



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**WE BUILD  
PEOPLE**

**A YMCA Initiative**

**YMCA of Greater Erie  
Community Support Campaign**

**2012 Volunteer Guide**

## About your Y

**The Y's Mission:** To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

**The Y's Cause:** At the Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day, the Y works side by side with our neighbors to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

**The Y,** founded in 1860, is one of Erie's leading nonprofits (501 c-3), committed to strengthening our community in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility:

### **Youth Development: Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.**

The Y believes that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. That's why, through the Y, thousands of Erie's youth today are engaged in programs that encourage Y core-values – character, honesty, respect and responsibility. Unique community partnerships with the City of Erie and the Erie Housing Authority serve Erie's most at-risk, underserved kids and teens directly in their neighborhoods. In our membership and program centers, award-winning childcare, before & after school care, summer camp, youth sports, swimming, youth fitness, leadership, mentoring and volunteerism, are all Y programs that are helping Erie's kids and teens reach their full potential.

### **Healthy Living: Improving health and well-being.**

Through advocacy and leadership, the Y is a leading voice on health and well-being. With a mission centered on balance, the Y brings families closer together, encourages good health and fosters connections through fitness, sports, fun and shared interests. As a result, thousands of Erie's youth, adults and families are receiving the support, guidance and resources needed to achieve greater health and well-being for their spirit, mind and body.

### **Social Responsibility: Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.**

Across Erie County, the Y helps people give back and assist our neighbors by offering them opportunities to volunteer, advocate and support programs that strengthen community. At the Y, we are volunteer-founded, volunteer-led organization. Volunteers are found at every level of the Y – in childcare, health & wellness, youth mentoring, board leadership and more. Through the Y's We Build People annual community support campaign, the Y provides financial assistance and income-based membership rates so that everyone can benefit from Y programs and membership. Additionally, the Y partners with other area non-profits enabling our members to support the community through donations and volunteerism.

### **The Y by the Numbers:**

The Y has 5 membership branches: the County Y located in Edinboro, the Downtown, Eastside Family, Glenwood Park and UPMC Hamot Ys. Twenty-one award-winning childcare centers provide care to children as young as six weeks. Unique community partnerships with the City of Erie and the Erie Housing Authority serve Erie's most at-risk, underserved kids and teens directly in their neighborhoods. **30,000 people of all ages – nearly 1 out of every 9 Erie residents** – are served by the YMCA of Greater Erie.

## **What is We Build People?**

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from all walks of life. We open our doors and work within neighborhoods to ensure that everyone, regardless of gender, income, faith, sexual orientation or cultural background can come to the Y and benefit from our programs.

How can we do all of this? We raise money from our employees, members, volunteers and the community to provide vital programs and extend financial assistance to the kids, adults and families that need us most.

We Build People is the theme of our annual community support campaign.

The YMCA of Greater Erie is a 501(c)(3) charity and is one of the largest philanthropic organizations in Erie County dedicated to helping children and families live healthier, more productive lives in spirit, mind and body.

Campaign donations **do not** pay general branch overhead or campaign expenses. Your Y membership **does not** support the Y's financial assistance program or Y-sponsored community outreach programs.

## **Your Role as a Campaign Volunteer**

As a volunteer, you are an integral part of a team that will help achieve our financial goal which ultimately provides the financial resources needed by the Y to support our community and those that need us most. Your most important job is to:

### **Tell the Y Story**

Let people know how the Y is strengthening the community and improving the quality of life for the 30,000 we serve. Ask your branch executive director or campaign chair for Y stories that you can share. A great way to learn Y stories is to visit a Y program or take a Community Impact Tour and see our mission in action. This lends itself also to sharing this program with others as you ask for their support.

### **Attend Campaign Events**

Be active in the campaign. You'll meet other campaigners, learn more about Y programs, and celebrate success. A calendar is included within this guide.

### **Make Your Gift First**

Your gift demonstrates your commitment and belief in the Y. After making a personal gift, it is much easier to ask someone else to do the same.

### **Ask**

Think about your connections at the Y – the small groups you belong. Perhaps you take a group exercise class or you shoot hoops with some guys in the morning, maybe you and others are regulars on the treadmill. These are the people you feel most comfortable with and perhaps can join you in contributing. You perhaps may be asked by your Branch Executive or your Campaign Chair to review a list of past stewards or a list of new stewards we've identified. It's important to keep clear communication with the Branch Executive and Campaign Chair to avoid duplication.

**Submit completed pledges weekly.**

Please turn in pledge cards for those that gave and those that declined to your Branch Executive or Metro Office.

**Write personal thank you notes to the donors you solicit.**

A hand-written thank you note is important, and should be sent ideally as soon as 48 hours, but not later than one week from when a steward makes a gift. Blank note cards are available from your Branch Executive or Metro Office.

## 8 Keys to Success

**1. Visit Y Programs/Take a Community Impact Tour**

Understand the Y's mission by getting to know the programs firsthand. Meet staff and ask questions. Invite others to join you on program visits.

**2. Make Your Gift First.**

This is the most important thing you can do to be successful. It is difficult to ask others to make a significant investment in the Y before making your own.

**3. Meet Prospective Stewards Face-to-Face & do your homework**

People give to people. It takes time to ask face-to-face, but it is far more effective and rewarding than asking by phone or email. By making a personal visit, you demonstrate genuine interest in a prospective donor. Perhaps you see someone in the locker room, in class or on the treadmill – these are key times to ask. Before asking, review the stewards giving history at the Y. This confidential information is available from your Branch Executive.

**4. Share the Y Story.**

Communicate the story and the case for giving with enthusiasm and passion. Share stories of individuals to demonstrate community needs.

**5. Aim High, be Specific.**

When the time is right, ask for a specific amount. Don't talk dollars; focus on service – what those dollars will do for people. Use the campaign brochure as a guide: "In addition to my personal gift to the Y, I have also volunteered to ask others in sponsoring a membership to the Y, this program etc." If the person has donated in the past, encourage an increase in this year's gift. "Thank you for last year's gift of \$300. Would you consider a gift of \$500 or more this year, allowing the Y ....." **The #1 reason people don't give? They are not asked.**

**6. Emphasize pledging.**

Most people can give more over a period of time than at any given moment. Four payments of \$250 become a generous gift of \$1,000. A donation can also be added to their membership bank draft.

**7. Ask about matching gifts.**

Ask the steward if his or her employer has a matching gifts program. If so, the steward may turn in their form along with pledge card and payment to a volunteer OR enclose the form when payment is due.

**8. Thank personally.**

Always follow-up with a personal thank you note. Stewards feel very passionate about their charitable giving, and they often have a personal connection to the Y.

## Online Giving

[www.WeBuildpeopleerie.org](http://www.WeBuildpeopleerie.org)

[www.ymcaerie.org](http://www.ymcaerie.org)

Donors have the option to make an outright gift online if they choose. They can go straight to the We Build People website or the Y's website and click the donate button. The purpose of online giving is to give stewards a tool to make a gift online if they prefer online to writing checks.

## Making the Ask

### Four most important steps to a successful personal visit:

#### 1. Prepare for your face-to-face visit

Customize your ask to the person you are asking. What is their link to the Y? What is their capacity to give? What questions might the person ask? Should you take someone with you (board member, Y staff)? Be certain you've made your own gift first.

#### 2. Relate your own Y experience

Think about and relate how the Y has affected your life. Talk about several Y programs to find "hot" buttons. Relate the value of Y programs bring to the community. Address concerns . . . a negative can be turned into a positive.

#### 3. Ask for a specific amount

Talk about giving a gift to a person, not to the Y. Ask for the amount reflecting the steward's capacity to give. Know what they've given in the past. After asking, be silent. Wait for a response to your request. Do you need a second visit? Make arrangements before leaving.

#### 4. Confirm the pledge with a signed commitment

After you get a confirmation, ask the donor to fill out the pledge card. Make sure the card is legible and complete. Accept gifts or pledges with a meaningful thank you.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the YMCA?**

The YMCA of Greater Erie is a not-for-profit 501 c-3 human service organization funded by membership and program fees, contributions from YMCA friends, corporations, foundations, government grants and United Way support. YMCAs are independent, volunteer-founded and volunteer-lead organizations.

Character development and a clear mission distinguish the YMCA from organizations that exist only for recreation, fitness, sports etc.

### **How does the campaign fit into the branch budget?**

Each YMCA branch participates in the We Build People community support campaign. Contributed funds do not pay for branch operations, campaign expenses or support for other branches.

### **Why should I give my money to the Y? I already pay membership dues.**

When you make a gift to the Y, you are actually strengthening community. Your gift directly helps your neighbor in their pursuit of youth development, healthy living and family time. Your membership rates cover the costs of a Y membership, and do not support outreach programs and financial assistance.

### **Doesn't the Y receive funding from United Way?**

The YMCA is a United Way funded agency. The United Way is an important partner in helping the YMCA deliver programs and services related to early care and school-age enrichment. However, the request for financial assistance for membership and programs as well as community outreach programs of the Y, far outweigh our allocation from United Way (\$115,000 – the Y awards over \$900,000 annually).

## Key Campaign Dates

- Thursday, Jan. 26, 11:30 a.m., Volunteer Training
- Thursday, Jan. 26, 5 p.m., Volunteer Training
- February 1, 4 p.m., We Build People Kick-off – Downtown Y Lobby
- March 1, Mid-Way Reporting – Conference Call
- March 31, Campaign Concludes