

YWCA Greater Harrisburg

August 2015 Newsletter

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Message from the Interim CEO

In July the New York Times published an article with detailed excerpts from a **memorandum of law in a case of sexual assault**. The accused was **Bill Cosby**. The case was settled in 2006. So far, there are **35 women** claiming **misconduct of a sexual nature** spanning the years from 1965 to 2004. All of the women have **strikingly similar stories that match many of the details from the recently unsealed memorandum of law**, in which Mr. Cosby acknowledged that he had obtained Quaaludes as part of his effort to have sex with women.

The disturbing stories from all the women that have accused Mr. Cosby of sexual misconduct are by themselves horrific. There is a **pattern of abuse** including; power, manipulation and unknowingly being drugged. However, there is another similarity in their stories. Many of these women reported **feeling too "ashamed" or "embarrassed" to come forward** to report the crime until years, sometimes even decades later. For this reason, their truthfulness is in question.

To quote Mr. Cosby's attorney, "it is completely illogical that so many people would have said nothing, done nothing, and made no reports to law enforcement or asserted civil claims if they thought they had been assaulted over a span of so many years."

I challenge this rationale based on what we know as a leading advocate for sexual assault victims through our Violence and Intervention Programs and Legal Center. Furthermore, the Department of Justice reports sexual assault as one of the most under reported crimes. **Only thirty-two percent of sexual assaults are reported** to the police. The reason is **many victims feel as though they did something wrong, were naïve or are not believed** by the person they confide in first.

A friend or family member is typically the first person a victim confides in after an assault. Each individual's personal reaction is the first step in a long path toward justice and healing. For this reason, the YWCA Greater Harrisburg launched the **Start by Believing Campaign** this past April during sexual assault awareness month. The initiative is a **public awareness campaign** designed by End Violence Against Women International. It is uniquely focused on the **public response to sexual assault**.

Knowing how to respond is critical—a negative response can worsen the trauma and foster an environment where perpetrators face zero consequences for their crimes. Our responses matter and we need to start by **believing –not blaming!**



Mary Quinn, Interim CEO

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mary Quinn".

**eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca**

greater harrisburg

The YWCA Pillar Society



Members understand importance of unrestricted funds

The YWCA Greater Harrisburg is very fortunate to receive significant financial support from a variety of sources: federal and state government, the United Way, private foundations and generous individuals. Much of that funding, however, is **restricted** to specific departments or programs and is often **subject to budget cuts** or shifts in funding priorities.

Established last fall, the Pillar Society has raised **\$38,000 in unrestricted funds** for the YWCA. Thirty-three members have made a **5-year, \$1,000 per year commitment** to providing unrestricted funds that will help us **fill gaps and initiate mission-based programming**.

Examples of uses for unrestricted funds include: **Camp Reily**, a rural summer camp for inner-city children (with a swimming pool!), **cultural competency and anti-bias training for local law enforcement personnel** to promote positive community-police relations, and **free legal services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault**. Additionally, the building in which we provide the majority of our programs and services is large and in constant need of **upkeep**. These unique but vitally important aspects of our organization depend on the availability of unrestricted funds.

Robyn Holder, Friends Board and Pillar Society member, felt so good about her contribution that she has made a concerted effort to encourage others to join the Society. She made an appeal to her fellow Friends and three individuals answered the call! Follow Robyn's lead – **join the Pillar Society** and bring friends and family along with you! Your generosity will support the YWCA in a significant way and **ensure the viability of the organization for years to come**.

If interested in becoming a member, please contact **Pamela Rhoads** at 717-724-2241 or prhoads@ywcahbg.org.

PPO&S Sharing Success

In commemoration of 35 years of success, **Harrisburg marketing communications agency, PPO&S**, is launching an **initiative** this fall to heighten awareness of the YWCA Greater Harrisburg's **In a Pinch Fund**.

"As a woman-owned business, we want to continue our tradition of giving back to the community," said PPO&S President Virginia Roth, "and among the organizations we've championed is the YWCA."



Earlier this year, PPO&S committed a **\$25,000 five-year pledge** to The YWCA Greater Harrisburg in support of renaming the Legacy Award in honor of the agency's late founder, Carolyn Smith. Carolyn established the In a Pinch Fund, which helps women who are living at the YWCA with **small, one-time financial grants that enable them to cover immediate needs** such as a coat, eyeglasses, or a new pair of shoes. Since then, nearly 80 women have been aided by the fund.

Donors are asked to contribute **35 cents and \$35 or more**. As part of the effort, PPO&S has secured the support of **downtown restaurants and businesses who will offer special promotions** throughout September and October. The YWCA has established a permanent link for online donations at www.ywcahbg.org/donate.

"Thirty-five cents may seem insignificant, but **a large number of small contributions can make a meaningful impact**," said Roth. "Our intent is to emphasize that when a woman is trying to turn her life around, **small things can make a big difference**."

In Loving Memory of Belinda Maksumic

Belinda Maksumic came to the United States as a refugee from the Bosnian War. After graduating with an Associate in Social Work, Belinda came to the YWCA in 2004.

Belinda's passion for empowering clients and making a positive impact was apparent from day one. While providing counseling and advocacy services, Belinda saw a gap between survivors of domestic and sexual violence and people struggling with drug and alcohol addictions. Belinda met with numerous facilities and persistently fought to make our services available at the prison and drug and alcohol facilities.

Because of Belinda's hard work and dedication, there are currently 4 facilities that host weekly YWCA support groups and others that transport people to the YWCA for individual counseling.

Despite losing her battle with cancer on June 23, 2015, Belinda's legacy of dedication, passion, and empowerment will live on at the YWCA.

Belinda will be greatly missed by her husband Max, her son Brian, the YWCA staff and the clients of the YWCA.



Belinda (left) and her son, Brian (or Brajan).

Friends Board Update

The YWCA Greater Harrisburg holds a special place in my heart, and it is an honor to serve as **president of its Friends Board**. The first Power of Style Fashion Show was my first real connection with the YWCA, and I instantly knew that **this was an organization that I wanted to support**.

The Friends Board of the YWCA Greater Harrisburg has a **long history of amazing women**, and I am happy to say that this coming year will be a continuation of that tradition. Each member seems to be bursting with **enthusiasm for the coming year and our projects**.

The **Power of Style Fashion Show** continues to be our biggest event of the year. Preparations are well underway, and I hope that everyone already has **October 8th** on their calendars! Additional Friends Board events to look forward to are the **Holiday Giving program** in December, the **Valentine's Day Party** for YWCA residents in February and the **Cards with Heart Project** in the spring.

It is going to be a great year, and I am looking forward to each step of the way!

Alison Ballantine
2015-16 Friends Board President



Junior Board Update

The YWCA's Junior Board has worked hard in 2015 to **support the needs of the YWCA and Camp Reily**. Our newest members have brought a fresh level of excitement and continue to add energy to the Junior Board. As we transition Board Presidents, it has been an honor to serve the YWCA and those who benefit from the many services it provides.

The Junior Board hosted its annual Happy Hour, **"A Night of UnWINEding with the YWCA"** on April 1st in Lower Paxton Township. The event was sponsored by Maher Duessel and hosted by Spring Gate Vineyard. It brought **more guests than ever and raised more than \$2,900** in support of Camp Reily and the children who attend the summer camp.

The Junior Board is planning its **6th Annual Fall Fest** at Camp Reily. This year's fest will be held on **Saturday, October 3rd** and will include **beer tasting, food, live music** and more! Visit www.ywcahbg.org/events for more information.

Lastly, the Junior Board is currently accepting applications from women ages 21 to 35 for membership for the 2015-2016 year. If you or someone you know is interested in joining the Junior Board, or if you'd like more information regarding our events, please contact the 15-16 Board President Erin Burlew at egburlew@gmail.com.

Jade K. Herbst
2014-15 Junior Board President

Veterans Services Spotlight

Jose: A Veterans' Journey

As an 8-year Army veteran, Sergeant and combat veteran, Jose knows a lot about **overcoming adversity**. Jose discovered, as many veterans do, that some of the greatest challenges a veteran faces are right here at home. They include **reintegrating to civilian culture, obtaining employment and transitioning from soldier to civilian**.

Like many veterans, Jose began his journey back to civilian life with the help of his family. His mother, Diana, was the rock that supported him and provided the housing and encouragement he needed. Unfortunately, she developed health issues that forced her to leave Pennsylvania. Her absence left Jose homeless and in need of support.



Jose and his mother, Diana (left), and Veterans Employment Specialist Barry Cannon (right).

He found the support he needed through the **outreach and services provided by the YWCA Veterans' Services programs**. While staying at the York Rescue Mission, Jose met YWCA **Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP)** Veterans Employment Specialist Barry Cannon. Barry met with Jose and provided **rapid job readiness services**. Barry also connected Jose to Nicole Wilson and the **Transition in Place (TIP)** housing program to meet Jose's immediate housing needs.

Jose enrolled in TIP and moved into his own apartment. He worked closely with Barry and obtained employment as a machinist while working with Nicole on his **housing stability goals**. Jose's leadership skills and desire to overcome challenges defined his approach.

Jose decided he needed a change, so he took a job with J. J. Snacks, a growing company. After a short period of time, the company recognized Jose's **leadership and management skills** and offered him a full-time management position. As he states, **"I have gotten back into life and want to help others"**. He is a vocal supporter of veterans' programs and enjoys helping other veterans to find employment.

Jose now shares a happy home with his spouse, daughter and son and enjoys his career. Jose's mother noted during a recent visit that she is proud of her son and that he is, **"more at peace"**. While Jose agrees, he makes it clear that life is a journey and that he is far from finished exploring possibilities.

He plans to go back to school, use his position to help others find meaningful employment, and utilize his artistic skills in professional and personal growth. His **dedication, success and support** motivate other veterans to believe in themselves. His example shows that **dreams and challenges serve as opportunities for growth and achievement** on the journey through life.



Racial Justice Updates

Camp Reily Video Project in Full Swing

The YWCA's new **mission-focused video project** is in full swing at Camp Reily, where **35 kids in grades K-6** are learning about **"eliminating racism and empowering women."**

Carmen Henry-Harris lead the kids to interact with different types of hair as part of **learning about race**, instilling the mantra that **we're "different but not deficient!"** Tara Leo Auchey's workshop on gender ignited a spirited **debate about what objects and items are traditionally considered male or female** – but by the end of the session most kids agreed that **"it doesn't matter!"**

With that foundation set, Diana Robinson taught the kids about the **production process**, and started working with them to develop the story they want to tell on film.

The finished product will be showcased at a "red carpet" event at the **Midtown Cinema on Tuesday, September 15th at 6:30 PM**. Save the date!



Tara Leo Auchey (back) and Carmen Henry-Harris (right) help the kids choose their video themes while Diana Robinson (left) captures the process on camera.

Diversity Forum Re-Launches under YWCA Leadership

The YWCA has contracted with Dauphin County to take leadership of the Diversity Forum, a monthly gathering which has historically focused on **networking and education around diversity**.

Under the direction of a newly-expanded Advisory Panel, the Diversity Forum's new focus will be to **foster inclusive, action-oriented communities through educational forums that promote and facilitate dialogue, best practices and solutions**.

The next Forum will take place on **Thursday, September 17th at 8:00 AM at the YWCA**. Opening remarks from Commissioner Hartwick, Sen. Rob Teplitz and Rep. Patty Kim will be followed by a presentation from the Advisory Panel about the new direction moving forward.

Please mark your calendars!

DIVERSITY FORUM

One Community, Diverse Voices. — 3rd Thursday of every month

The Journey Forward

Join us for welcoming remarks by Commissioner George P. Hartwick, III, Rep. Patty Kim and Sen. Rob Teplitz and a talk about the future direction of the Diversity Forum!



**Thursday,
September 17
8-10 a.m.**

Light breakfast provided

**YWCA Greater Harrisburg
Highmark Room
1101 Market St
Harrisburg, PA**



The YWCA is proud to recognize **Amanda Arbour, Racial Justice Program Coordinator**, who graduated with the 2015 class of the **Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Development Institute** this June.

Amanda and thirteen other graduates came together one Saturday each month from September through May for **speakers, panel presentations, activities and discussions** focused on **identifying community issues, learning strategies for change and developing leadership skills**.

Amanda shares some of her reflections below:

*"I remember on our first day of class watching a video about the Civil Rights Movement and the **sacrifices that so many people made to fight for freedom**. For me, it brought up tears of pain, of anger and also a **burning desire to carry on those efforts today**."*

*The Institute was a great experience for me because I was with a **group of people who share that same desire**, and although we came from very different backgrounds we had inspiring discussions about the problems that we see and how to **affect change**."*

*In addition to what I learned from the speakers, panelists and facilitators, I learned a lot from my fellow classmates, and I am coming away from this program with a **broader circle of partners and friends in the work to eliminate racism**."*

The MLK Leadership Institute is a program of the **Interdenominational Ministers Conference (IMC) of Greater Harrisburg**, and its mission is **preparing and empowering individuals committed to exercising creative leadership to improve conditions in the Greater Harrisburg community**.

The Institute is currently accepting applications for the 2016 class, so if you're interested please contact Joe Robinson at JRobin2009@aol.com.



Amanda Arbour, YWCA Greater Harrisburg's Racial Justice Program Coordinator

Upcoming Events

Keys to Freedom

Saturday, September 19

Keys to Freedom is a casual to formal, black and white attire fundraiser to benefit the Pennsylvania Alliance Against the Trafficking in Humans: The Route 15 Project (PAATH15).



The event will be held on Saturday, September 19 at Sun Motor Cars in Mechanicsburg, PA. It will include small plates, live entertainment, a cash bar, a silent auction, raffle prizes, a best dressed contest with celebrity judges and more!

All ticket holders will also receive one chance to win a 6 month or 6,000 mile lease of a 2016 Mercedes Benz E350W4 Sedan! Additional chances for the car raffle can be purchased in advance or at the event for \$10 each. Tickets are \$60 per person.

Event sponsors and in-kind sponsors are needed for food, silent auction items, and raffle prize donations. All proceeds raised will go toward the purchase of a mobile outreach vehicle for PAATH15, a 12-county outreach project that provides direct services to victims of human trafficking along the PA Route 15 corridor from the New York to the Maryland border. These services include crisis intervention and response, emergency shelter, case management, advocacy, legal and medical accompaniments, information and referrals and other vital services.

For more information, to register, or to learn more about sponsorships, please visit the YWCA website at www.ywcahbg.org/events/keys-freedom, join the Keys to Freedom Facebook page, or contact Donna Ulrich at donna@hellogorgeousconsignments.com.

6th Annual Fall Fest

Saturday, October 3



Fall Fest is an annual gathering held by the YWCA Greater Harrisburg's Junior Board to raise funds for, and community awareness of, Camp Reily, a summer enrichment program for inner-city children. Funds raised by the event will be used to:

- underwrite scholarships for camp participants, inner-city children 5 to 12 years of age;
- purchase supplies needed for activities that campers engage in, such as arts and crafts, outdoor games, water safety and swimming lessons and hiking; and
- purchase supplies needed for the Junior Board's annual Camp Reily clean-up day, which occurs in preparation for the arrival of campers in early June.

This year's Fall Fest will be held on October 3 from 4 to 8 p.m. at Camp Reily and will feature beer tastings, great food, local entertainment and a beer fire sale at the end of the night. Tickets are \$25 per person.

For more information, to register, or to learn more about sponsorships, please visit www.ywcahbg.org/events/6th-annual-ywca-junior-board-fall-fest, join the Fall Fest Facebook page, or contact Erin O'Dea at eodea@ywcahbg.org.