

LIVE Y'ERS MENTORS ARE CHANGING LIVES ONCE AGAIN!



When EVSC schools shut down in-person classes in March of 2020, YWCA staff had to get creative. How could our Live Y'ers program continue to engage with participants in the midst of a pandemic?

"We ended up taking the show on the road!" said Courtney Edwards, the YW's Youth Program Director.

Partnering with Feed Evansville, Courtney and crew delivered hundreds of food boxes to Live Y'ers families (as well as other needy individuals in the neighborhoods we serve) and also prepared activity kits that were handed out to our students (and sometimes their siblings too) that kept the girls busy, involved, and enthusiastic about learning.

But one thing that couldn't be replicated is an integral part of the Live Y'ers experience: mentoring. With the schools shuttered month after month, all school-related activities ceased. And with limited phone and email information on many of our participants, Zoom-type mentoring wasn't an option.

"Our girls missed the connections they had with us," said Edwards. "The continuity broke the momentum that we and the mentors had built with them." Sadly, many relationships were disrupted just when the girls needed them the most. Marginalized children across the country, including the ones served by Live Y'ers, were especially impacted, facing hardships such as food and housing insecurity in addition to disruptions in learning and the influence of positive role models they often encounter in school settings.

The good news is that with in-person school back in session, traditional Live Y'ers programming has largely resumed. "We wear masks; we social distance; we take

every precaution we can to keep everyone safe," says Edwards. But one challenge remains: making sure there are enough mentors to ensure that every girl is matched. Right now, there is a waiting list of girls who want to be paired with a mentor.

According to Edwards and Mallory Hartweck, Live Y'ers Coordinator, many at-risk youth are in need of emotional and social resources to break the cycle of poverty that is part of their everyday lives. And this has been compounded by the pandemic. But when adult mentors are part of the picture, high school graduation rates increase, career goals are identified, healthier lifestyle choices are made, college enrollment rates rise, and self-esteem is enhanced.

GIVE BACK GET BACK

What is involved in being a mentor?

- Devote one lunch hour, once a month during the school year
- Bring in lunch for the mentee
- Commit to one school year at a time
- Have full support and expertise of YWCA staff
- Expect masks, social distancing of tables, and surface sanitizing to be performed

Want more info? Email Mallory Hartweck at mhartweck@ywcaevansville.org OR Courtney Edwards at cedwards@ywcaevansville.org



BECOME A MENTOR!



In essence, mentoring demonstrates to youth that there is someone who cares about them, assures them that they are not alone in dealing with challenges, and lets them know that their thoughts and feelings matter. In fact, studies show that mentored youth often take the things they learned well into middle age. "It's a very small commitment on the part of the mentor to make a huge difference in the life of a young girl," says Edwards. "We're so glad to be back." ■



**Want to help, but can't commit to mentoring?
We'd love to have you!**

Do you love your job and want to share what you do with our Live Y'ers girls? Do you have a hobby or outside interest that our girls may find appealing?

We are always looking for programming for our younger Live Y'ers girls in our after-school sessions. Come to our facility and do a one-off discussion or demonstration to a small group! Our girls often come from poverty-prone backgrounds and aren't always exposed to things the rest of us may take for granted. Thanks to volunteers, our participants have tried yoga (the girls LOVE audience participation!), heard about engineering and nursing jobs, made crafts, planted seeds - you name it, we guarantee the girls will be riveted! And Live Y'ers staff will be right there with you every step of the way.

Email us (mhartweck@ywcaevansville.org OR cedwards@ywcaevansville.org) or give us a call at 812-422-1191.

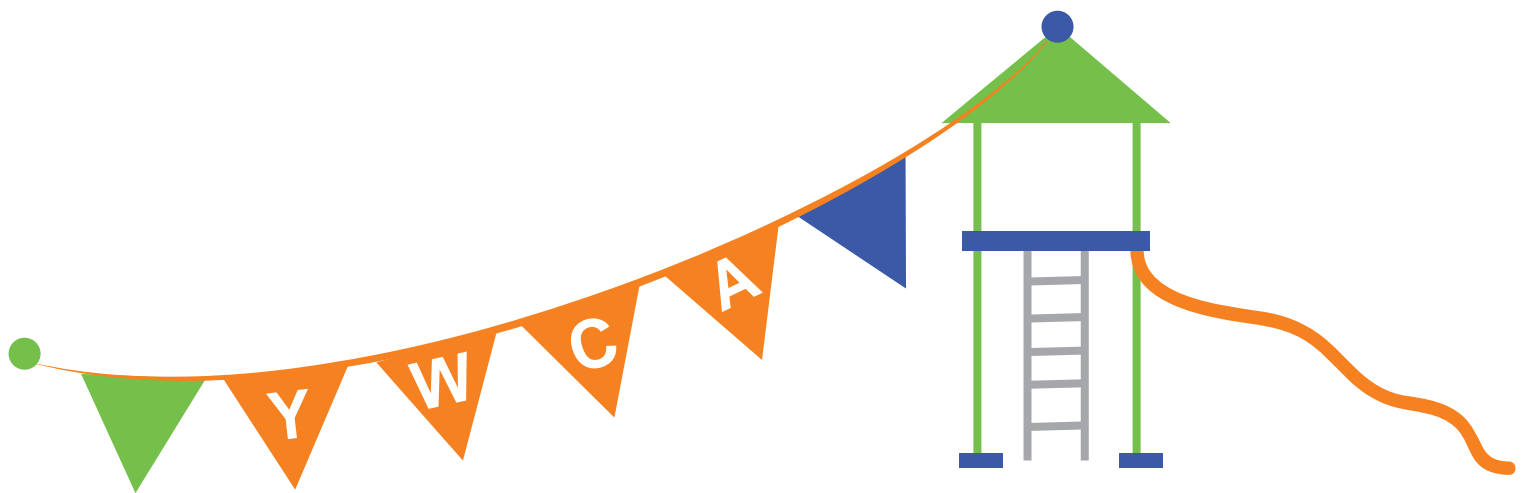
STAND AGAINST RACISM is a signature YWCA initiative designed to create dedicated time and space to build more effective social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, privilege, and leadership. Join our virtual community of growth at facebook.com/groups/ywcaevansvillechallenge to engage in discussions and the sharing of information. Beginning in April, daily challenge materials will be posted in this group.

**STAND
AGAINST
RACISM
CHALLENGE**

A Virtual Community of Growth

**eliminating racism
empowering women**
ywca

Evansville



PLAYGROUND PROJECT

IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.

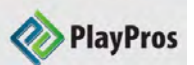
Last spring, we launched our Playground Project campaign to raise funds to completely overhaul our decades old playground. Thanks to our many generous donors, YWCA Evansville has secured enough funds to build the playground of our dreams. The new play space will feature play structures, musical features, water features, sensory features, and a colorful rubber ground covering that incorporates shapes, numbers, and letters to engage kids in make believe and other free play. We are grateful to each donor who supported this project, especially our Celebration Sponsors, Toyota Indiana, Mattingly Charities, and CenterPoint Energy.

This spring, we will break ground on the new playground, and we look forward to sharing photos of our ribbon cutting, installation progress, and the completed playground as well as a full list of donors in our upcoming newsletters. Thank you for helping us provide a beautiful play space for our youngest clients! ■



YWCA - Evansville

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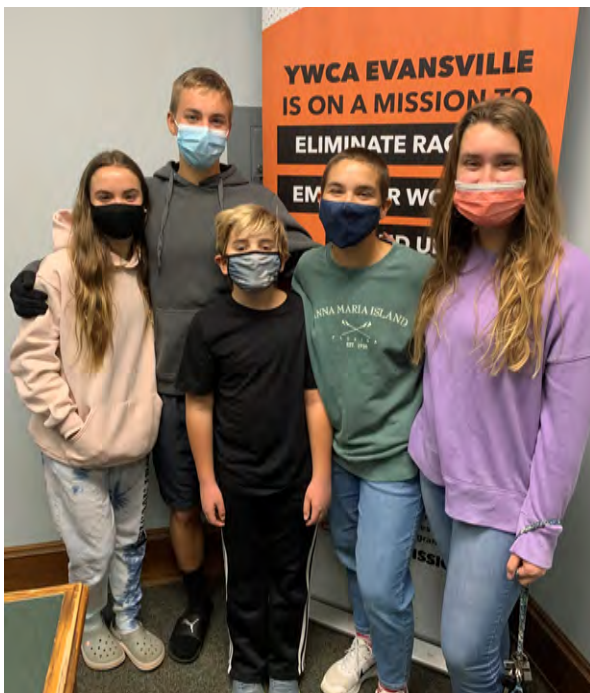


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DONOR SPOTLIGHT

COVID once again kept us from photographing and personally thanking many of our generous donors this year. Please know we are incredibly thankful for each donation this holiday season and throughout the year. Thanks to your support, it was a truly magical holiday at YWCA Evansville.



Pictured above left to right: The Women's Club of Newburgh brought a little sunshine to our building on a cold December day when club member Clara Boyles delivered laundry baskets, detergent, and fabric softener for each of our housing clients. Clara is pictured with YWCA Director of Client Services, Dee Lewis. ■ The Prather family decided to spread a little holiday cheer this year by purchasing necessities and wish list items for our residents and students. The youngest family members (Avery, Evelyn, and Beverly Prather) pictured here especially enjoyed collecting toys for the children we serve, and we are very grateful for their generosity. ■ This quintet of smiling faces arrived on our doorstep in late December with an incredibly generous donation in support of YWCA programs and services. Pictured are Amelia, Reese, Colin, Sophie, and Chloe Perry. ■



Pictured top to bottom: Sisters Grayson and Addison Koch helped stock our shelves with household essentials this holiday season. The hamper, towels, and other items they delivered brought comfort and joy to our clients during their stay at YWCA Evansville. These young ladies along with many other community donors truly helped make this holiday special for our clients! ■ Each year, our residential clients receive a themed gift from Gerling Law, and this year's self-care kits were a huge hit. Adult residents received a new yoga mat, jump rope, scalp massager, eye mask, lip balm, cucumber face mask, and mug with hot cocoa. Thank you to the Gerling Law team for making sure our adult clients have something to look forward to at the holidays. ■ YWCA Evansville is very fortunate to have the annual support of many individuals and organizations who come together to make the holidays magical for our residential clients and the students we serve. This year the Rodriguez family continued their annual tradition of delivering gifts for our youngest residents the week of Christmas. Pictured left to right are Saydee Rodriguez, Tracy Rodriguez, and Sophie Frank. ■ Below: Throughout the year, sisters Delanie and Desie Potts (with help from their mother Jamie) create craft and activity kits for our young residents to enjoy. The kits often feature holiday or seasonal themes which our children love. Our heartfelt thanks goes to the Potts family for providing YWCA children access to creative expression through art. ■



heart of the HOME



The Wells Fargo YES! Lounge Welcomes Women Home

In 2020, your generosity helped us raise funds to renovate the YES! (YWCA Embracing Sobriety) lounge on our third floor. As with everything in 2021, this project was delayed several times due to Covid-19 and supply issues; however, we could not be happier with the end results.

The new space is welcoming and functional. It features a large dining table, smaller high-top table, and additional barstool seating for meals. The kitchen is complete with beautiful cabinetry, extra storage, and new appliances. All three rooms received a fresh coat of paint following necessary repairs and new flooring. The space also includes extra outlets for charging devices, two computer stations for job searching, comfortable seating to unwind after a long day, and uplifting decorations to inspire our residents to reach their full potential. This lounge truly is the heart of the home for our YES! clients now.

Special thanks to Wells Fargo, Ashley Furniture and the Bosler Family, and Boyd Electric for helping make this project possible.

BEFORE & AFTER



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For more information about the YWCA, or to make an online donation, please visit www.ywcaevansville.org.

Join the YWCA in the fight to eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice and freedom for all!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

All 2022 event dates are tentative as the COVID-19 virus continues to spread throughout our community. YWCA may change dates, locations, safety protocols and formats of events based on the most current data and guidelines available in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

April 28 - May 1, 2022 | Community Wide Locations
Stand Against Racism Week - We Can't Wait: Equity and Justice Now!

May 5, 2022 | Evansville Country Club
32nd Annual YWCA Tribute to Achievement Dinner

October 4 - 14, 2022
YWCA Legacy Auction

October 1 - 31, 2022 | Community Wide Locations
Chalk it Up to Awareness

October 17 - 21, 2022 | Community Wide Locations
YWCA Week Without Violence

October 19, 2022 | YWCA Parlor | 8:30 AM | FREE
YWCA presents "It's a Family Affair: Domestic Violence Hurts Everyone"

November 15, 2022 | Evansville Country Club
9th Annual YWCA "Tastes and Treasures" Holiday Luncheon

Please visit our website,
ywcaevansville.org, or call the YWCA
(812) 422-1191 for details and updates on all of
our events.

**YWCA
IS ON A
MISSION**