



So many reasons.

BECAUSE AFTER MORE
THAN A CENTURY AND
A HALF, WE'RE JUST
GETTING WARMED UP.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP.

It all started here.

On the evening of April 26, 1852, in the organ loft of the Pearl Street Methodist Church (now the Asbury Delaware Avenue Methodist Church), a number of young men led by George W. Perkins established the second YMCA in the United States. One hundred and fifty-seven years later YMCA Buffalo Niagara is much more than our founders probably ever could have imagined.

Today's YMCA continues the tradition of service that was established in 1852 through cultivating programs that fulfill the YMCA's mission of "... an inclusive association of people committed to a common effort to help individuals and families reach their fullest potential in terms of spirit, mind, and body." The size and scope of YMCA programs has greatly expanded since its founding to encompass youth, families, and seniors.

It all starts at the YMCA for thousands of Western New York children, where they are taught valuable lessons they will use the rest of their lives. The YMCA plays a key role in their positive development, providing them a nurturing, caring, healthy, safe, and educational environment where they learn new skills and positive values. Swimming instruction, youth sports, arts, summer camping, and pre-school education activities are delivered at sites across Western New York. Additionally, the YMCA collaborates with seven school districts to deliver Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs, ensuring children in our community are well prepared as they start on their educational expedition.

With the growing number of families and seniors wishing to take part in YMCA programming, we also find the increased need for financial assistance. Each year, thousands of opportunities for kids and families are made possible by the YMCA's Strong Kids Campaign. Led by General Campaign Chair Sally Pyne, hundreds of volunteers worked to raise a record \$513,003. The efforts of the Strong Kids volunteers and generosity of donors made it

possible for 19,572 kids, adults, and seniors to take part in YMCA membership and programs.

YMCA programs are also made possible thanks to an event that is as rich in its heritage and tradition as the YMCA itself. In 1895, the very first YMCA Turkey Trot was run by a mere six runners. In 2009, the 114th edition of one of Buffalo's premiere events saw a record 11,953 runners travel down the historic Delaware Avenue route accompanied by cheers from family and friends. We're grateful that so many Western New Yorkers year after year truly start their Thanksgiving Day celebration with the YMCA.

And the YMCA continues to look toward the future with the development of the new Northtowns Family Branch facility, which started a new phase with the purchase of a nearly 14-acre parcel of land from the Randall Memorial Baptist Church. Adjacent to the north campus of Erie Community College, the unique 92,000-square-foot family facility will be the first YMCA facility in New York State to include a medical clinic and physical therapy center. Currently, teams of dedicated volunteers are diligently working on design, financing, and fundraising requirements for this project. It is sure to be a place where many start on the path to a healthier and happier lifestyle.

As YMCA Buffalo Niagara enters into the 158th year of our journey, it is wonderful to look back and see how much we have grown. Each and every day we continue to strive to improve the lives of children, families, and seniors, so that they improve in spirit, mind, and body. As the YMCA begins the next leg of our journey, we invite you to join us.

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BECAUSE THESE MOMS
MADE A LIFE-CHANGING
CONNECTION HERE THEY
WOULDN'T HAVE FOUND
ANYWHERE ELSE.



Six years ago, a group of strangers, each for their own reasons, decided to take part in a toddler playgroup at their local YMCA. Little did they know at the time how this one program would impact their families' lives for years to come.

As a new mom, Amy Jones felt it was important to find a program that would enrich her son Aiden's life. After researching the various options available, she enrolled herself and Aiden in the Southtowns Family YMCA's Y-Playgroup. The program proved ideal for this mom and son as it offered not only the types of enrichment activities Amy was looking for but also the opportunity for her to spend quality one-on-one time with Aiden. As an added bonus she was also able to connect with other moms. "After being in the working world I really wanted to reconnect with adults and have an adult conversation," Amy laughed.

Upon joining Y-Playgroup, Amy met new moms MaryAnn DiSimone, Donna Sylvester, Michelle Boyle, Rose Dodge, Kelly Keller, and Marla Walker who were seeking the same type of socialization. Twice a week these new moms and kids

met at the YMCA. Through the course of the session, the moms not only watched their children grow but their friendships as well, which proved to be ideal for MaryAnn who was new to the area. "It was a great way for me to meet new people in the area since I didn't have any friends or family here. I thought perhaps I'd meet one or two women I'd connect with but never did I imagine nine!"

After the session ended, these moms continued on with their own "Y" playgroup outside of the YMCA. Not only did they enjoy weekly outings with the kids to the zoo, Strong Museum, and the beach, they also set aside some "mom only time" with trips to the coffee shop and some fun "mom nights out" too. This ritual continued for years both inside and outside of the YMCA until their babies went off to preschool. Yet their friendship didn't end there, as Marla, MaryAnn, and

Amy all became pregnant within months of one another. "It was great to have such a support system and to have such an exciting thing to look forward to together," said MaryAnn.

Today, these moms and their husbands are the closest of friends, and so are their children – 16 to be exact. "A few of these moms have become my social circle. I know I could count on them if I needed anything. I don't have family in the area, so they are my emergency contacts. The kids play together so well, it is like they are an extended family," said Marla. The children take part in YMCA programs together, have sleepovers, and wouldn't miss attending each other's birthday parties.

Looking back, the friendship circle that came out of a YMCA playgroup was something none of these moms would have ever envisioned when they first walked through the doors of the YMCA. "I can see that our children will have the same strong, lasting friendships that we as moms have developed over the years and that's a great feeling," said Amy.



BECAUSE SANDY KNOWS THAT WHEREVER SHE IS IN HER LIFE, SHE ALWAYS HAS A PLACE HERE.

When people first walk through the front door of their local YMCA, their reasons for being there may vary. Some come to the “Y” for fitness, others for childcare, swimming, youth sports, or even summer camp. But when Sandy Sheppard walked through the door of the YMCA, she had no idea what was in store for her or how much the YMCA would mean to her and her family.

Sandy's first experience with the YMCA came when she was just graduating from college. Growing up around country, swim, and tennis clubs, her previous exposure to the YMCA was limited. Once engaged in YMCA programming, Sandy was pleasantly surprised at the level of support and encouragement she received from the staff. It was because of this encouragement that Sandy began accepting positions in leadership, teaching, and management, including directing the high and low ropes course at Camp Weona – an achievement she

never envisioned. “I still remember the conversation with Rob Walker (Vice President of Operations for YMCA Buffalo Niagara) about this. I asked him, Are you sure you want me in charge of this? To which he replied, ‘Absolutely.’”

Sandy admits that now and again she drifted away from the “Y.” “We all disappear from time to time. My life includes being a single parent, finishing a doctoral dissertation, working three part-time jobs, and maintaining a house. But the YMCA never let me disappear.

They have ‘seen’ me in the past in a positive and productive way before I saw myself that way. Today when I walk into the YMCA, I am immediately ‘seen’ again by staff and instructors who greet me as a member, a swimmer, a yoga enthusiast, a mother, a student, and an old friend.”

What does the YMCA mean to Sandy? “I find my thoughts drifting to the idea of what the YMCA has done for me that no other organization has done. The YMCA engages kids and families in a way that values them, while supporting them as

members of our community. For me, that's been financial assistance to maintain my family membership and knowing there will always be a spot on the floor in the yoga class no matter how long it takes me to get back to a regular routine. For my son, it's been sports skills development, a scholarship to summer camp, regular swimming lessons, and after-school care he wishes he hadn't aged out of. The YMCA inspires me to refresh my self-image and keep on striving for the best in myself and in my community.”



Y?

BECAUSE THIS IS WHERE
A FORMER GANG LEADER
IS NOW LEADING KIDS IN
THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.



Arlee Daniels, Interim Chair for the Stop the Violence Coalition, wasn't always in a position to make a positive change in his community. In fact, as a young adult, Arlee was a gang leader, surrounded by guns, gangs, and violence.

Wanting a better life for himself and the kids in his community, Arlee became determined to not just change his ways but to take an active role in helping to show area youth that there is more to life than gangs and violence.

His drive to improve the environment around him led him to Judge James A.W. McCleod, a Buffalo Family Court Judge who often saw these troubled youth in his court. Wanting to call a truce between gangs in the neighborhood, the two discovered that what these kids truly needed was a safe and caring environment free of violence and vandalism where they could learn, grow, and become better citizens. Together they agreed: What better place to do that than at the Ellicott-Masten Family YMCA?

Soon after approaching YMCA President and CEO John Murray, their vision of a pilot program was launched. The program

included mentoring, GED, and conflict resolution workshops, along with the use of the YMCA wellness and recreational facilities. What grew out of this collaboration, however, was more than any of these men could have dreamed. Now, six years later, their programs have served hundreds of individuals and their families, providing these young adults with an education, a safe haven, and a support group, all while instilling in them the YMCA core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility.

"I couldn't imagine the YMCA without the Stop the Violence Coalition programs in place. It's a perfect fit," said Ellicott-Masten Branch Executive Matt Hilton. "To have a program that seeks out troubled youth, brings them to a place completely opposite of what they are accustomed to and shows them there is an alternative to following the

crowd is amazing. We're so glad to be a part of this."

Even more amazing are the success stories from those who have walked through the doors. Arlee proudly shares that the Ellicott-Masten Family YMCA program not only has seen the most GED graduates in the Buffalo system (2007-'08), but also that most students exceed the minimum score for passing. Two of these young men, James Rob and Bruce Griffin, are now proud to have their GEDs and are hardworking members of society. "On my way to taking my GED I was approached by some guys in the neighborhood and a fight broke out, but I was bound and determined not to let that get me down and showed up for my test and passed," said James. "It was really important for me to get my GED," said Bruce. "I wasn't always focused, but when I buckled down and put my mind to it I was so glad to walk away with my GED. You can't get anywhere in life without an education."

"It's these types of kids that remind us that together we are making a difference. We are so grateful to the YMCA and to Matt Hilton. We would not be here today in this capacity without their support," said Arlee.

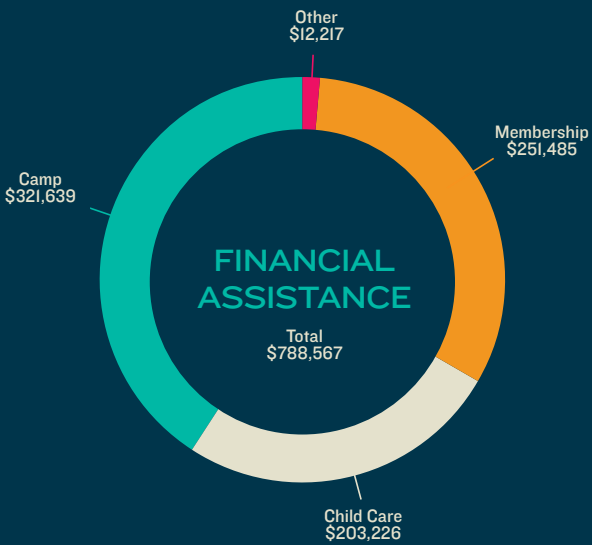
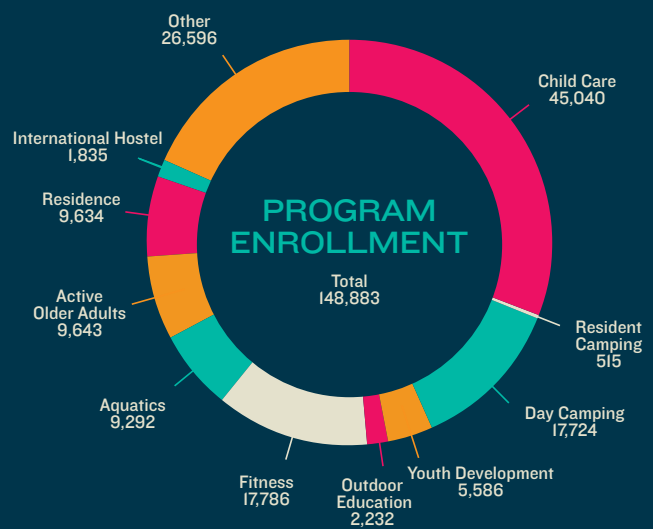


BECAUSE OUR IMPACT IS MEASURABLE.

2009 KEY OPERATING METRICS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

Revenue	2009	2008	% +/-
Annual Campaign	482,428	473,098	2.0%
Other Contributions	152,074	273,341	-44.4%
Special Events	409,170	377,479	8.4%
United Way	139,863	167,561	-16.5%
Government Grants	582,975	443,759	31.4%
Program Fees	4,954,261	4,963,822	-0.2%
Membership Dues	5,147,136	5,120,030	0.5%
Other Income	1,041,841	928,597	12.2%
	12,909,748	12,747,687	1.3%
Expense			
Program Services	10,654,317	10,686,378	-0.3%
Administration	1,459,956	1,391,735	4.9%
Fund-Raising	536,186	453,245	18.3%
	12,650,459	12,531,358	1.0%
Operating Surplus	259,289	216,329	19.9%
Disposition of Property	0	82,500	
Investment Activity	1,140,399	-1,666,382	
Surplus (Deficit)	1,399,688	-1,367,553	



MEMBER/PROGRAM PARTICIPATION BY AGE



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YMCA Buffalo Niagara Heritage Society

The YMCA's Heritage Society recognizes a select group of individuals and/or families who have made a significant commitment to the YMCA's endowment fund. Their gift to the YMCA is the starting point from which the YMCA will expand its reach, providing life-enriching experience that in turn will help build stable families, stronger leaders, healthier communities, and a brighter future for Western New York.

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