

ywindow

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca

spring/summer 2011
greater harrisburg

youth volunteers beautify allison hill

On April 15, the Weed and Seed program proudly hosted the United Way Youth Day of Caring. Nearly 250 youth volunteers from nine area schools, along with 100 adult volunteers worked on 22 exterior beautification projects throughout the South Allison Hill neighborhood. Adult volunteers included teachers and chaperones, Harrisburg City police officers, Dauphin County Adult Probation officers, and volunteers from the Allison Hill community.



(Photographs taken by Jason Minick)



Projects included gardening, graffiti removal and trash clean-up. In total over 500 bags of trash were removed, 43 gallons of paint were used and over 300 plants were planted. Reducing crime and blight are the goals of Weed and Seed, but probably a more significant accomplishment was the collaboration between neighborhood organizations, government, businesses, law enforcement and members of the faith community to address areas of community concern. Seeing youth from city and suburban schools, from the East and West shores working together and laughing together, was inspirational.

Community partnerships have been strengthened and new friendships among students have been found. The Allison Hill neighborhood is cleaner and more beautiful. All represent the value of such a day of community service.

- Jason Rissler, Weed and Seed Coordinator

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mission

The YWCA Greater Harrisburg is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.

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programs and services

Childhood Programs

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Community Programs

MESSAGE from the CEO

Is it just me or does money seem not to stretch as far anymore? How much does it cost to feed your family now, compared to a few months ago? A year ago? A decade ago? How much does it cost to fill your car with gas now, compared to last year? To pay your electricity bill? As a reference point, the Consumer Price Index tells us that housing has increased 21% since 2001; food has increased 25% and utilities are up 49%. We all know that feeding our families takes a greater portion of our paychecks now than it used to. We are not imagining these difficulties.

The YWCA of Greater Harrisburg is feeding a much larger family. These family members are escaping violence and in crisis mode. State and federal funding for domestic violence is stagnant and has been for more than a decade! What has not remained stable are the costs associated with providing the same services; they have skyrocketed.

The Governor's budget proposes widely-publicized cuts to (higher) education spending, provoking a great outcry from college students, among others. The projection is that when the legislature prepares its budget bill, those education cuts will be much less than the Governor has proposed. But with no new revenues coming in, an increase somewhere means a decrease somewhere else.

It is anticipated that these funds will come from the Department of Public Welfare or DPW. Let's think about that. The majority (52%) of the DPW budget funds Medicaid, with $\frac{3}{4}$ of that benefiting the elderly and disabled. The DPW also funds most of the social services safety net, including domestic violence and rape crisis programs. The Childcare Network gives subsidies so parents can send their children to safe, affordable daycare, enabling them to go to work. To our most vulnerable families, these funds are a lifeline. We cannot afford to have our shelters and hotlines for victims and families in crisis jeopardized. Our community cannot afford to have victims of abuse, forced by poverty, into staying with abusive partners because their only other option is homelessness and hunger.

April was a month of advocacy at the YWCA. I was on the hill in Washington D.C. with several hundred YWCA advocates from across the country, raising awareness and discussing our concerns with our elected officials. The YWCA of Greater Harrisburg then hosted a very successful YWCA Mid Atlantic Region Legislative Breakfast and Advocacy Day.

Our elected officials need to know the truth about the harsh realities of the homeless, abused women and children that we work to protect, who are at the center of our advocacy, whose lives we fight for. If you would like to join us in these efforts, we want to hear from you.



highlighting local role models

Taylor, Heather, Maria and Sheila were among the 500 guests at this year's Tribute to Women of Excellence (TWE) event. Arriving at the YWCA, they were respectively; recovering from a nervous breakdown, homeless, escaping abuse and unemployed. Now they are strong, empowered, financially independent and productive women who are paying it forward. "Every year we empower hundreds of women to regain control of their lives", says Tina Nixon, YWCA CEO. "In sharing their stories and standing up to be recognized, they serve as compelling examples to many of the other women who arrive in crisis each week at the YWCA."



TWE Class of 2011

TWE, a mission driven event, featured a class of 27 women representing a range of industries and backgrounds, but they have in common their passion for giving back to their communities. "These women inspire our clients to reach their goals and dream big."

The YWCA would like to extend a big thank you to Highmark Blue Shield, the Signature Sponsor of this event, The Hershey Company, our Visionary Sponsor and to all the other sponsors for their ongoing support.
-Gillian Byerly, Executive Liaison

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Sponsors

“GirlTalk” engages and inspires teens



to combine their interests, harness their skills and get involved in their communities.

“I’m going to try and be a good role model for my brother, little cousins and possibly other younger children I might meet along the way.” - summit participant

Leaving the third session, the girls felt empowered and confident in their ability to navigate the college application process. The final workshop focused on healthy versus unhealthy relationships, recognizing the warning signs and dating violence as well as risky sexual behavior. The girls learned how to protect themselves and what to do if they believe they have a sexually transmitted disease.

“If we can help some of these girls avoid some of the most common pitfalls, especially in their first relationships with boys; if we can foster support and non-judgment among the entire cohort, introduce them to positive role models and inspire them to aim higher and be role models themselves, we might avoid seeing these same girls show up in crisis situations at the YWCA, which is ultimately our goal,” says Tina Nixon, YWCA CEO.

Feedback from all participants has been overwhelmingly positive and the student committee is already looking forward to next year’s event. Capital BlueCross, Highmark Blue Shield, Messiah College, Pennsylvania Automotive Association and several generous individual sponsors helped to make this event a great success.

- Gillian Byerly, Executive Liaison

Healthy relationships, dating violence, sexually transmitted diseases, preparing for college, as well as community service and mentoring youth were a few of the thought-provoking topics selected by a student planning committee, comprised of four students from SciTech and Harrisburg High Schools, for the inaugural “GirlTalk” youth summit.

“Girls report higher stress levels than boys, making them vulnerable to self-medication, substance abuse and risky behavior.” (teen voices magazine Vol. 19 issue 2 fall/winter 2010.) To address some of these issues, the YWCA teamed up with the Harrisburg School District to host the first teen summit at Temple University Harrisburg on April 15th. The goal of the summit was to educate, encourage and empower teen girls in 9th through 12th grades. The United Nations Girl Up! Foundation’s “Girlafesto” encapsulated the spirit of the event.

A powerful and dynamic group of speakers facilitated four “Healthy” workshops. Alana Cornish led an energy-fueled session that had students standing and applauding in support of each other to build self-esteem and respect for each other and themselves.

“It inspires me to go for whatever I want to do and be what I want to be.” - summit participant

“Promoting tolerance isn’t enough. I don’t want someone to tolerate me. I want their respect,” Phebe West emphasized, during her inspiring workshop. She encouraged participants



GIRLAFESTO

I AM A GIRL.

bright, able, outspoken, soft-spoken, serious, spirited, adventurous, curious and strong.

i am me. i follow. i lead. i learn. i teach.

i change my clothes, my hair, my music and my mind.

i have a voice that speaks, ideas to stand on, and a world to step up to.

i matter. and so does she.

she may look different and talk different,

but she is like me.

SHE IS A GIRL.

And together, we will rise up.

Because while we are strong, together we are stronger.

And together, our voices will change our world.

— You see a girl. —

WE SEE THE FUTURE.

The United Nations Girl Up! Foundation's "Girlafesto" encapsulated the spirit of the inaugural "GirlTalk" youth summit. The "Girlafesto" was printed on the t-shirts and goody bags given to all participants.



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We appreciate every donation and make every effort to list all donors accurately. We apologize if you made a donation and your name does not appear.

successful supported employment

Mental health issues can prove a significant barrier to those searching for stable employment. Read about how the YWCA helps mitigate this and other barriers to employment:

Jennifer's ongoing mental health issues had been a significant barrier to finding and sustaining stable employment and housing for many years. In 2010, Jennifer was accepted into the Bridge Housing program at the YWCA with her two daughters. Once established in stable housing, I began working closely with her to find employment. Despite being highly motivated and qualified to work, Jennifer was concerned about her young children. A common barrier to employment for many parents, safe, affordable daycare is a critical service provided by the YWCA to our clients and the community. Jennifer was able to utilize the drop-in daycare service for her work-related appointments and job interviews.

With her children taken care of, Jennifer's job search began in earnest. We revised her resume and began applying for positions and practicing interview techniques. Quickly, Jennifer accepted a position as a stylist and for the past ten months she has maintained stable employment and developed a relationship with her boss that allows her flexible hours so she can take care of her daughters' needs.

Ongoing support can make a real difference in a client's continuing success. Consumers gain confidence and take charge of their job search. With self-sufficiency, structure and routine comes self-esteem. Jennifer told me recently that she is very happy. She has saved enough money to purchase a

car and no longer relies on public transportation! I will continue to provide job retention services to Jennifer and assist her as any work or mental health related issues arise in the future.

Supported Employment is a well-defined approach to help people with mental health or co-occurring disorders participate in the competitive labor market; the service has been offered at the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg since February, 2010. Supported Employment uses an evidence-based treatment model proven to achieve positive results in helping people with mental illness, find, select and maintain employment.

-Marlai Paxton, Employment Specialist



a message to our donors

The YWCA of Greater Harrisburg respects the privacy of our donors and safeguards the confidentiality of all information related to your gifts. If you would like your monetary contribution to be kept anonymous, please let us know. All monetary gifts are acknowledged with a letter that reflects the tax deductible portion of the donation. The official registration and financial information for YWCA of Greater Harrisburg can be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. Please consider making a general donation to the YWCA. Every dollar makes a difference! Questions? Please call Pamela at 724-2241.

junior board blossoms...

At the end of last year, YWCA board member Kim Phipps led the Junior Board through a team-building exercise in which we were asked to suggest imagery that represented the Junior Board. The image that resonated most strongly with the Board was that of a new garden. In 2009 the seeds were planted, in 2010 we started establishing our roots and put out leaves, and now in 2011 the Junior Board is truly beginning to blossom.

Our previous efforts provided the foundation needed to jump right into planning our yearly signature events in 2011. In March, the Junior Board sponsored a community night at Isaac's Deli where 25% of the proceeds benefitted the YWCA. In April, we hosted our second annual happy hour fundraiser. This year the happy hour was held at Level 2, an upscale bar and club on Restaurant Row. Celebrity bartenders (and local district attorneys), David Freed and Edward Marsico, Jr. shook cocktails and abc27 TV personality Josh Reed was the MC for the evening. All tips, as well as proceeds from a raffle, went to the Junior Board. The event was a huge success – Level 2 was crowded with guests, the tip jars were overflowing and competition for the great raffles prizes was fierce. May brought our annual clean-up and project day at Camp Reily, where volunteers put their elbow grease into getting the camp ready for the arrival of the 150+ inner city children who will arrive in mid-June. Planning is underway for the Junior Board's 2nd annual Fall Fest at Camp Reily, which will be held on October 1.



Like a garden that's made it through its first few winters, the Junior Board is starting to spread out, flourish, and create a place for ourselves within the YWCA family. Members of the Junior Board now participate on a number of other committees at the YWCA and continue to increase our involvement in the YWCA's activities:

- Former president Nicole Stezar is on the Power of Style committee, helping to plan this fall's fashion show.
- Dana Klinepeter lends her expertise in the construction industry to the Camp Reily Assessment committee, which is working on identifying and prioritizing improvements at the camp.
- Lissa Richards is working with the Public Relations committee to enhance the communications activities of the YWCA's various boards and increase awareness about YWCA events.
 - Catherine Stetler is not only a member of the Racial Justice committee, she also volunteers with the YWCA's Violence Intervention and Prevention program,
 - Toni Theis helps the Advocacy and Public Policy committee to promote the mission of the YWCA with elected officials.

As 2011 progresses, we're working on more ways to get involved at the YWCA and more ways we can help raise awareness in our community about the YWCA and its mission. If you would like more information about the Junior Board or know someone who may be interested in joining in 2012, please contact Board President Emily Bensinger at ehbensinger@gmail.com.

- Lissa Richards, Junior Board



one brave little girl

“I don’t want to go to jail like my Dad...”

Sally’s experience is typical of a child struggling to cope with violence in the home. Her relationship with YWCA children’s counselor, Lindsay England, helped her express her feelings of fear and inadequacy.



When I met twelve year-old Sally for the first time, her violent father was in jail and her struggle to communicate her fears and concerns was manifested in angry outbursts at school, a reflection of the abuse she experienced at home. Our sessions focused on building healthy relationships and developing anger management and coping mechanisms. Sally also needed to learn non-violent behaviors. Once she overcame her initial shyness, her outgoing personality began to emerge. After a number of sessions, during which we built a rapport, Sally began to trust me and open up about the issues in her life and what were really bothering her.

During one session, she blurted out “I don’t want to end up in jail like my dad.” This was a major breakthrough. I knew Sally didn’t share her experience with anyone. I was very proud of her that day and I made sure she knew it. Through her slight smile, I knew a small weight had been lifted from her shoulders, but Sally continued to demonstrate anxiety about the future.

We discussed healthy relationships and boundaries, including those with boyfriends, friends and family. Sally began thinking about the people she hangs out with, who her friends are and how they treat her. We talked about respect, bullying, peer pressure and gangs. Sally

began to understand that by hanging out with people who are respectful and are there for her, she could avoid the pitfalls and patterns experienced by her father.

Sally began to grow in confidence as our sessions continued. Her mother confirmed that her behavior was changing and her self-esteem growing. Sally looked forward to our sessions. Now her trusted confidante, she talks to me freely about her concerns. After every session you can see another weight lifted from her twelve-year-old shoulders. She is a young girl growing into a young lady. Her courage left a lasting impression on me.

-Lindsay England, Children’s Counselor

“When the person you love becomes the one you fear, you are scared to the core of your being”

MILDRED D. MUHAMMAD domestic violence survivor, author, victims’ advocate and ex-wife of the convicted, now executed DC Sniper, John Allen Muhammad.

SATURDAY | THE FORUM listen and be inspired as she shares her powerful story of survival...
October 15th | 2:00PM

tickets are free, reservations recommended: 717.724.2250
presented by YWCA of Greater Harrisburg and Victim Witness Assistance Program

with a little help from our friends

Our Friends Board volunteers have been busy planning and executing special events to benefit the YWCA over the past several months.

A Valentine's Day dinner party, co-chaired by Friend's volunteers, Erin Hoynes and Michelle Piscioneri, was held on February 10, 2011. Fifty women attended the event. Volunteers from Highmark entertained the children so that the mom's could enjoy a quiet dinner; they feasted on lasagna and salad with cupcakes for dessert while being serenaded by musician Mike Banks, who generously donated his time and talent for the occasion. Photos were taken of the moms with their children and each guest received a personal frame for their photo, along with a personal care gift donated by CVS and Melissa Goulet, Arbonne representative. Delicious homemade cookies were provided by Tanya Rhen, Friends volunteer. Thanks to everyone who helped with and attended this special evening.

The Mother's Day card artist reception was held at Mitrani on April 14. Mitrani kindly hosted a cocktail reception with wine and hors d'oeuvres. The card featured a reproduction of original artwork donated by Dianne Bemederfer, a watercolor artist who enjoys experimenting with different techniques and subjects. Dianne's artwork has been featured in several art shows in the Harrisburg area. Thank you to this year's sponsor, Partners in Women's Healthcare, P.C. for underwriting the printing costs of the cards. For each card purchased, a donation toward a night of shelter for a mother and her child is made to the YWCA of Greater Harrisburg.

A gathering hosted by Dee Lewin and Ellen Warren called the "Children's Teddy Bear Tea" was held on April 30 for children ten and under. In addition to traditional tea fare such as tea sandwiches, scones, cupcakes and cookies, Marcia Wharton presented a manners class to the children. This lovely event provided, in addition to basic etiquette and conversation topics for the children, music and favors. Thank you to all the friends who donated their time and talent to this successful and fun gathering.

In keeping with our new feature, we'd like to introduce you to Friends volunteer, Liz Delaney.



Liz lives in a lovely setting on Clarks Creek, with her husband of 9 years, Sean, and their two boys, Hank and Graham. She grew up on the West Shore, the youngest of three girls, and graduated from Cumberland Valley High School.

Liz then went on to get a degree in Psychology and a degree in Elementary Education. After teaching second grade at the Harrisburg Academy for four years she opened My Gym Children's Fitness Center in Mechanicsburg. She eventually sold her business to stay at home with her young sons. Not surprisingly, Liz was not idle for long and turned her hobby of photographing children into a small business called Liz Delaney Photography.

Liz's passion for volunteering began at a young age and she was president of the Special Olympics in high school for two years. She has continued to support the local community through volunteering, joining the Junior League of Harrisburg in 2002, where she met some great local women who introduced her to the YWCA. She became a Friends board member in 2009, and hit the ground running by co-chairing the Power of Style Fashion Show in 2010. She will chair the event again this year, and brings to the process countless organizational skills and planning tools to make the event even more successful.

In addition to her work with the Friends board and the Junior League, Liz volunteers extensively at her sons' school, utilizing her photography skills as the yearbook photographer. Liz, thank you from all of your "Friends" for all that you do to support the local volunteer community.

- Michelle Piscioneri, Friends Board

upcoming events

Race Against Racism • June 18th
Annual Meeting • September 20th
Fall Fest • October 1st
Mildred Muhammad at the Forum • October 15th
Power of Style Fashion Show • October 20th
Pursuit of Justice • December 1st

go to www.ywcahbg.org for more information about upcoming events

YWCA of Greater Harrisburg
1101 Market Street
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**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

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The YWCA of Greater Harrisburg is a 501(c)3 organization, affiliated with the YWCA of the USA and is a United Way Agency. The YWCA is certified under the Pennsylvania Association of Non-Profit Agencies' Standards of Excellence.