



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



## Annual Impact Report to the Community 2012 YMCA of Greater Erie



## MESSAGE FROM THE YMCA CEO & CVO

Dear Friends,

Recently, we've been asking our employees and members – "when you think of the Y, what word would you choose to describe your personal Y experience?" There's been a commonality in the words chosen – acceptance, fellowship, family, confidence – single words that represent powerful stories of the impact the Y is having in someone's life.

Having impact is what fuels our spirit as an organization. Since 1860, our cause of strengthening community has inspired us to demonstrate what happens when we focus on our core conviction that all people, especially children, deserve an equal chance to reach their full potential in body, mind and spirit.

It is through our unending dedication to improving the quality of life that the impact we make goes beyond one person and into the heart and mind of so many more. It is the notion that, by working together, ordinary people can accomplish extraordinary impact and find purposeful and meaningful relationships along the way.

Throughout this publication, are personal stories of those whose lives have been changed through the Y – from the family who overcomes tragedy, the teachers who enhance learning, the teens who achieve academic success and friendship that is found on the volleyball court.

In neighborhoods across Erie County, we are helping to make a profound difference in our community through lasting personal and social change.



Gerry Vandemerwe  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Ken Slaney  
*Chief Volunteer Officer*

# A PLACE OF FELLOWSHIP

It's 5 a.m. on a Friday morning at the County Y branch in Edinboro. The regulars filter in and begin their routine. For the self-branded "Early Morning Crew", a group of 14 regulars, this has been their ritual for nearly 13 years. Comfortably making themselves at home in the lobby, they share their favorite freshly-brewed coffee – from their own French Press pot.

Friendly conversation gets the morning rolling for this bunch – chiding they often solve the world's problems before most are out of bed. Multiple conversations converge all at the same time and laughter fills the lobby, creating an atmosphere of friendship as other Y members arrive.

The Early Morning Crew is made up of folks from different walks of life –professions, stages, perspectives and interests. One thing they admit to sharing, is a friendship that began because of the County Y – and, the game of volleyball.



With coffee and conversation behind them, the group takes to the gym – each with a role. One grabs the broom and begins sweeping the gym floor, a couple start to hang the net and then others help install it. The warm-up begins – some stretching on their own, others beginning to bump the ball back and forth.

"We play strictly pick-up volleyball. Our rules are loose. We play for fun and recreation," says Paul Kostovick. "I guess all those years ago, we began to play volleyball because none of us were very good at basketball!"

Ranging in age from early 40s to late 60s, this group fondly says, "We look forward to this time every week. No matter how bad our week has been, our Friday morning routine is part of our sanity. We let off some steam. At the Y, this is the one place where we are all equal. No one is better than the other."

For one hour, it's high-fives, friendly prods and prideful volleys before heading out to work and family responsibilities. "The Y is more than a place. It's a second home. Not to sound corny, but it's a place for fellowship," says Chris Lovell.



# HEALING BODY AND SPIRIT



It was just a regular day at work for Joe Seth – that was until he was in a terrible explosion that burned more than 85 percent of his body. Brianne, Joe’s wife, commuted on weekends from Pittsburgh for a change of clothes and to visit their two foster children who were staying with another family during this time. “I just remember feeling that it would be best to move the children to another foster home since we were not able to give them the love and support they deserved at that time,” recalls Brianne.

Brianne was Joe’s primary care giver, learning to bathe and change his bandages. “There were rehabilitation appointments and doctor visits here and in Pittsburgh. It was an undertaking to say the least. But, I knew God was watching over us.”

Today, the family has been reunited – including their foster children, whom they’ve since adopted. Joe, now fully recovered, has scarring on his chest and right arm– and continues to work to fully regain his strength.

Money for the Seths is very tight, as much of their savings was spent to supplement their income during Joe’s accident and recovery. Joe is back to work, working 6 or 7 days per week and Brianne has also taken on a job. “Getting out of a financial hole takes a long time. Joe is working 10-12 hour days. Getting exercise, though, is important for Joe’s continued recovery. He needs exercise to get his strength back,” says Brianne. “We received a scholarship from the Eastside Family Y so that I could help Joe with his workouts and our kids could participate in sports and swimming.”

Funds from the Y’s annual scholarship campaign We Build People, provides the financial assistance for a family Y membership.

Since the accident, the Seths are very active at the Y – particularly in the youth sports program where Joe volunteers as a coach. “I wanted to be involved with my son. It’s most rewarding to see kids having fun and improving their skills,” says Joe. “Y sports is not only teaching kids how to play the game, but the importance of sportsmanship and learning to give your best effort.”

“The Y is that place where I don’t feel any stress, but can just have fun with my family and regain my strength,” says Joe. “We are forever grateful to the Y.”





# IPADS ENHANCE LEARNING

In preschool, “A” stands for apple – it also stands for apps – as in applications. And, thanks to a \$4,500 grant through Pennsylvania’s Pre-K Counts program, the YMCA of Greater Erie’s preschool teachers now have access to 12 IPADS that enable teachers to supplement and extend classroom learning.



“In small group settings, the IPADS are used, in conjunction with a teacher, to enhance learning concepts such as reading, writing, spelling, speaking, coloring, matching and sorting,” says Jill Simmons, YMCA of Greater Erie Vice President for Childcare Services. “The aim of Pre-K Counts is to specifically provide high quality preschool for children living in poverty areas and to make preschool – and, now, technology– accessible. It’s a chance to level the playing field for kids who may not have the same early-learning opportunities that their more affluent peers may take for granted.”

At the Downtown Y, classroom teacher Amy Rivera leads children in turning on the IPADS and selecting one of many preloaded learning applications. She patiently assists each child in navigating from one level of the application to the next, helping them with the coordination and dexterity they need to maneuver their fingers and accomplish the task asked by the activity. Each application is set-up for success and learning building confidence in what they’ve learned and applying those concepts to traditional classroom work.

“Many schools are moving away from classroom books – this is a trend in education. Our responsibility as educators is to provide all kids with the same opportunity to learn. Not knowing how to use a computer or an IPAD in kindergarten is the same equivalent to not having another skill such as cutting,” says Amy.

In Amy’s classroom of 27, only one child has access to an IPAD at home. And, she finds that often it’s the IPAD that gets kids interested in traditional learning. “I have a student that has very low interest in learning to write his name. This is an expectation of him as he enters Kindergarten. Traditional teaching methods to introduce proper letter formation have not been effective. It was the writing application on the IPAD that provided the tool that we needed to gain his interest and now he’s writing in a traditional sense too.”

The YMCA of Greater Erie graduates over 240 preschoolers to Kindergarten annually.



# 2013 SENIORS: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

It's a rainy Wednesday after school and the Downtown Y Teen Center has quickly filled with teens – some coming in with ties loosened and shirts untucked, others with hoodies up and athletic shorts from practice. The vibe is comfortable, laughter and friendly jostling saturate the room. Many of these young adults – most now seniors in high school – have been coming to the Teen Center since they were freshman, marking them as the Teen Center's first graduating class since opening in the fall of 2008.



"This place is my second home," says Zhamar "Screech" McAdory. "These guys are my dudes." Many having grown up in the same neighborhood and attend the same high school, find they've made friends from different schools and been influenced by the positive environment at the Y. "Coming to the Teen Center is my routine," says Donny Tatum. "It's what I do every day. The routine keeps me focused and out of trouble. I've made friends here that I wouldn't have otherwise."

All say that the activities at the Teen Center have greater purpose than the actual activity. It's through the acts of recreation and physical training that they are learning about respect for themselves and each other, setting goals and creating a path to achieve them. Chris Kirkland and Donald Bender nod in agreement. "The staff here is always pushing me to go further," says Donald. "This place is everything," says Chris. "It's more than just a place."

"I could see myself as a mentor to a young man," says Screech. "I know that I have to be patient and strong – just like Jeremiah and Dean here at the Teen Center."

Many of our teens will head on to higher education and military service – including those in our story. **Our congratulations to our first graduating class – we are proud of you!**



# FRIENDSHIP COMES IN BIG & LITTLE PACKAGES

It's clear in their eyes – that look of total excitement and anticipation as their "Big" makes their way from the Mercyhurst University van to the Glenwood Park picnic pavilion. The kids run quickly and give their Big an I'm-so-glad-to-see-you greeting. For Trent (13), Kari (11) and Jada (11), Tuesday is the best day of the week. It's on Tuesdays that their Big visits them at the Glenwood Park Y. Through Big Brothers Big Sisters Site-Based Mentoring Program, volunteers are matched with Y kids enrolled in the after-school program.

"For one hour each week, the Bigs & Littles have the opportunity to spend quality one-on-one time at the Y, taking part in activities outside of our structured program," says Glenwood Park Y School-Age Enrichment Center Director Stacy Dambaugh.

Mom Stephanie May says "their Bigs have become their friends. They have an influence on my kids that, as their mom, I don't have . . . often they present a solution to a problem in a way that sounds fresh and that makes a difference for my kids when dealing with the challenges of growing up."



Seated next to their Littles, the Bigs share what motivated them to volunteer for the program. "I am the youngest of five and always had older siblings to look up to," says Luke James. "I wanted to give that experience to another child." For Sara Mills, it was her good upbringing that inspired her to volunteer. "I wanted to be able to share what I was taught with another child and help them." And for Sophia Damasceno, one of six siblings, she said it's hard being away from home. "I'm used to my brothers and sisters looking up to me – I miss it. I thought I could have that same positive influence as a volunteer."

It's clear sitting in conversation with the matches, that the relationship they've developed is genuine. The kids all agree that their Bigs are very helpful with their homework and openly admit that they like to get away from their siblings. Trent chids saying, "I live in a house full of girls. I need a break!" Aside from homework help, the pairs say they most enjoy playing sports and having fun together.

All four YMCA of Greater Erie branches offer the Big Brothers Big Sisters Site-Based Mentoring program. To learn more, call your local YMCA branch.

## 2012 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

The Y is for **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**, because we believe that all kids deserve opportunities to discover who they are and what they can achieve.

The Y is for **HEALTHY LIVING**, improving the nation's health and well-being. The Y brings families closer and fosters connections through fitness, sports, fun and shared interests.

The Y is for **SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**, giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

### Financial Assistance

Every day, we work side by side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. In 2012, thousands of children and adults engaged in Y membership programs like camp, afterschool, youth sports, teen clubs, family activities and wellness programs as a result of \$856,429 provided in financial assistance through the Y to those in need.

### Membership and Program Participation

During 2012, over 35,000 youth, families, adults and seniors engaged in YMCA programs and membership. Membership exceeded 24,000 individuals and retention held at 65%, well within the standards of the national YMCA.

### Glenwood Park Y Marks 50 Years of Service

In 1962, the YMCA of Greater Erie opened its first family branch – the Glenwood Park YMCA. It has been in this facility that tens of thousands of children have experienced the confidence that learning to swim and playing sports can bring; families have reconnected through healthy-home centered programs and adults of all ages have built life-long friendships through common interests.

### Highmark QUAD Games Marks 30 Years

The 2012-2013 Highmark QUAD Games marked 30 years as the region's premier fitness program with four year-round events dedicated to offering a one-of-a-kind, fun and unique way to bring variety and fun to physical activity. Children as young as two years old in the Highmark QUAD Kids sponsored by Wegmans were part of the celebration season and "older kids" like 86 years young Phil Chenard crossed all four finish lines to become QUAD Games Champions.

### CoventryCares Movers & Shapers Fitness Program Provides Free YMCA Membership

Medicaid beneficiaries on the CoventryCares health plan began receiving a free membership to the YMCA of Greater Erie. The program is designed to improve the overall health and well-being of local families on Medical Assistance by increasing their access to fitness and weight management facilities. Unlike other programs that cover the cost for adults only, the Movers and Shapers program covers the cost of membership for children as well. As of April 2013, more than 800 memberships have been awarded. Memberships are awarded for an ongoing commitment to getting healthy and staying fit and include utilization requirements.

### City of Erie Recreational Partnership Expanded to Include Learn to Swim Program

Since 2001, the Y has been collaborating with the City of Erie to provide summer recreational programming at nine City of Erie neighborhood parks. The summer of 2012 brought an additional collaboration to provide over 500 youth with swimming lessons through the City of Erie's Brian Lee Memorial Learn to Swim Program at Strong Vincent and East High Schools. Youth ages 3-17 had various swimming abilities and learned from YMCA certified instructors – nearly 1/2 participating in swimming lessons for the first time.

### 100 Years of Making Friends at YMCA Camp Sherwin

Favorite camp activities from yesterday and today, friends old & new, Camp roll-call, Camp memorabilia, bonfire and Camp sing-a-long all marked the August open house and reunion. The highlight was surely the taffy drop from the passing-by helicopter that scattered hundreds of pieces of salt water taffy from the sky above to the field below – a camp tradition from the 1950s. Campers from the 1930s mingled with the campers of today – all signing the historic guest book and paddle!



## 2012 OPERATING REVENUE



### REVENUES

Membership.....	\$5,338,249
Childcare.....	\$9,067,145
Program.....	\$494,165
United Way.....	\$105,796
Community Support.....	\$940,169
Other.....	\$1,282,588
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$17,228,112</b>



### EXPENSES

Salaries & Benefits.....	\$9,291,395
Other Operating Expenses...	\$6,740,233
<b>TOTAL.....</b>	<b>\$16,031,628</b>

### MEMBERSHIP (as of Dec. 31, 2012)

Membership Units	2011	2012
	7894	8378
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>23,016</b>	<b>24,638</b>

## 2013 EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

### EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Molly Papson, *Camp Sherwin*  
 Brennan Fedorko, *County*  
 Mildred "Jeanne" Moss &  
 April Moskalczyk, *Downtown*  
 Diane Dale, *Eastside Family*  
 Dennis Browne, *Glenwood Park*  
 Linda Bush, *Waterford Y Early Learning*  
 & *School-Age Enrichment*

### VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Betty Stevens, *Camp Sherwin*  
 Beth Kirschner, *County*  
 Connor Herron, *Eastside Family*  
 District Attorney Jack Daneri, *Downtown*  
 Joshua Adams, *Glenwood Park*

### VOLUNTEER FUNDRAISER OF THE YEAR

Josh Lardi, *County*  
 Margaret Matthews, *Glenwood Park*  
 Tom Myers, Esq. *Metro*

### YMCA SPIRIT AWARD

Hannah Layne, *County*  
 Amikka Bowers, *Downtown*  
 Chiara Wawrzyniak, *Eastside Family*  
 Chuck Pora & John Wroblewski, *Glenwood Park*  
 LECOM, *Metro*

### CORPORATE PARTNER

Mason Farms, *Camp Sherwin*  
 Rebich Investments, *County*  
 Lowes, *Downtown*  
 Brooks Landscape, *Eastside Family*  
 Walgreens, *Glenwood Park*  
 Erie Insurance Group, *Metro*

### EMPLOYEE 5 YEARS OF SERVICE

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 Julie Baganski  
 William Beach  
 Jeffrey Bresslin, II  
 Dean Brown  
 Kendra Christiansen  
 Emily Compton  
 Evan Csir  
 Stephanie Crowl  
 Betty Dean  
 Susan Ellsworth  
 Donald Ferri  
 Erin Fleming  
 Kathryn Foley  
 Nancy Jo Foor  
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 Mona Free  
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 Jillian Marks  
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 Christopher Mendez  
 Shelly Miller  
 Kayla Nesselhauf  
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 Devin Perry  
 Shirley Pytlarz  
 Danielle Ricci  
 Amy Rivera  
 Ryan Rowan  
 Mariah Sager  
 Kevin Salem

Kathleen Seib  
 Aaron Soule  
 Alexandria Snippet  
 Heather Wheeler  
 Shannon Zoltowski

### EMPLOYEE 10 YEARS OF SERVICE

Irina Alanakyan  
 Janet Bailey  
 Sandra Berkowitz  
 Linda Bush  
 Mary Dougan  
 Tammi Firestone  
 Melissa Grey  
 Kelly Humes  
 Stephanie May  
 Mary Schmidt  
 Sara Volkman  
 Sabrina Wangler

### EMPLOYEE 15 YEARS OF SERVICE

Cary Bardwell  
 Kelly Gheres  
 Lori Lewis  
 Rose Lucas  
 April Moskalczyk  
 Lawrence Schaller  
 Stacey Tetuan  
 Richard Williams

### EMPLOYEE 20 YEARS OF SERVICE

Debbie Anderson  
 Kathy Heiter  
 Jim McEldowney

### EMPLOYEE 25 YEARS OF SERVICE

Dianne Dale

### EMPLOYEE 30 YEARS OF SERVICE

Sallie Barnes

## 2013 EMPLOYEE & VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION (continued)

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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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*\*denotes deceased*

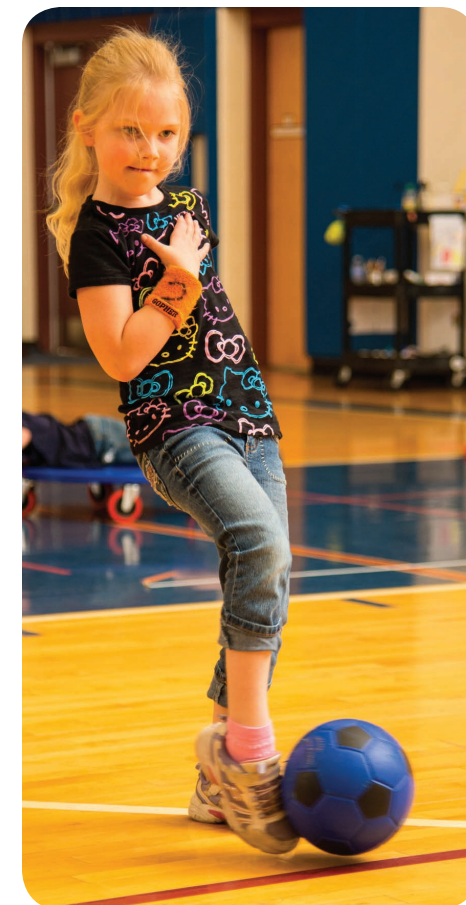
### YMCA CHAIR'S ROUNDTABLE

Recognizes donors for contributing \$1000 or more to the Y's annual community support campaign We Build People or special events, projects and programs during calendar year 2012.

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 Sean & Kim Beers  
 Ron & Cindy Bielani  
 BNY Mellon  
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 Citizen's Bank Foundation  
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*\*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.*



YMCA of Greater Erie  
31 West 10th Street  
Erie, PA 16501  
[ymcaerie.org](http://ymcaerie.org)

**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