

WE ARE ABLE TO DELIVER ON OUR MISSION THANKS TO A VAST COLLECTION OF COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND GENEROUS DONORS LIKE YOU.



MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR & PRESIDENT/CEO

Dear Friends of the YMCA,

It is with great honor that we present to you the 2021 YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago's Annual Impact Report—a celebration of how we continue to build community and connection in the lives of those we serve.

Over the past year, we have thought carefully about how we can leverage our vast footprint across the Chicagoland area to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities, families, and youth.

This commitment has been realized in a number of ways. We assisted with the state's efforts to protect our staff and those we serve by hosting free COVID-19 vaccination clinics at our sites. We introduced an important new position as part of our Youth Development team: a Behavioral Support Specialist who is focused on the mounting pandemic-related social and emotional needs of our youth. We continued our partnership with the Chicago Public Schools to ensure families in some of Chicago's most underresourced communities have access to the internet and digital literacy resources. And, we reaffirmed our commitment to the Pilsen and Little Village communities and are working to foster equitable communities by resuming health and wellness offerings at the Rauner Family YMCA, which are complimentary through 2022.

We are able to deliver on our mission thanks to a vast collection of community partners and generous donors like you. Because of your investments, we will ensure that the Y remains a vital community asset for anyone looking for a welcoming, supportive, and caring community. And for that, we are immensely grateful.

We hope you're inspired by the work reflected in this year's report and we look forward to your ongoing support as we continue to transform tomorrow. Thank you for investing in what can be. ▼

Yours in service,



Sharon R. Fairley BOARD CHAIR



Dorri C. McWhorterPRESIDENT AND CEO

2021 MISSION IMPACT MOMENTS

JANUARY AUTHOR AND PHILANTHROPIST MACKENZIE SCOTT **SELECTS THE Y TO RECEIVE \$18M** PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT **AUGUST DORRI MCWHORTER** JOINS THE YMCA OF **METROPOLITAN CHICAGO AS** CEO—MARKING ITS FIRST **BLACK PERSON AND WOMAN** TO HOLD THIS ROLE **OCTOBER WINTRUST GENEROUSLY SHOWCASED** THE YON THE MURAL **BUILDING. DEPICTING OUR COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO LEARNING NOVEMBER FORMER UNITED** STATES PRESIDENT BARACK **OBAMA VISITS THE SOUTH** SIDE YMCA AND SURPRISES 100 **BASKETBALL ENTHUSIASTS DECEMBER RAUNER**

FAMILY YMCA REOPENS
AND RESUMES HEALTH AND
WELLNESS OFFERINGS

INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE, PROGRAMS, AND PLACES



When author and philanthropist MacKenzie
Scott selected the Y as one of 384
organizations receiving a philanthropic gift
at the end of 2020, it was seen as a strong
affirmation of our work to strengthen
youth, families, and communities.

Ms. Scott's intention was to support "organizations with high potential for impact," including those who work to "address long-term systemic inequities that have been deepened by the (COVID-19) crisis." Racial and gender equity, upward mobility, and pandemic response were among her top priorities.

Ms. Scott gifted the Y \$18 million, which will help to reinforce the operational sustainability of the Association's facilities and programs and allow us to continue to impact the lives of approximately 200,000 Chicagoland youth and families a year.

In 2021, that work began. Under the new leadership of President & CEO Dorri McWhorter, a small portion of Ms. Scott's gift was invested in our people for their tireless work and selflessness throughout the pandemic to deliver the Y's mission and support those we serve. We have also enhanced



the leadership team with a number of new roles to align with our core functions, including community development and equity, academic achievement, and membership innovation so as to better meet the changing needs of Chicagoland's families.

The Y also invested \$5 million to complete 30 key mission-related and capital projects to strengthen and grow its programs and facilities. We enhanced popular mission-focused programs closely aligned with our four mission anchors: academic readiness, character development, fitness and healthy living, and violence prevention. Projects included our Youth Safety and Violence Prevention initiative, food distribution services in high-need communities, and community sports leagues. We added a Behavioral Support Specialist role to support the complex mental and emotional needs of youth intensified by the pandemic. And we hired more inclusion

aides to support our after school and summer day camp programs, expand the Association's services for individuals with disabilities, and deepen our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Capital projects also commenced. Interior and exterior facility improvements such as locker room and camp cabin updates, outdoor ice-rink and splash pad renovations, and fitness equipment updates at some centers are already underway. These will visibly enhance the facility where local patronage is already consistently strong, enabling the center to remain a valuable community asset for many more years to come. \blacktriangledown



As the country and world grappled with the enormous task of getting people vaccinated, the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago collaborated with health providers to protect those we serve from the pandemic.

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES' HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The partnerships enabled us to do our part as a wellness organization to address health inequities in our communities by increasing access to the COVID-19 vaccines. As vaccines became available, we hosted free vaccination clinics across our city and suburban locations throughout the year, starting with a clinic at the Kelly Hall Y in March, ensuring that everyone – including those in some of the city's most under-resourced neighborhoods – got immunized.

the Buehler YMCA, was "absolutely thrilled" to participate in her local center's mobile vaccine clinic in October.

The doctors were informative, and I was so pleased with the personal and kind staff that helped with this process,"

she said. "Not having to wait in long lines made getting vaccinated a wonderful experience overall."

Frank, Olive's spouse, also participated in the Buehler

Olive, who received her first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at

immunized.

Frank, Olive's spouse, also participated in the Buehler

YMCA's mobile vaccination clinic. He described his visit in
three words: "quick, easy, and painless." ▼



INVESTING IN OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS

With one preschool student and another preschool alum at the Rauner Family YMCA, the Hart family counts on the Y to instill healthy habits, cognitive skills, and emotional wellbeing—core competencies that support school readiness and lifelong learning.

J'tia Hart shared the following sentiments at our virtual Recognition Dinner in October: "That is the power of these programs: they develop the whole person, they give you your path, they give you your runway, and they let you launch."

At the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, we believe in showing up for families at every stage of life. This means investing in our community's kids early on and providing the nurturing, attentive care infants and toddlers need to reach their full potential.

We're proud to offer foundational early learning experiences across several Chicagoland locations, including in neighborhoods like Little Village and North Lawndale, where affordable, high-quality child care is an urgently needed community asset.

Our early learning programs, which serve 529 young learners weekly, pair developmentally appropriate curriculum with the positive human connections and resources our youngest learners need to thrive. Essential supplies, such as formula, diapers, and wipes are provided to enrolled families at no additional cost, and funding from Early Head Start, Preschool for All, Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and the Y's Scholarship Fund make it possible for us to make early education accessible to all.





Meanwhile, the Y's licensed preschool programs bring our mission anchors of academic readiness and character development to life, preparing young learners aged 3–5 for anything life throws at them. Aligned with state and national Early Learning Standards, our preschools promote language, anti-bias literacy, math, and critical thinking skills by encouraging children to explore their own interests in a supportive environment.

Providing children a safe, nurturing environment in which to learn and grow is the utmost priority at every one of our child care locations. All YMCA teachers are highly trained, DCFS-certified, and carefully selected based on the Y's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. As we continue to adapt to the changes and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, we've adapted our early education programming to adhere to IDPH guidelines.

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is committed to building a healthier, more equitable Chicagoland, and that starts with intentional investment in the youngest members of our community.

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100% OF FAMILIES
REPORTED FEELING
THAT THEIR CHILD
WAS SAFE WHILE
AT A YMCA EARLY
LEARNING PROGRAM.



INVESTING IN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES

Last summer, we adapted to the challenges of a changing world to make summer magic happen for our community's kids.

With dozens of Day Camps throughout the Chicagoland area and Overnight Camps on four scenic campgrounds throughout the Midwest, the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is a trusted leader in bringing unforgettable, life-shaping experiences to youth and teens.

And 2021 was no exception.

This past summer, YMCA Camp Duncan celebrated its 100th year of fostering confidence and resilience in children and teens. After a yearlong hiatus, camp staff worked tirelessly to ensure the 300-acre campsite in Ingleside, Illinois was ready to give campers the warm welcome they'd been waiting for.

New COVID-19 safety protocols, like rearranging bunks and keeping campers in "pods" based on cabin groups, made it possible for youth to enjoy loads of summer fun while giving parents peace of mind.

Still, what makes the Y's Overnight Camps so special for generations of campers hasn't changed: they're places where youth can be their fullest, most authentic selves, surrounded by friends and role models who embrace them for exactly who they are.





INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S MOVERS, MAKERS, AND **LEADERS**

Raising strong, resilient kids takes a village.

IN THE FALL OF 2021, THE Y SERVED 2566 YOUTH IN **BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL** PROGRAMMING AT 71 SITES.



Chicago, we're proud to serve as an extension of that village for Chicagoland's families—and one of the key ways we live that purpose is through our Out of School Time (OST) program.

With program sites at local Y centers and schools, we provide reliable, enriching before- and after-school programming to school-aged youth throughout Chicagoland. By thoughtfully merging play and structured learning, our OST programs build upon what students experience in the classroom while creating a warm, inclusive environment that doesn't quite feel like school.

In December, youth enrolled in afterschool care at the Kelly Hall YMCA, McCormick YMCA, Rauner Family YMCA, and South Side YMCA had the opportunity to exercise their imaginations, collaborate with one another, and practice their problemsolving skills through the Y's new 3D Printing and Design Program, which was funded by the CME Group Foundation.

"Whatever you want to design, you can design it your own way," said Brianna, a participant at the Kelly Hall YMCA, proudly holding up two of her creations—a bag tag and a guitar pick with her zodiac sign.

Throughout the course of the six-week program, students like Brianna took on increasingly complex design challenges, culminating in a lesson titled "Invent for Tomorrow." For this culminating project, youth identified areas of improvement in their communities, designed products to address those issues, and fabricated prototypes for these useful objects with their 3D printing knowledge.

On top of promoting academic readiness, the Y's before- and after-school curriculum prioritizes socialemotional and cross-cultural learning.

With the pandemic's mental health impacts in mind, our OST programs have helped youth readjust to daily interaction with both peers and adults. Monthly curricular themes like Self-Esteem, Connection & Belonging, Emotional Management, and Honesty & Integrity give participants ageappropriate vehicles to engage in honest dialogue about mental wellbeing, healthy relationshipsbuilding, and bullying prevention.

Belonging lies at the core of the Y's before- and after-school programs,

In February, the South Side YMCA youth celebrated Black History Month by portraying Black luminaries in the center's halls and sharing facts about their chosen historical figures to members and staff. During Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May, students at YMCA Safe 'n Sound created artwork inspired by Japanese multimedia artist Yayoi Kusama. Throughout September and October, several of our Association's **OST** sites observed Hispanic Heritage Month by learning about the cultural contributions of the Hispanic and Latine diasporas through crafts and historical teachings.

"It was great for our children that the Y's after-school program celebrated their heritage," a parent from Alex Haley Academy's OST program said. "Often, our culture is overlooked, and for the Y to take the time to teach the students about theirs was truly appreciated."



INVESTING IN SAFER NEIGHBORHOODS

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago's Youth Safety and Violence Prevention initiative (YSVP) operates on one driving principle: healing is prevention.

Through trauma-informed care and positive youth development, our YSVP programs strive to end cycles of violence that adversely affect far too many young people's lives. By creating safe spaces for Chicago-area teens to build community and process their lived experiences with trusted peers and mentors, we're investing in a safer, more equitable Chicagoland for future generations.

Urban Warriors, our longest-running YSVP program, pairs military veterans with youth exposed to violence in some of Chicago's most dangerous neighborhoods. Together, these two groups engage in meaningful, intergenerational dialogue about how to survive in hostile environments and channel their strengths toward positive change in their communities.

Mayte Gonzalez, a recent alumna of YSVP's Urban Warriors program at the Rauner Family YMCA, shared the following remarks in a speech during her program graduation ceremony in June: "I met new people and built relationships. I'm pretty sure if I wouldn't have been doing this, I would have been doing other things, you

know, going down the wrong path.

Now I know that I don't need to face
my problems alone."

And Urban Warriors is just one of the Y's many programs focusing on violence prevention. From Story Squad, which utilizes podcasting and audio production as outlets for socialemotional learning, to Safe Humane Chicago's Lifetime Bonds Program, which strengthens teens' leadership skills as they help train rescue dogs, our YSVP program fosters communitywide resiliency through healing, restorative activities. ▼



INVESTING IN DIGITAL ACCESS AND LITERACY

A well-connected neighborhood is a healthy one.

Internet access and digital literacy resources are crucial to building equitable communities—especially now, when technology plays such a vital role in our daily lives. From scheduling COVID-19 vaccination appointments to assisting children with online learning, families use digital tools every day to attend to their basic needs.

As the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago continues to evolve in tandem with our changing world, we're finding exciting ways to incorporate digital wellness into our mission.

With support from the City of Chicago's Chicago Connected program, we've connected more than 1,850 households with no-cost, high-speed internet.

This year, we also set up our Community IT Help Desk, a bilingual phone line through which local residents ask questions about Internet connectivity, online learning tools, navigating email software, and more. To date, we've helped 276 unique callers with 554 technology-related inquiries.



TO DATE, WE'VE
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CALLERS WITH 554
TECHNOLOGYRELATED INQUIRIES.

Ana Lopez, a Chicago resident who called our help desk looking for assistance with Zoom, reflected on the impact of our community-driven IT support.

"The skills I have learned have served me greatly because now, I am able to communicate with other people through the applications that I now know how to use," Lopez said. "I am very happy because I can now call my native country. If I had known how to use [these applications] before, I would have been able to talk to my brother before he died. I would like to thank the YMCA and Chicago Connected for the great help that they have given me."

To further bridge the digital divide, our Association opened in-person Computer Support Labs at the Kelly Hall YMCA, Rauner Family YMCA, and South Side YMCA in November. Community members can use these labs at no cost to apply to jobs, take free training courses on basic computer use, and access resources like unemployment insurance, RTA bus passes, and more.

"With help available both in-person and over the phone, I hope that more and more people ask us tech-related questions about services they're qualified and eligible for," said Jorge Mora, Community IT Help Desk Specialist at the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. "Thanks to the Y's collaboration with Chicago Connected, we're able to assist a lot more people at a much greater capacity."



INVESTING IN WHAT CAN BE



Seen as a powerful endorsement, the virtual event inspired a record-high \$1.3 million in generous contributions from engaged philanthropists, generous corporate sponsors, and other like-minded Y supporters who believe in the value of strengthening youth, families, and communities. Philanthropic gifts like those pledged at the Recognition Dinner are vital to ensuring that the Y's quality programs remain accessible to everyone, regardless of their ability to pay. Every year, our scholarship program provides nearly \$2 million in financial assistance to local families.

This year's event celebrated three distinguished honorees and the investments they've made to transform Chicagoland's tomorrows: Dr. Byron T. Brazier (Volunteer Award), Mr. Peter B. McNitt (Leader Award), and the Wintrust Financial Corporation (Partner Award). It was an evening of reflection, celebration, and reverence that showcased the Y's work and evolving vision for serving our diverse communities.

Additionally, our partners at Wintrust also helped us showcase our pride in investing in our community's youth in a big way. In October, the Y was proudly featured on Wintrust's mural overlooking the Kennedy Expressway, allowing more than 500,000 travelers to catch a glimpse of the many ways in which we empower youth to reach their fullest potential. \blacktriangledown





INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES



As part of our commitment to remaining a vital community asset and a place of belonging for all families, the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago announced in November that health, fitness, and other community programming would resume at the Rauner Family YMCA starting in 2022, after being paused in 2020 due to the pandemic.

CHILD POVERTY IN THE SURROUNDING AREA OF THE RAUNER FAMILY YMCA IS 46% (COMPARED TO CITY AVERAGE OF 27%).





Renewing its commitment to youth and families in Little Village and Pilsen marked one of the ways in which the Y is addressing inequity in our communities.

The Y is offering complimentary memberships to the Rauner Family YMCA throughout 2022 to ensure that everyone can access the Y's quality health and wellness programs. Additionally, families and individuals residing in the zip codes 60608,

60623, 60632, and 60609 also have free access to any of the Association's centers in Chicago and the suburbs. The complimentary memberships will enable local families to access fitness resources and connect with others to maintain wellness in spirit, mind, and body.

"I am so happy the Rauner Family Y is back!" exclaimed Lizette Garcia, a Gage Park resident. "I really loved the fitness classes and can't wait to do

them again. When [my son Andrew] was born, the Y became a huge part of his life, too. During the pandemic, we would ride our bikes to stay active but it doesn't compare to seeing friends at the Y."

Our doors are open to all who are looking to join a welcoming, supportive community that offers opportunities to make a real impact on themselves and others.



At the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, we recognize that collaborations are the cornerstone of our success.

In 2021, we turned a partnership between the YMCA of the USA and Wilson Sporting Goods into a once-in-a-lifetime enriching sporting experience for local youth.

In tandem with the return of the iconic Dreamville Chi-League Powered by Wilson basketball tournament, the Y and Wilson co-hosted three complimentary youth clinics led by local coaches and Chi-League organizers at the South Side YMCA in August. Around 150 youth learned from the best at the clinics, including tips from NBA trainer Chris Brickley. Bringing his NBA experience to the South Side Y's hardwoods, Brickley took the aspiring players through a set of high-energy drills focused on developing oncourt skills while emphasizing teamwork and sportsmanship.

The tournament itself inspired more than \$14,000 in contributions to the Y and also led to a collaboration with The Winning Edge Leadership Academy. Together, we presented a Town Hall discussion for youth that discussed and promoted interest in the arts and sports beyond being a performer or athlete.

For generations, YMCA youth sports programs have empowered children and teens to become and stay active, gain confidence, and develop the behaviors of good sportsmanship and teamwork. The partnership with Wilson enabled the Y to extend exciting opportunities to underserved youth who might not otherwise have had the chance to access.



INVESTING IN YOUTH THROUGH COMMUNITY SPORTS

Similarly, working with the Obama Foundation unlocked a whole host of new experiences for local teens. Around 100 young South Side basketball enthusiasts got to practice drills with Chicago Bulls player Patrick Williams, Bulls general manager Marc Eversley, and representatives from the Chicago Sky in December at the South Side Y. But without question the biggest surprise of the day came when former US President Barack Obama made an unannounced visit to encourage the student athletes to work hard to achieve their goals and express support for the Y's work as a leading community youth services provider.

"I used to bring the girls [Malia and Sasha] here when they were just itty bitty things," President Obama recalled fondly. "This was a community center and a place of refuge for kids ... [and] I wanted to make sure that we stopped by to let you know that it's our intention to partner and work with this Y right here, that we're doing everything we can to amplify and support great programs like the ones that are taking place here every day."

"I thought I was just coming to a basketball clinic until President Obama walked in," said shocked teen participant Antoine C. "Meeting Obama is the best thing that has ever happened to me, especially knowing that he is a ballplayer like me. I loved every minute!"

The Y is collaborating with the Obama Foundation and Obama Presidential Center in Woodlawn to bring more quality services and resources to local families and youth, especially on Chicago's South Side.

Through slam-dunk partner events like these, there's no denying the positive impact youth sports can have on bridging community gaps for the next generation.



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Indian Boundary YMCA
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Kelly Hall YMCA
Lake View YMCA
McCormick YMCA

Rauner Family YMCA

Sage YMCA
South Side YMCA

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Marshall YMCA
McCormick YMCA
North Lawndale YMCA
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South Side YMCA

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