



Fall 2009 *Volunteers & Donors* **COMMUNITY REPORT**

*YMCA of Arlington
is a family of volunteers, donors and members. We are dedicated
to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities.*

FROM THE CHAIRMAN



The other day, I had a conversation with a lady who loves dogs. She really, really loves dogs. There's nothing wrong with that, of course. As a matter of fact, I love dogs, too. Long ones, hairy ones, cute ones, pretty much all kinds of dogs. This lady I was talking to puts her time and money into training and adopting dogs. She's a wonderfully generous woman.

As much as I love dogs, I, frankly, prefer people. And kids are my favorite people!

I think it's wonderful that folks have all sorts of options when choosing to put their time, talent and treasure toward something they feel most passionate about. The United States is the most blessed country in the world and has the highest rate of volunteerism, too. We donate our time and money to cause after cause to support need after need. The people of this country are truly amazing.

But I think that putting my time and talents toward improving the lives of kids and families is what makes the absolute most sense to me. The reasons for my choice are obvious to me. And, if I'm going to focus my efforts on helping kids, I figure there are plenty right here in my hometown that can use my help the most. In my opinion, the YMCA of Arlington is the best place that I can help them.

There are a thousand ways to help the world, and I respect anybody who chooses to help in any way, shape or form. Our hearts lead the way and point us in the direction that we should go to help the bigger world. Charity, social service (or whatever you want to call it) is a calling. And normally it isn't a calling that goes first through your brain. It connects through your heart. We all intellectually know that there is a need out there, but having it in our mind is not the same as having it in our heart.

Our hearts connect with the Special Friends program at the North YMCA. Our hearts connect with a kid who goes home from school — not to cookies and milk and mom like on "Leave it to Beaver" — but to an empty apartment in a dangerous complex with no parents around for hours or even all night. Our hearts connect with the Miracle League kids, playing baseball without restrictions or limitations, in spite of their disabilities. Our hearts connect with kids struggling to find positive values in a scary, dangerous world. Our hearts connect with the senior citizens who have little means but want a place to connect and remain healthy and a part of their community.

Our brains and our bodies will follow our hearts. To help — to commit to making a difference — we first must connect with our hearts. So today, while there are dogs and whales and trees and a million other causes that are worthy, I ask you to choose kids and families. I ask you to commit yourself to helping through this incredible organization known as the YMCA. Through the Y, we can do more than we can ever do alone. It is a magnifying glass that takes our efforts and increases them tenfold to help the kids and families in our community.

So, while I know that we all have the Y and its mission in our mind, TODAY, I ask you to put the YMCA in your heart and help us make a difference right here, right now in our very own community!

Len Oszustowicz
Board Chairman



Little Learners at the Cooper YMCA



YMCA Summer Day Camp kids celebrating success at Camp Tacular

STRONG KIDS CAMPAIGN

The YMCA of Arlington's Strong Kids Campaign is the annual fundraising effort that allows the Y to make its programs and membership available to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. During 2009, Campaign Chairs, Lance Winter and Chris Ringel helped a crew of volunteer fundraisers secure nearly \$400,000 in donations! This tremendous result, added to other fundraising efforts, helps the YMCA give more than \$600,000 in funding directly back to the community in financial assistance and program support each year.

Planning is already underway for the 2010 campaign. Shirley Cox, Arlington Market President for Frost Bank, and Bill Bowie, Owner and Founder of Resin Technologies, will lead the charge. They are busy assembling additional volunteer leaders for their team. The theme for 2010 will be: "The YMCA Dream Team: Helping Strong Kids Live the Dream!" Using the basketball tradition of the YMCA (basketball was founded at a Y) and taking advantage of the energy in our community as it plays host to the 2010 NBA All-Star Game, campaign leaders will dribble, shoot and score their way to a campaign victory in 2010.

"The goal of the campaign for 2010 is to help the Y meet the tremendous needs in our community by helping to fund financial assistance for thousands of youth, adults and families who can most benefit from Y services," said Shirley Cox, who's acting as the Dream Team's head cheerleader.

Bill Bowie added, "The YMCA makes such a tremendous difference in our community, and I'm excited about helping to lead the Dream Team this year. We're going to make sure the YMCA continues to change lives in Arlington and Mansfield!"



Bill Bowie & Shirley Cox are leading the Strong Kids Campaign "Dream Team" for 2010

ON GOING PROGRAMS

A Summer Full of Fun at the YMCA

Summer is always a busy time at the YMCA of Arlington, and this past summer was no exception! From summer day camp to swimming, from Dive-In Movies to youth sports, there was always something fun to do at the Y.

Summer Day Camp

More than 450 kids attended summer day camp at 6 sites throughout Arlington. Thanks to donations to the Strong Kids Campaign, nearly one-third of these campers received financial assistance so that their working parents could provide them with quality summertime care that they would otherwise be unable to afford.

In July, all the Day Camp locations came together for a day of celebration and lighthearted competition at the annual YMCA CampTacular. At this event, the camps compete in camp games, like the three-legged race and capture the flag, to see who is tops in the Y. Awards were also given for spirit and team work. It was hot outside, but the competitors didn't even notice. They only knew that YMCA Day Camp is COOL!



Combining physical activity with music and fun

Artisan at Rush Creek Apartments

The Artisan at Rush Creek Apartments in south Arlington had been identified by the Arlington Police Department as one that had a high incidence of police calls for crimes that are typically associated with youth with a lack of alternative activities or supervision. Since the YMCA began programming there during the summer of 2008, reported crimes at this location have gone down significantly to nearly non-existent!



YMCA lifeguards keep the pool at the Artisan at Rush Creek Apartments safe

Throughout the summer, we continued to offer our Teen Leadership Council and Tween Leadership Council programs, as well as other activities to encourage youth to make wise and healthy life choices. We also expanded our programming there this summer and began providing lifeguards at the complex pool so that it could remain open for more hours during the hot Texas summer. We even hired one of our teen program participants to work as a lifeguard onsite. We also offered free swim lessons through The Urban Swim program, providing water safety skills to about 85 children and youth at Artisan and throughout Arlington.

In addition, the owners of this complex asked the Y to expand programming to the adjacent complex, which they now own. The Rush Creek Apartment complex is twice the size of Artisan, with twice as many residents. The YMCA is truly making a difference with the youth and teens and their families who live in this neighborhood in south Arlington.

Summer Sports, Specialty Camps, and Nights Out

Each summer the YMCA of Arlington hosts many specialty camps focusing on a specific sport or activity. This past summer, children participated in basketball camp, soccer camp, volleyball camp, cheer and dance camp, and so much more!

We also hosted the younger kids at Little Learners camps with different weekly themes. From "Trash Camp," where participants used old newspapers and shopping bags to make artistic projects and learned about our environment, to "Chef Camp," where they learned to make simple snacks and meals, the YMCA Little Learners had a blast!

At Camp Skyline held at the North Branch YMCA, special needs kids had the opportunity over six weeks to go on a Surfin' Safari and to venture back in time to the Land of the Lost. The kids enjoyed arts & crafts time and participated in lots of sports and healthy activities while building friendships and having fun!

Girls Night Out at the Y was also a big hit this summer. Tween and Teen girls came together for one evening to enjoy lots of girlie fun. They learned how to make jewelry, put on makeup and care for their skin, to make a cool scrapbook and some great dance moves! Girls Night Out was such a success that it's now become a regular occurrence at our Central Branch YMCA!



Learning to swim makes hot Texas summers more fun

21st Century Learning Centers A Collaboration with AISD

The Arlington Independent School District approached the Y last spring and asked us to work with them to provide summer programs at some of their schools. Our staff jumped in and offered lots of fun activities for youth and teens where programs had not been available before.

At Carter Junior High, Bowie High School, Barnett Jr. High School, Lamar High School and Webb Elementary, the YMCA brought youth and teens together for four weeks, offering courses in film making, providing opportunities to learn about and experience community service, to learn about and prepare for college and their careers, and to experience camping. From rock climbing to working at Mission Arlington, these youth and teens experienced a summer to remember.

Thanks to the success of these programs, the YMCA has been asked to continue and expand programming for at least 12 Arlington schools during the school year. We will work with the schools and their staff members, as well as with students from the University of Texas at Arlington, to provide sports programs, teen programs, YMCA Youth & Government and more throughout the school year. We love working with our great community partners to make our city an even better place!



Participants in the YMCA cheer and dance camp show off what they learned

YMWCA AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Fall is Always Fun at the Y!

The start of a new school year, the leaves turning color, fall is always a wonderfully exciting time of year at the Y and throughout all the Y programs. Youth sports “kick off” a new season and after-school programs see bright new young faces. It’s a great time of year at the Y!

YMCA After School in Full Swing

The YMCA of Arlington continues to bring before-and after-school care to school campuses throughout Arlington and Mansfield. Collaborating with Arlington and Mansfield ISDs, the YMCA has 20 different sites this year and provides fun activities and learning opportunities for nearly 850 youth. It’s going to be a great year!

Father/Child Program

The YMCA Father/Child Program kicked off the new year with a carnival and family fun day at the Central Branch on August 29. This carnival was a great opportunity for dads and kids to learn about the program and to connect with a tribe. It also allowed old friends to gather together to start a new season of great father and child activities.

The father/child program provides an opportunity for dads to connect with their sons and daughters through camping, service learning, and just plain fun. They also connect with other dads and kids, building friendships and support systems for life. This program is a wonderful way for dads and kids to bond in a way that otherwise might not be possible in our hectic and crazy world!



The YMCA’s Father/Child program helps build confidence and strong bonds



Fathers and daughters in the Father/Child Program enjoy camping out

Miracle League...the Miracle Continues

The YMCA of Arlington continues to help support the Miracle League here in Arlington. This program provides special needs kids with the opportunity to play baseball...without restrictions or limitations. The fall season kicked off on September 26th with a grand opening event at the ball park at Randol Mill Park.

The Y helps the Miracle League secure and train volunteer buddies for the program and provides administrative support in managing the league. We’re proud of our collaboration with such a great organization and love to see all the smiling faces of the baseball kids this season.



Miracle League provides special needs kids with the opportunity to play baseball without restrictions or limitations



The YMCA’s “Special Friends”

The North Branch YMCA will continue to be the host site for a program that responds to the needs of special needs adults and their caregivers. Through our Special Friends program, mentally challenged adults spend four afternoons a week at our North branch, building friendships, enjoying lots of fun and participating in healthy activities with one another. This program provides their caregivers, usually their aging parents or family members, with some precious time, too.

The North branch also hosts regular evening activities and field trips for their Special Friends. Rangers games, disco nights and baseball at the Miracle League field at Randol Mill Park provide great times and great memories for everyone involved. We love our Special Friends!

Fall KidsFest at the Y An Arlington/Mansfield FITFUTURE event

Thousands of children and adults attended the 3rd annual FitFuture® KIDSfest October 11, 2008 in Fort Worth and learned firsthand that physical activity and healthy eating habits can be fun. Sponsored by the United Way of Tarrant County and other local organizations, the free event enabled families to take part in cooking demonstrations, vegetable gardening, yoga, rock climbing, table tennis, walking, and other activities.

In 2009, FitFuture® KIDSfest expanded to 3 locations and broadened the effort of United Way, Tarrant County Health Department and other partners to help local families and individuals live healthier lives. This year’s Arlington area event was co-chaired by Keisha Leatherman, Tarrant County Public Health, and Sue White, YMCA of Arlington. The on-site event coordinator was Tim Cameron, YMCA of Arlington. The event, the culmination of support from the cities of Arlington and Mansfield and many local community organizations, took place at the Central Branch YMCA on October 23. Hundreds of families had a great time!

YMCA Goes High Tech

Deans Diary: Dr. Willie Dean, President & CEO of the YMCA of Arlington has a blog! You can read his posts about life, the YMCA, and more at: <http://williedeansdiary.blogspot.com/>.

Want to know what's going on at the Y? Follow us on Facebook!



And you can always get the latest information... class schedules, registration forms and more... on our website: www.ymca-arlington.org!



YMCA After School programs create lasting friendships



Soccer is one of the YMCA's largest youth sports programs

From the CEO



I'm continually reminded of the lives we're changing through our YMCA. As many of you know I'm an avid photographer. I've taken hundreds of photos of our members and program participants over the last few years, and each photo is a glimpse into the tremendous benefits our Y provides to our community.

I get energized when I go out on a photo shoot for our YMCA and see kids hovering around a soccer ball, or youth and adults enjoying health and well-being activities like swimming, group exercise and walking. Photos provide lasting evidence that the work we do has meaning. They document and give witness to the fact that "we're changing lives!"

Thanks for your support of our YMCA and the tremendous work that we're doing! I'm happy to use my God-given talents to help such a worthy organization.

Willie Dean, Ph.D.
President and CEO

The YMCA and AISD: Partners in Building a Stronger Community

Dr. Willie Dean presents a plaque to Jerry McCullough, Superintendent of AISD, recognizing the school district as the Y's Community Partner of the Year.



We're Changing Lives!

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YMCA of Arlington Holds First Annual Prayer Breakfast

The first annual YMCA Prayer Breakfast was held Sept. 16 at the Central Branch YMCA. More than 150 members of the community attended the breakfast, which featured prayers led by Christian pastors, ministers and leaders in our community. Dr. Willie Dean, President & CEO of the YMCA and a recent cancer survivor, also shared his testimony on how his faith sustains him in his work and his life.

The breakfast, an effort by the YMCA to build bridges to and share with the faith-based community, will become an annual fall event for the Y.



We are proud to partner with United Way!