



RICHARD MERWIN, CHAIRMAN
GERRY VANDEMERWE, CEO

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

WHY WE ALL NEED THE Y

By: Tammy Roche

Retired phys ed teacher and swimming coach Merrienne Gaber volunteers her time at the Glenwood Park Y teaching basic swimming skills to young adults living with severe autism. "The developmental progress is immeasurable. The lifelong skills learned in simply getting ready to go to the pool and follow directions are routine and the swimming experience enhances their senses, calms their being and is something they can enjoy forever. I love it."

In a 3-year collaborative relationship with the Edinboro Community –Based Transition Program, the Glenwood Y has been offering group adaptive swimming lessons for young adults 18-21 who are transitioning to life on their own. "Our program is teaching more than just swimming. Through the act of swimming, we are teaching independent living skills - getting dressed and showering; we are teaching community skills – appropriate behavior for public places and getting along with others – and work skills – following directions and respect for authority."

The Glenwood Y serves as a support resource for other community groups such as Erie Homes for Children and Adults, the Achievement Center, Barber National Institute, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Erie and Community Resources for Independence.

Throughout our community, the Y is known as a place to go swimming or work out, but it's much more than that; it's a place that changes lives. Programs like the Adaptive Swimming Program's story demonstrates the intrinsic value of having a Y in Erie and there are many others who could benefit greatly from the different services and programs offered by the YMCA of Greater Erie.

This is why we are launching our annual community support campaign *We Build People*. Your financial gift to the campaign will help continue the important work the Y does, be it providing kids a safe place to learn and grow before or after school; offering families opportunities to reconnect and grow together; or providing people of all backgrounds access to healthy living programs to help them in their overall wellness.

Gifts to *We Build People* provide the Y with resources for community outreach programs and scholarships for programs and memberships to the kids and families that need us most.

We encourage everyone in the community to join our cause. When we all pitch in and help our neighbors, we make a meaningful, enduring impact in the lives of children and families and ultimately, strengthen our community.

To get involved in the Y's *We Build People* community support campaign, visit www.webuildpeopleerie.org. **YMCA OF GREATER ERIE** WWW.YMCAERIE.ORG

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



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