to the streets in June 2016.



Our Impact: Served 250,000 meals, introduced many new foods and influenced food choice and education.

Served 10,000 free meals through the Y's Meals for Kids program in 3 months.

"IT'S THE FOOD THAT BRINGS THE KIDS OFF THE STREETS INTO A SAFE SPACE — WHERE FOR THE TIME THEY ARE WITH US, KIDS CAN BE KIDS."

At its very basic level, the Y's *Meals for Kids* program is providing healthy meals that low-income children otherwise would not

"Today, we're serving chicken salad wraps, green beans and fruit salad. The ladies are served first, then the boys," says Sheldon

2016 EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Doug Forne, *Glenwood Park*
Kelly Gibson, *Eastside Family*
Brandi Kramer, *Childcare Services Branch*
Atalaya Richey, *Downtown*
Stephen Sajewski, *County*

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Brady McGill, *Association Office*
Kate Neubert-Lechner, *Downtown*
Ryan Rafeew, *County*
Megan Shannon, *Glenwood Park*
Steve Vollmer, *Eastside Family Y*
Marlena Wilhelm, *Camp Sherwin*

FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR

Victoria Stilson

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Rebecca Reed
Schaileen Rozalski
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Taylor Sowers
Sandra Waite
Debra Woodie
Mary Catherine Young

10 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

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Carrie Baker
Maria Batista
Michelle Beddick
Betsy Buhl
Virginia Flowers
Alisha Glover
Kara Hall
Melissa Kelley
Cheryl McGranor
Jennifer Sikora
Tara Wetzel

15 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Victoria Stilson

FOR LEARNING

Zahra and her family decided to move here from Nigeria to provide a safe home with more opportunities. Zahra and her daughter, Aisha, began *Play & Learn* when Aisha was 2. Aisha was extremely shy and dependent on her mother, but, over time with the Y staff, Aisha came out of her shell.

Now, she not only starts conversations with a confident tone in her voice while

looking you in the eye, she also names letters and numbers at circle time. She is gaining more independence every day.

“... WITH THE HELP OF PLAY & LEARN, SHE WILL ENTER KINDERGARTEN PREPARED TO KEEP LEARNING.”

“She knows all of the colors, shapes, can count to 10 and has begun to write her name,” says Zahra. “She shows more

interest in learning and proudly picks out the first letters of her family’s names. With the help of *Play & Learn*, she will enter kindergarten prepared to keep learning.”



Research shows that many youth from underserved and low-income families need extra support in reaching their full potential. That “gap,” known as the achievement gap, presents not just immediate hurdles for these students, but also long-term challenges for us all.

More than half of young children of working parents in the U.S. — especially children in low-income and newcomer/immigrant communities — are cared for by relatives, friends and neighbors who may not be trained in child development. The Y’s innovative *Play & Learn* program works with families and caregivers to incorporate learning into everyday household activities. This program is held in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club and expanded to include the International Institute in 2016.

Our Impact: 91 percent of caregivers reported an increased ability of children to follow directions; 90 percent of caregivers reported an increased willingness to try new things; 78 percent of caregivers reported that their child knew their ABCs and 82 percent knew their numbers.

2016 EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION (continued)

20 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Laura Powierza

25 YEARS OF EMPLOYEE SERVICE

Judith Boboshko
Linda Farnen

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YMCA HERITAGE CLUB MEMBERS

The following individuals have made a lasting investment in our community through their commitment to the YMCA Endowment Fund. Below is a partial list of members as some prefer to remain anonymous.

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Albert Straus
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Arloween Todd*
Gerard Uht, Sr.
Dr. William* and Janice Underhill
Gerry and Amy Vandemerwe
Everett and Susan Walker
William E. Walker
Rich and Suzanne Weber
Cyrus and Susan Wellman
Carl and Jessica Wolfrom
Walt and Martha Wydro
Douglas Ziegler

*Denotes Deceased

FOR SAFE SPACES

Fifteen-year-old Alex Staley admits that recently he started to get into some bad stuff — just being a teenager. That wound Alex in front of a judge for truancy and the possibility of expulsion from school.

“I SING, ACT, PAINT, WRITE AND PLAY MUSIC. I PORTRAY MY LIFE THROUGH MUSIC — MY STRUGGLES, MY BELIEFS, STUFF I’M TRYING TO OVERCOME.”

But, it was because of his love of music and the Downtown Y Teen Center, that the judge gave him a second chance.

“Music is my life. My teacher Corey Cook understands the harsh backgrounds we come from. He helps me make positive out of negative,” says Alex.

Corey’s program, LifeThruMusic, is an innovative music-mentoring program that integrates

traditional music training with the latest technological updates in the music industry. In addition to music training, Corey incorporates a business-training model that prepares students with business skills geared toward the industry of music and connects them to music professionals already working in the field.

“I sing, act, paint, write and play music. I portray my life through

music — my struggles, my beliefs, stuff I’m trying to overcome. When I finish a song, it blows my mind because I feel so accomplished. I appreciate where I’ve been.”

All kids and teens need a safe and productive place to go. Opened in October, the Downtown Y Teen Center sees about 40 teens daily who participate in community-based programming that offers mentorship, academic enrichment, creative expression, positive values and conflict resolution.

Our Impact: Parent involvement at the Teen Center jumped to over 90 percent and close to 70 percent of parents have given permission to the Y to access the “parent portal” at school enabling us to monitor school grades and behavior. More than 75 percent of teens keep coming back and tell us they find a safe and welcoming environment. Of our total attendance, 67 percent of teens are enrolled in our structured programming ranging from financial literacy to conflict resolution and college prep.



2016 EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION (continued)

YMCA CHAIR'S ROUNDTABLE

Recognizes donors for contributing \$1,000 or more to the Y's annual campaign or special events, projects and programs during calendar year 2015.

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YMCA of the USA
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*Denotes Deceased

The YMCA makes every effort to ensure that each contributor's name is listed properly. If your name is omitted, listed incorrectly or misspelled, we offer our sincere apologies and ask you to advise us of corrections by calling Tammy Roche at (814) 452-1432.

FOR HEALTH

“AS A VET, I LIKE HELPING OTHER VETS. I LIKE KNOWING THAT I AM GIVING THEM TOOLS TO HELP THEM COPE.”

A 2010 deployment to Afghanistan returned Matt Borzon to his family with issues with his hips, neck and post-traumatic stress disorder. “At my worst, I felt — am I going to let this break me, or will I be disciplined enough to get over my setbacks? Big

things, small things — experience opens a part of you that wasn’t there before.”

Matt volunteers as an instructor of Tai Chi to veterans.

“I believe in energy medicine. For me, martial arts have kept me moving and flexible,” says Matt. “As a vet, I like helping other vets. I like knowing that I am giving them tools to help them cope.”

Tai Chi, often described

as meditation in motion, involves a series of movements performed in a slow, focused manner and accompanied by deep breathing.

“One of the benefits of Tai Chi is that you can practice the soothing mind-body concepts without performing the actual body movements when you are in a stressful situation.”

Matt emphasizes the importance of what he calls breathing

mindfulness. “It’s about visualization, movement and a distinct breathing pattern. When you practice and combine all three, little else can get in the way.”

The Y’s Military Outreach Initiative supports families by providing memberships when a loved one is deployed. The Wellness Series for Veterans is a natural extension when these family members return. More than 5,000 veterans in Erie County are currently treated for post-traumatic stress disorder. We provide free wellness programs and Y memberships for veterans to help them deal with anxiety and return back to society.

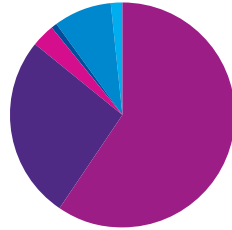
Our Impact: 400 monthly memberships were provided to veterans. Thirty-two veterans participated in holistic classes and 82 percent report going from having extreme daily anxiety to having moderate daily anxiety. Vets also ranked their general level of motivation to participate in social activities on a typical day. After three months of membership, 74 percent reported an increased level of motivation to socialize.



2015 OPERATING REVENUE

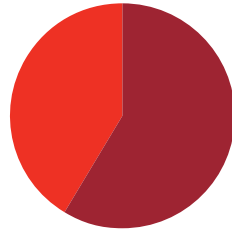
REVENUES

Membership	\$4,684,439
Childcare	\$9,419,959
Program	\$574,480
United Way	\$125,836
Community Support	\$1,290,338
Other	\$281,101
TOTAL	\$16,376,153



EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits	\$9,951,009
Other Operating Expenses	\$6,995,554
TOTAL	\$16,946,563



MEMBERSHIP	2014	2015
(as of Dec. 31, 2015)		
Membership Units	8,269	8,406
TOTAL MEMBERS	24,606	25,029



2015 HIGHLIGHTS

Wellness for
life
THE REGIONAL CANCER CENTER

The Glenwood Park Y partnered with the Regional Cancer Center for a series of free holistic classes developed specifically for cancer patients, survivors and their caregivers. Classes range from Gentle Yoga to Strength & Courage and Tools for Meditation. More than 50 participated in the small group classes and found support with each other. **Wellness for Life** participants are given a free membership to the Y while they are involved in the classes.

Downtown YMCA Preschool received their first ever \$5,000 grant through the National Farm to School Network. The Y participated in Seed Change, an initiative of the National Farm to School Network aimed at expanding farm-to-school activities at the state and community level to support better health outcomes for children and strong local economies. Downtown YMCA Preschool's Farm to School activities included container-growing classes, planting and storing while learning how to repair food, and an aeroponics garden, a garden in which crops grow with just water and air and no soil.



The Y received a \$25,000 grant from YMCA of the USA to fund free **Safety Around Water** classes to 300 inner-city children. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death for children under age 14. The program taught children that water should be fun, not feared through fundamental water safety skills and what to do if they find themselves in the water unexpectedly.



A \$515,000 renovation concluded with the grand opening of the **Downtown Y's Community Learning Center** which was built to accommodate the growing programming needs of kids, teens and aging adults. The Community Learning Center is a space that is primarily used as functioning programming space for the Y's Teen Center and then optimized at off hours for preschool and older active adult programming.

A \$870,000 federal grant powered a new partnership between the Greater Erie Action Committee and the Y to offer **Early Head Start** to 75 infants and toddlers at three Y early learning locations. Each child participates in developmentally appropriate activities while also receiving extensive services such as nutrition, health and dental evaluations. Parents also receive comprehensive services and engage them in their role as primary caregiver and move parents toward self-sufficiency.

OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

OUR FOCUS

Youth Development,
Healthy Living and
Social Responsibility

OUR CAUSE

To strengthen community



YMCA OF GREATER ERIE

31 W. 10th Street
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www.ymcaerie.org