



*We Build People*

YMCA of Greater Erie • 2010 Training Guide

## About Your YMCA

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

- More than 13,000 people are involved members, volunteers, donors and program participants of the YMCA of Greater Erie.
- We have five branches (including Camp Sherwin), 20 childcare sites with over 1,400 children throughout Erie County.
- YMCA of Greater Erie employs nearly 600 employees.
- More than 5,000 children participate in youth sports, helping them get active and learn new skills.
- More than 80 teens participate in the new Y-Metro Teen Center.
- The YMCA of Greater Erie provides income-based memberships that further the mission of ensuring Y programs and services are available to everyone regardless of income.

## What is *We Build People*?

### **It's about people**

The *We Build People* campaign raises funds for families who can't otherwise fully afford YMCA programs and services. Campaign contributions are invested in people. The money raised goes directly to programs and services for children, teens, adults and families. It **does not** pay general branch overhead or campaign expenses. Your membership to the YMCA **does not** support the *We Build People* 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.

## Your Role as a Volunteer

As a volunteer, you will be an integral part of a team that will help achieve your YMCA branch's goal. Your most important job is to:

### **Tell the YMCA story**

Let people know how the Y is strengthening the community and improving the quality of life for children, teens, adults and families.

### **Attend campaign events**

Be active in the campaign. You'll meet other campaigners, learn more about Y programs, and celebrate success.

### **Make your gift first**

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

### **Ask**

You should only contact the people for whom you have been assigned. To avoid duplicate solicitations, please do not call on anyone else unless cleared through your branch campaign contact.

### **Submit completed pledge cards weekly**

Please turn in cards to your branch office for both those who give and those who decline.

### **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 donor makes a gift.

## 8 Keys to Success

### 1. Visit YMCA programs

Understand the YMCA mission by getting to know the programs firsthand. Meet staff and ask questions.

### 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 YMCA before making your own.

### 3. Meet prospective donors face-to-face

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.

### 4. Share the YMCA 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. 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 YMCA to expand services to even more children and families?" **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.

### 7. Ask about matching gifts

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

### 8. Thank donors personally

Always follow up with a personal thank you note. Donors 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)

This year, donors will have the option to make gift online if they choose. They can go straight to the *We Build People* website and click the **donate** button.

The purpose of online giving is to give donors a tool to make a gift online, if they prefer online to writing checks.

## 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, grants and United Way support.

Character development distinguishes the YMCA from organizations that exist only for recreation, fitness, sports, etc.

The YMCA operates day camps, health and fitness programs, youth programs, senior adult programs, family programs and much more.

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

Each YMCA branch participates in the *We Build People* annual 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.**

Your membership rates cover the costs of Y membership, but they do not support additional costs for outreach programs and financial assistance. Your support in this campaign will provide safe, high quality, character-building programs for many children, teens, adults and families in need.

### **Why should I give to the Y? I'm not a member.**

Your support is still needed! You benefit by having a strong YMCA in our community that provides meaningful opportunities to help young people grow into responsible adults. The YMCA makes our community a better place to live and work.

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

The YMCA is a United Way agency. The United Way is an important partner in helping the YMCA deliver programs and services. However, a significant portion of YMCA community outreach is supported by funds raised in the *We Build People* campaign.

## Making the Ask

Four important steps to a successful personal visit:

### **1. Prepare for your face-to-face call**

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

### **2. Relate your own YMCA personal experience**

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

### **3. Ask for a specific amount**

Talk about program benefits, not just dollars. Ask for the amount reflecting the prospects 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 you leave.

### **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*.