

YWCA Greater Harrisburg

June 2015 Newsletter

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Message from the Interim CEO

It's hard to believe that we are six months into 2015, and that the summer months are already upon us. For many, it is also graduation season – a time to offer our congratulations and best words of wisdom to loved ones who will be starting out on their career paths. Every year, the New York Times reviews the best commencement speeches from colleges all over the country. As I write this article and think about the challenges we face today, I am reminded of one speech in particular given in 2013 by Facebook co-founder, Chris Hughes. He had this advice for graduates: “The easy part is knowing that you should follow your heart and do something important; the hard part is coping with the world as it is today at the same time as you invent how it should be in the future.”



Mary Quinn, Interim CEO

The YWCA is constantly facing this challenge. We are impassioned by the important mission before us and its vision to create a better future, but still must cope with today's realities – like the series of violent incidents that have taken place in Ferguson, Charleston, New York City, Baltimore, and most recently in McKinney, Texas. The YWCA's mission to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all is more relevant now than ever.

As Interim CEO, I had the privilege of joining our sister agencies at the National YWCA USA conference in Washington, DC last week. This year's conference theme was Our Collective Power, building on the idea that together we can affect change and move our mission forward, especially in the area of racial justice. This year, the YWCA Greater Harrisburg was one of three finalists selected for the Association Excellence Award recognizing the strength of our Racial Justice programs. While we have a long road ahead of us, the nomination affirmed our efforts and renewed our passion to continue this crucial work. Communities like ours across the country are at a critical juncture, and we play a vital role in the fight to eliminate racism. Thanks to dedicated staff and community members who have worked diligently to develop and implement solid programs, we are having an impact in our community and are being recognized in other parts of the country by associations seeking to follow our lead.

The “easy part” of our effort to promote racial justice and women's empowerment comes from the YWCA's rich history of being at the forefront of the fight for civil rights, the campaign for women's voting rights and advocacy around workplace safety and pay equity, as well as the strong partnerships we have developed with local law enforcement and human rights advocacy groups. We are ready to take on the challenge of the “hard part,” as we continue to shape the future by advocating for what is right in the context of today's realities.

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

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

greater harrisburg

Legal Center Spotlight

Over 1,000 clients served by YWCA's legal center each year

The Legal Center was established in 2000 and was one of the first programs in the state to combine legal services under the umbrella of a domestic violence/sexual assault program. At its inception, the Legal Center provided only legal representation in protection from abuse cases. The Legal Center has since expanded the services it provides to include **divorce, child custody, child and spousal support, protection from abuse, adoption, guardianships, name changes, and immigration**. Since 2000, the Legal Center has helped thousands of domestic violence and sexual assault victims in Dauphin County with their legal needs. The Legal Center provides these services, free of charge, to victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence, regardless of gender. In fiscal year 2013/2014, the Legal Center provided services to over 1,600 individuals.

The Legal Center also provides **training and technical assistance** to attorneys, law students, district magistrates, medical students, high-school students, college and law school faculty and staff, police officers, probation officers, and other community groups on issues relating to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence.

In 2009, in response to funding cuts to the Legal Center, an ad hoc Advisory Board was formed to assist in securing long-term funding for the Legal Center. On December 4, 2014 the Advisory Board hosted the 6th Annual **"Pursuit of Justice" Purse Auction**, featuring dozens of designer purses and accessories available in a silent auction. The evening was highlighted by a live auction, with guest auctioneer Steven V. Turner, auctioning off several high-end handbags. The event raised over \$19,000 with all the proceeds benefiting the Legal Center.

This year, the "Pursuit of Justice" Purse Auction will be held on **December 3, 2015** in the Highmark Room at the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg.

Legal Center Client Testimonies

"My attorney's experience and professionalism were invaluable in obtaining an order without requiring my over-involvement during the court hearing." "My family and I were extremely grateful for my attorney's assistance in simplifying the process for me. Her actions eased my concerns in court and spared me from emotional distress. I will be forever appreciative. She made a difficult situation tolerable."

-2015 Legal Center Client

"I didn't know anything about what to do and I was advised very well and when we went to court I was represented very well." I want to thank you for your services. You made this process as easy as it could be considering the circumstances. I'm thankful that we have a service like this to help people like me in situations like the one I was in. I was very happy to have you and you gave me such a sense of peace knowing you were fighting for my safety."

-2014 Legal Center Client

"I have never had to file a PFA before, so I was very thankful to be represented by an attorney who made me feel at ease through the court process. I am thankful to my attorney for her professionalism, support, and concern for her client. She kept me informed at all times and I was very pleased. I work for the State and when the next United Way Campaign comes around, I plan to make a payroll deduction to the YWCA so that I can in some way thank you for all your assistance – it was a hard situation to go through and I am ever so grateful for your legal assistance and professionalism. Thank you."

-2009 Legal Center Client

Meet our Legal Center Team

Our talented legal center team offers passion and dedication to all legal cases for our clients

Nichole M. Walters, Esquire, Director, YWCA Legal Center

Nichole has over fifteen years of experience representing victims of sexual assault and domestic violence in civil legal matters. Nichole has also worked as Visiting Clinical Professor at The Elder Law and Consumer Protection Clinic at the Pennsylvania State University, Dickinson School of Law from May 2003 until May 2012. Nichole is member of the Dauphin County Bar Association's Family Law Section and the Public Service Committee. Nichole also is a member of the Dauphin County Domestic Violence Task Force, STOP Coordinating Team, and the state-wide Domestic Violence Attorney Network.

Laurie E. Wiest, Staff Attorney

Laurie provided direct legal representation to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault for over eight years before joining the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence as a staff attorney providing statewide services to attorneys representing victims of domestic violence. Between 1994 and 1999, Laurie volunteered on the sexual assault and domestic violence hotline and co-facilitated support groups for sexual assault and domestic violence survivors at the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg. Laurie served as a member of the Advisory Committee, advising the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg's Board of Directors on policy, procedure, and training.

Grissel Reyes, Legal Advocate

Grissel provides victim accompaniment to criminal proceedings, provides outreach and advocacy services to Latino victims, provides translation services for clients of the Legal Center, provides training to law enforcement, and provides community outreach at the Community Check-Up Center located in Hall Manor, the largest public housing project in Dauphin County. Grissel has been with the Legal Center for seven years. Prior to working in the Legal Center, Grissel was a crisis advocate for the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg's Violence Intervention and Prevention Education Department where she provided crisis counseling to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Mayra Pais, Law Clerk

Mayra joined the YWCA in August 2015 as a part-time law clerk and moved to full-time in October 2015. Mayra interned for two semesters with the Legal Center before graduating from Widener University School of Law with her J.D. in May 2015.

Grace M. Pollock Fun

Geir Magnusson Ice Cream Party

One of our generous donors, Geir Magnusson, treated our daycare kids to ice cream sundaes for HIS birthday on Friday, May 29! What a treat!

Happy birthday Geir, and thank you so much for your continuous support of the YWCA!



Geir feeding ice cream to a young girl in our young toddler classroom

Camp Reily



Having fun at Camp Reily!

Camp Reily officially opened on June 1! Camp features over 28 acres of trails and fields, and our campers enjoy outdoor games and activities such as swimming in our in-ground pool, hiking, arts and crafts and more.

Breakfast, lunch and snacks are provided, as well as daily transportation to and from the YWCA.

For more information about Camp Reily, please contact Andre Nelson at anelson@ywcahbg.org or call (717) 234-7931 ext. 3127.

Jumpin' Jitney

Every Thursday, the Jumpin' Jitney bus comes to the YWCA Greater Harrisburg!

The Jumpin' Jitney is a full-size, hollowed-out schoolbus with mats on the floor, carpet on the walls and an assortment of fun equipment inside! Activities include mats, rings, a trapeze, balance beam, bars, zip line and other gymnastics!



Learning gymnastics on the Jumpin' Jitney!

YouthBuild Graduate Interview

Planting “CEEEDS” for the future

Markeese Beverly will be a high school graduate in a few months. As a member of the second cohort of the YouthBuild program, the 23-year-old will finally have the diploma she has desperately wanted.

Markeese almost gave up on her mission to graduate from high school. She was not successful in two previous GED programs that she attempted since leaving high school in eleventh grade.

While working at the Family Dollar in Harrisburg, Markeese was the victim of a robbery. It was then that she decided that she never wanted to work behind a cash register again.

At 22, even with a child at home, she would not qualify for cash assistance if she was attending GED classes. She made the very difficult decision between applying for county aid and being able to become a full-time student.

Unable to provide for her daughter, she was left with very few options. It was then that she claims she experienced a “miracle.” That is how she refers to the letter she received from the YouthBuild Case Manager, which revealed that she was selected to participate in the program.

“It was a happy time,” she recounted.

Markeese has been in the program for 4 months and is on schedule for graduation, but her journey has not been without a few bumps in the road.

Though she was receiving a paycheck for participating in the program, she found that she was unable to compensate for the overdue rent payments between resigning from her position and applying for YouthBuild.

As the stress threatened to disassemble the hard work she put in to participating in the program, Markeese confided in her case manager that she was facing eviction in just a few short weeks, an obstacle that would threaten her graduation.

Stewart Henretta, YouthBuild Case Manager, took action.

“He made the call,” Markeese said tearfully, “I don’t know what I would have done without him.”

Markeese is now living in a new apartment with her daughter and facing a bright future. In less than 2 months she will have her GED and hopes to continue her education.

Visit the [YWCA's YouTube channel](#) to learn more about Markeese and how the YouthBuild program has made a difference in this young woman's life.



Markeese Beverly, YouthBuild student

About YouthBuild

YouthBuild is a youth and community development program that addresses issues facing low-income communities. YouthBuild invests in young adults who have a desire to transform their lives by building a better quality of life for themselves and the communities in which they live.

In YouthBuild programs, unemployed and undereducated young people work toward their GED or high school diploma while learning construction skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people. Strong emphasis is placed on leadership development, community service and the creation of a positive mini-community of adults and youth committed to success.

Racial Justice Updates

11th Annual Race Against Racism a Success

On Saturday, April 25, the YWCA Greater Harrisburg held the 11th Annual Race Against Racism on City Island. **Seven hundred people participated** in the 5k run/walk, which included a Kids' Fun Run and Humanity Fest featuring food, exhibitor tables and live entertainment.

The Race Against Racism **raises awareness of racism in our community and vital funds to support the YWCA's Racial Justice programs**, including the "Let's Talk: A Conversation About Race" series, "To Protect & Serve in the 21st Century: Building Bridges with Diverse Communities" law enforcement training and other efforts focused on eliminating racism.

This year's Race Against Racism raised **\$47,000**, and was supported by Gold Sponsors Erie Insurance, Penn State Hershey and Target; Silver Sponsor The Hershey Company; and Bronze Sponsors Deloitte and Hershey Entertainment and Resorts Company.

If you are interested in serving as a **sponsor** for next year's Race Against Racism on April 30, 2016, please contact YWCA Special Events Coordinator Erin O'Dea at eodea@ywcahbg.org.



The Kids' Fun Run for kids 6 years old and younger at the 2015 Race Against Racism

YWCA Launches Mission-Focused Video Project at Camp Reily this Summer



Tara Leo Auchey leads a discussion about gender stereotypes with kids at the YW.

breaks down gender stereotypes about what it means to "throw like a girl" or "run like a girl." During the discussion, one girl asked: **"Can we make our own video?"**

The YWCA has turned that idea into a reality with an exciting video project for Camp Reily participants this summer. **Focused on our mission of "eliminating racism and empowering women," workshops at the beginning of the summer will help K-6th graders unpack what these constructs of "race" and "gender" mean and how they've experienced them in their own lives.** Professionals will work with them then to identify some themes, and the kids will produce a video from start to finish that reflects their voices speaking to these two aspects of the mission. We hope this will be both an **educational and empowering experience** for them, and look forward to showcasing the resulting video in the fall!

YWCA Completes Law Enforcement Trainings in the Region

Over 300 officers from the local precincts attended



Samia Malik, CRN member, and Amanda Arbour, YWCA Greater Harrisburg Racial Justice Program Coordinator, at April's law enforcement training session

The YWCA Greater Harrisburg worked with the Community Responders Network (CRN), Dauphin County Chiefs of Police Association, U.S. Department of Justice and the Governor's Advisory Commission on Asian American Affairs to plan and present three two-day law enforcement trainings entitled **"To Protect and Serve in the 21st Century: Building Bridges with Diverse Communities."**

Over **300 officers** participated, representing **30 police departments and state agencies across five counties**. Some community members attended as well, either as presenters or members of the audience, but the focus was on providing training for police officers. The sessions addressed **the importance of delivering culturally aware services, reducing allegations of racial profiling in a 'Post-Ferguson World,' understanding state and federal civil rights and hate crimes laws, and preventing/responding to hate groups.**

Peter J. Smith, Inspector General Grayling Williams, Senator Rob Teplitz and Representative Patty Kim, and the Dauphin and Cumberland County District Attorneys Ed Marsico and David Freed. The presentations on cultural awareness included **sessions on how law enforcement personnel can better serve** the following communities: Refugee and Immigrant, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Limited English Proficient, Latino/Hispanic, African American, Arab and Muslim, LGBTQ and People Living with Disabilities.

Each day began with remarks from government and law enforcement officials who provided a context and support for the training, including U.S. Attorney

The "To Protect & Serve" law enforcement training was **recently approved by the Municipal Police Officers Education & Training Commission (MPOETC) for continuing education credit**; all 300 officers who completed the training will receive credit retroactively. The planning committee continues to meet, and has been invited to assist in the revision of existing state law enforcement curricula and present policy recommendations to the Dauphin County Chiefs of Police Association. The YWCA is now pursuing a **Department of Justice grant to expand the law enforcement training, to engage in community outreach and education efforts, and to facilitate police-community dialogue sessions.**

Check out WITF's Tim Lambert and Radio Pennsylvania's coverage of the trainings, "Midstate police work to improve communication with communities," and for additional information please visit our Law Enforcement Training webpage.



Aspen Dental's Mobile Mouth Dental Clinic Visits the Capital Region

Whether it's having the confidence to succeed during an interview, addressing ongoing dental problems, or feeling your best, a smile can make all the difference. On May 12, **over a dozen area veterans** were able to improve their smiles with the assistance of **free dental care** provided by Aspen Dental's Mobile Mouth Dental Clinic. This nationwide initiative brings the dentist's office to the veteran as the mobile dental clinic tours American cities. Services provided included: **exams, x-rays, fillings, extractions and other dental services.**

As part of Aspen Dental's commitment to providing comprehensive dental services to America's service members, **Aspen Dental partnered with the YWCA's Veterans Service team to identify numerous area veterans in need of dental care but lacked the resources.** After identifying eligible veterans the YWCA Vets team coordinated appointment times and provided transportation services to the Mobile Mouth dental clinic parked at the State Capital.

Feedback from the veterans was very positive, with many receiving dental services for the first time in many years. As they packed the Mobile Mouth to move onto the next city, the Aspen Dental team shared their commitment to providing those who served a great smile.



The YWCA's Veterans Service team poses with Aspen Dental staff in front of the Mobile Mouth Dental Clinic

Save the Dates



Strong Enough

Saturday, September 19

A power lifting contest event raising funds for homeless and veteran services with Interfaith Family Shelter and the YWCA Greater Harrisburg



Fall Fest

Saturday, October 3

A festival featuring fall beers, food and music, and raising funds to benefit the YWCA's Camp Reily

Keys to Freedom

Saturday, September 19

A black and white cocktail event raising funds for a mobile outreach vehicle for the PA Alliance Against Trafficking in Humans: Route 15 Project (PAATH15)



Power of Style Fashion Show

Thursday, October 8

A fashion show featuring styles of local clothing stores owned by women, and raising funds to benefit the YWCA's Violence Intervention and Prevention programs

For more info about sponsorship or attendance, please contact Kayla Krebs at (717) 234-7931 x3011 or at kkrebs@ywcahbg.org.