



HOME

AWAY FROM HOME

2019 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT





A feeling of having a home away from home is one of the many reasons why we stand out. We asked people to share their photos on social media with #YWeStandOut.



Home.

When we think of home, we think of that place where we feel comfortable. You feel like yourself. You feel accepted. You feel loved.

That's exactly what we want our Y to be. A home for everyone. A place where no one feels alone, or excluded, or unloved – just as the unconditional love of God provides a home to everyone who seeks it.

As 2019 came to a close, we looked back over the year and are grateful for all the ways we were able to be home to the people in our community.

Our donors made it possible to provide more than \$1 million in program subsidies and financial assistance, so that everyone could belong.

We created programming and spaces for foster families, so everyone felt loved.

Program staff was trained and implemented strategies to include children in our programs who needed some extra accommodations, so everyone was valued.

Every day we work to create a home away from home for the people in our community. With our guiding values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith, we know we can be that place that is safe, secure and nurturing. We thank you for coming on this journey with us as we create a home for our community where everyone is welcome.

BRENT PENTENBURG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DR. DAVE GOMEL
CHIEF VOLUNTEER OFFICER

OUR MISSION

To put Christian principles into practice through programs, services and relationships that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

FINDING THE RIGHT PATH

As a sophomore in high school, Natura Robinson was at a fork in the road. He had recently suffered a knee injury that took away his dream of playing basketball. He was severely depressed and his decision in that moment about which road to take would determine his future.

"I thought I lost everything after that injury. I was really struggling and I started hanging around the wrong crowd," said Natura.

In stepped Miss Dee and Miss Tamica with the YMCA. They had noticed that Natura was a regular at the Y on the basketball court and they recruited Natura to join YMCA Achievers. Achievers is a career awareness and mentoring program for teens that helps students develop career goals; instills self-esteem, self-respect, and social moral character; and provides role models from diverse backgrounds.

"They taught me a lot about life and helped me recognize that I needed to change the people I hung out with," said Natura. "I soon learned there is more to life than basketball. I guess they saw the potential in me that I never saw," said Natura.

"The Y is able to offer the Achievers program free

of charge to teens because of the support of very generous donors," said Dee Edgerton, Teen Program Director. "We are grateful for their support and for the opportunity to help teens see their dreams can come true."

In 2018, Natura joined a group of young people on the YMCA College Tour. The tour exposes youth to several college campuses and shows them what it takes to make college a reality. Natura started to create new dreams.

"My mom and dad struggled a lot with paying bills when I was growing up. We had to move around a lot and we went through some bad times. But, they always encouraged and supported me. I want my family to relax. I want to say, 'I got you.' That is what keeps me motivated."

At age 20, Natura's story has come full circle. He is now the mentor as a member of the YMCA Kids' Time staff at Whitehead Elementary School. He is responsible for helping instill the Y's core values and shaping young minds.

"Working for the Y has been great. I try to motivate and encourage the kids to be a better person," said

Natura. "I want them to have a happy mind and be positive. I teach them that someday they will have kids looking up to them."

Natura is working on going back to school at Rock Valley College and then on to North Carolina University or Kentucky State University. He wants to study business and biology. His goal is to be a CEO of his own personal training and motivational speaking business.

"My life could be completely different right now. My mentors showed me that I have a purpose and a plan. God put me here to encourage kids. My parents always said, 'don't let anybody tell you what you can and cannot do.' So, I share that same message with the students in Kids' Time. I am proof that when you encourage kids, they can do good things."



86%

High school graduation rate for Achievers compared to 66% for RPS 205.

1,000

Students enrolled in Kids' Time after-school care for fun and enrichment every day.

188

Children who learned water safety in our community summer swim program.

MORE THAN A CLASS – A COMMUNITY

What started as a means to heal has turned into friendships, fitness challenges, and a home away from home for Richard Bowers, Jr. He suffered a devastating loss at the beginning of 2019 and needed a place to go to get his mind off things.

“In January of this year, my wife passed away. As part of dealing with the loss, I needed to have some structure. I needed to have a reason to get out of the house and do things,” said Richard.

So, he turned to the YMCA and started going to group fitness classes. He attended cycling classes at the SwedishAmerican Riverfront YMCA and Body Pump at the Puri Family YMCA. He made a connection with Body Pump instructor and Healthy Living Director Holli Tank.

“The thing I like about Holli is that she is genuine. Her own success story with her fitness and how she has achieved it is inspiring. She is not just instructing – she is going through the movements with us,” he said.

A former power lifter, Richard is active and fit, but couldn’t do the heavy lifting anymore. Body Pump intrigued him because it involved weight lifting, but at a more manageable level.

“When I first started the class, it was a struggle to get through because I had never done Body Pump. My goal was to put as much weight on the bar as Holli had on her bar.”

Holli laughs at this statement and says, “Richard has

come a long way in class. He lifts more than I do now. So, that’s a good thing.”

The class is about more than exercise for Richard and everyone in the room.

Richard realized that many of his fellow participants were moms who had a hard time starting the class at 8 a.m. because they had to drop their children off at child watch, which doesn’t open until 8. He started to help them grab equipment as they came in, but class was still starting late. He decided to make it easy for his classmates and make sure their stations were ready to go when they got there.

“I have time to get here early and I need a warm up. I knew which women were dropping children off so I would just set them up. I started setting

Holli’s station up, as well, to thank her because I appreciate what she’s doing.”

Holli shares that she looks forward to Monday classes so she can hear about Richard’s latest fitness adventures.

“He rides bikes, he runs trail races, and he’ll tell me about his new shoes. We’ve really built a great relationship. Richard is not just a participant, he is one of my friends and I look over to him for motivation when I’m teaching.”

This class has become a community – a home away from home. We’re happy Richard found a support system here at the Y.

“In January of this year, my wife passed away. As part of dealing with the loss, I needed to have some structure. I needed to have a reason to get out of the house and do things,” said Richard.



30%

Families who receive financial assistance to participate in YMCA programs.

85%

JOYNT participants who continue to pursue a healthy lifestyle, moving closer to eligibility for hip or knee replacement.

185

People battling cancer who worked to return to their pre-diagnosis level of health.

DONORS OPEN DOORS AT THE CLC

“I should be getting ready to retire now and not be thinking about daycare,” said Teri Murray, grandmother to Adonis, 6; Ares, 4; and Athena, 3, all past and present students at the YMCA’s Children’s Learning Center (CLC).

But, Teri made a decision out of love. She adopted her grandchildren because her daughter could no longer care for them.

“Life has a way of messing with our plans,” said Sarah Renicker, Executive Director, CLC. “Now, Teri finds herself in that mom role again and she came to us and said ‘I’ve done this, it was a while ago and I think I need your help.’”

Now, the CLC is a home away from home for Teri and the children. It’s a safe space where the kids are getting the academics that are so important to Teri. However, she had to make a decision about whether she could afford to keep the children at the place they had all come to love.

“She said she just couldn’t afford to pay tuition for her grandchildren to continue to go to preschool. She asked if there was anything else we could do, and we said, ‘yes,’ the Y does set aside funds to be able to help in this kind of situation,” said Sarah.

“The CLC, bless their hearts, they’ve helped me. I was going to have to pull them out. I wasn’t going to be able to keep them here because I couldn’t afford it. I was going to have to put them where they were before. It’s cheaper, but they don’t have the academics. And, they couldn’t go outside because it’s in a neighborhood where the woman didn’t feel safe having the kids outside. The CLC has done more than they’ll ever know they’ve done for me,” said Teri.

As a non-profit organization, the Y seeks donations to support its mission of putting Christian principles into practice through programs, services and relationships that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. We want to make sure all children are getting an even chance at what we have to offer and building the strong foundation they deserve.

“I see how much young, single moms or struggling families want what’s best for their kids, but without a scholarship – they just can’t do it financially,” said Sarah. “How do we make early education accessible to everybody – so whether a family has money or doesn’t have money, the kids get what they need? We want every child to be successful when they get to kindergarten and supporting our next generation of learners is how we make our community stronger.”



101

Children who receive a Y scholarship to attend the CLC and become ready for Kindergarten.

286

Children in foster care who participate in Y programs and receive the support of caring adults.

40

Chaplains who volunteer time to focus on uplifting our YMCA, the community, and our members.

“The CLC, bless their hearts, they’ve helped me. I was going to have to pull them out. I wasn’t going to be able to keep them here because I couldn’t afford it. I was going to have to put them where they were before. It’s cheaper, but they don’t have the academics. And, they couldn’t go outside because it’s in a neighborhood where the woman didn’t feel safe having the kids outside. The CLC has done more than they’ll ever know they’ve done for me,” said Teri.





TOTAL OF
2,618
VOLUNTEER
HOURS



JANUARY

**BRIAN
LEAF SPIN
STUDIO WAS
DEDICATED**

MARCH

**JOYNT PROGRAM
LAUNCHED WITH
JUDSON AND
ORTHOILLINOIS**

**OPENED THE
TWEEN SCENE AT
SAY TO SERVE
7-12 YEAR OLDS**



AREAS **TRANSFORMED**

**6 CLASSROOMS
GYM/PLAYGROUNDS
OFFICE & HALLWAYS
LANDSCAPING**



APRIL

**LAUNCHED A
NEW APP**

MAY

**DEDICATED THE RICK
AND LANA ENGEN
ACTIVITY CENTER
IN HONOR OF LONG-
TIME DONORS**

JUNE

**OPENED WEBSTER
PAVILION AT CAMP
WINNEBAGO**



**SHAREFEST
AT CLC**



**SWIM LESSONS
AT HARLEM,
ALPINE, AND
HARKINS POOLS**

SEPTEMBER

**WELCOMED
ONE BODY
COLLABORATIVES
PARTNERSHIP**



659
VOLUNTEER
SHIFTS



OCTOBER

**\$40,000 DONATION
FROM PROAM AND
SELECTED FOR 2020**

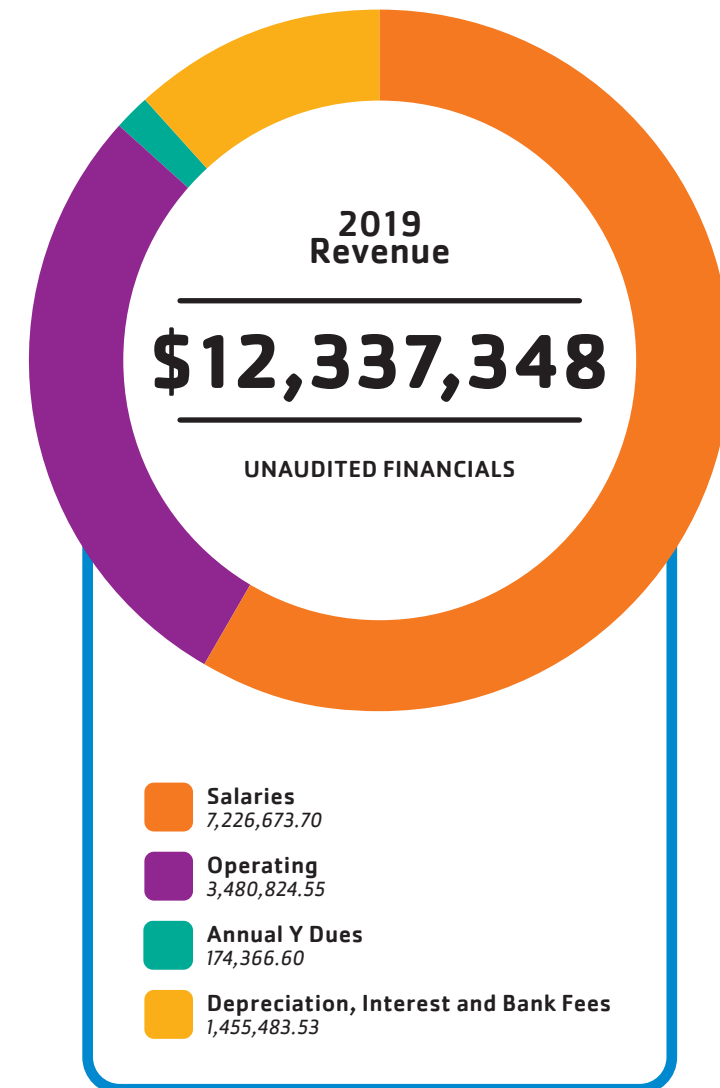
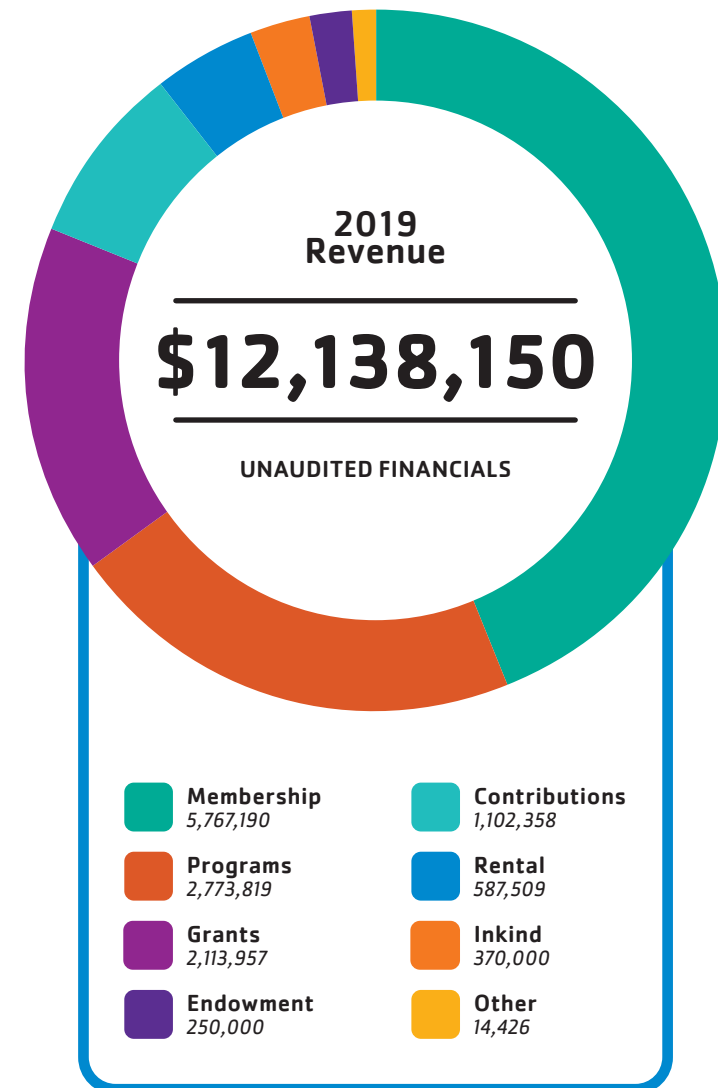
NOVEMBER

**LAUNCHED
THE SPIRITUAL
EMPHASIS TEAM**

DECEMBER

**HIGHEST EVER
ANNUAL CAMPAIGN
WITH \$1.28 MILLION
RAISED**

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



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Shelley Wagner

A MESSAGE OF THANKS

Thank you to all of the members, donors, staff members, and volunteers who made 2019 one for the record books. Your generosity meant our annual campaign grew to more than \$1.28 million – making the doors to the Y open to everyone in our community.

Your gifts gave respite to new moms, friendship to those who are alone in the world, and extra-special love to children who needed to feel safe and secure.

Your gifts meant that the old adage, “Home is not a place...it’s a feeling,” is more true than ever at the Y – and, for that, I am grateful beyond measure. Thank you for making the Y a home for so many in our community, particularly those who might otherwise be all alone.

When we come together, there is so much good we can do!

Wishing you a healthy and safe 2020,



Michelle Gorham, CFRE
Chief Advancement Officer

HERITAGE CLUB

From the very start of the **YMCA of Rock River Valley**, generous friends have recognized the value of the Y’s mission and have vowed to support it into the future. Heritage Club members have indicated their commitment to remembering the YMCA of Rock River Valley in their estate plans.

- | | | | | |
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- | | | | | | |
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2019 LEADERSHIP AWARDS

YMCA Community Leader Award K. Edward Copeland

The Community Leader Award is recognition for any outstanding leader who embodies excellence in their field, is an outstanding role model and exemplifies the mission and vision of the YMCA. Pastor K. Edward Copeland has a passion for education and making our community a better place to live. He was instrumental in the creation of Alignment Rockford, an organization dedicated to improving the city’s education system. He went on to create Connect Rockford, a program to curb repeat offenders, prevent crime and reduce juvenile delinquency.

YMCA Outstanding Business Impact Award Ortholllinois

The YMCA Outstanding Business Impact Award recognizes an organization that goes beyond its business to make an impact locally. After opening a new clinic within our Y, they donated \$100,000 for the Y to install a state-of-the-art rock-climbing wall. They also teamed up with Judson University and the Y on a new JOYNT program that helps patients who need surgery, but don’t qualify for health reasons. The program guides patients through exercise, nutrition, counseling and therapy so they can meet the requirements to undergo surgery.

Antonio Little Teen Leadership Award Annika Peterson

Antonio Little led youth mentoring programs at the Y until his untimely passing in 2015. This award provides a \$1,000 scholarship to a local student in his name. Annika Peterson graduated from Rockford Christian in 2019. Her compassion for children with disabilities has helped our community become a more inclusive and accessible place for all. Her sister has a bone disorder that affects her physical appearance. She took that insight and volunteered for the Rockford Park District’s Buddy Sport programs. These programs allow youth with disabilities the opportunity to play sports.

Judson University Scholarship Lindsie Combs

Each year, Judson University and the Y award a 2-year scholarship in the adult professional program at Judson. Lindsie Combs, a stay-at-home mom for five years, felt called to take the next step in her education. Her goal is to earn a degree in Applied Psychology to offer free Christian counseling services through her church. She grew up a pastor’s daughter and is now a youth pastor’s wife. Lindsie says she has walked through many difficult situations with people, and she wants to further educate herself to better serve others.



OUR DONORS

The work we are doing requires dedication from our team and from generous donors like you! Thank you to the following donors who invested in our community in 2019, giving everyone the opportunity to thrive. Your gift moves us all forward and builds a **BETTER US!**

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Robert Jackson	Jennifer Lemke	Carla Mullin	James and Lucy Pirages	Spectrum Agency	Margie VanWambeke
Ehren and Christie Jarrett	Glenn and Melissa Lemmers	Emmanuel and Lora Negrete	PMI Photography Inc	Steve and Patty Stadelman	Kathy (Mary) Vigna
Bruce and Karen Jasper	Paul and Judy Letourneau	Robert and Lori Neiber	Susan Polivka	Staff Management, Inc	Robert and Mary Vigna
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Delores Jensen	Tonya Lewers	Network For Good	Ben and Katya Pritchard	State Farm Insurance – Solomon Foley	James and Shirley Waddell
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Cynthia Johnson	Jakob and Mackenzie Loescher	Jim and Denise Noe	RAMM	Meredith MacKay	Thomas and Karen Walsh
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Michelle Johnson	Steve and Melanie Lukasik	Kevin and Jennifer Anne O’Brien	Nancy Anne Rettig	Daniel and Susan Swift	Curtis White
Sheryl Johnson	Joyce Lund	Michael Odling	Raymond Rhoads	Lawrence Taber	Jonathan and Nancy Whitlock
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Brian Kapusta and Diana Kenyon	Nick and Kelly Maier	Dean Olson	Edward Williams	Tonya Thayer–Meyer	Ahishia Wiley
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Brad Keyes	Rus and Kathleen Mayborne	Georgeann Palmquist	Joshua and Jenny Rogel	Thor Computing	Martin and Christine Tillou
Dana and Brenda Kiley	Monique McClurge	Panino’s Restaurants	Linette Rojas	Robert Thorsen	Total Faith Community Church
Joseph Klinck	Brian McDonald	Lana Paris and Don Zwiefelhofer	Samuel and Carm Rongere	Martin and Christine Tillou	Dale and Lynne Townsend
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Richard and Nancy Knight	Jim McIlwain	Greg Parsons	Bruce and Dawn Rudie	Lee and Jessica Ryden	Tyson and Billy Architects
Paul and Libby Knopp	Kimberly Menke	John Paulsgrove	Lee and Jessica Ryden	Sanders Design Group, LLC	United Way Suncoast
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Mary Kowing	Susan Meyers	Frederick Pelley	Laura Schulze	Lee Schreiner	Jasper and JoAnne
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Jeffrey and Vickie Krueger	Michael and Jodi Mohr	Gerald Peterson			
Jack Kubitz	Aaron and Eliza Montgomery				
Dave and Kim Lape					
Pedro Lara–Oliva					



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8451 ORTH ROAD
LOVES PARK, IL 61111

PURI FAMILY YMCA
1475 S PERRYVILLE ROAD
ROCKFORD, IL 61108

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