At the heart of the YMCA is the power to transform the life of a child.

A CLOSER LOOK
In high-risk communities where day-to-day hazards overshadow future daydreams, it’s especially important to create safe spaces for youth where their education, resilience and potential can be nurtured by engaging, research-based programs and positive role models. In Chicago, 50 percent of African American teen boys drop out of high school, and just 4 percent of youth from low-income communities go on to graduate from college. These children may find it challenging to envision lives beyond the limits of their neighborhoods and need guidance to learn how to build those realities for themselves.

High school senior Ja’Juan has participated in the South Side YMCA’s programs since the age of 4, receiving homework help, mentorship and guidance to make positive choices throughout his young adult life. A graduate of the YMCA’s Teen Leadership Institute, he already has several internships under his belt. “The Y helped open my eyes to the endless possibilities in my life,” he says. “Now I’m on the honor roll and am looking forward to my future in college.” Ja’Juan is currently a participant in the YMCA Achievers program. He hopes to pursue a degree in computer science when he graduates from the University of Chicago Woodlawn Charter High School in 2016.

Achievers is one of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago’s youth development programs that encourages interaction between youth and adult role models and the exploration of higher education and career options. The African American and Latino youth participants in grades 7 through 12 build character and self-worth, engage positively with their communities and develop life skills that are important for entering the workplace successfully.

THE Y MEETS COMMUNITY NEEDS
At the Y, we strengthen community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility because we believe in nurturing the potential of every child and teen, improving our community’s health and well-being and giving back and providing support for our neighbors. From fitness to academic readiness to community service, everything we do at the Y is an exercise in possibility.

Visit southsideymca.org to learn more.
HELP US GROW STRONGER TOGETHER

You can change a life by making a gift to children and families in need at the South Side YMCA. The impact of your gift will be felt when:

- A kindergartner starts school ready to learn because he attended the Y’s early learning center.
- Kids have a safe, nurturing environment to go to after school and during the summer.
- A teen develops communication skills that will help her land a summer job.

Make a Gift. Change a Life.
Make your gift today at donate.ymcachicago.org.
To learn more, call the South Side Y at 773.947.0700.

ABOUT THE YMCA OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO
The South Side YMCA is part of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. We’re a non-profit well-known for our 22 centers, camps, and health and fitness programs. But we’ve also moved wellness beyond the gym to prepare our next generation with the physical, academic and social skills they need to thrive. Our neighborhood base helps strengthen communities through programs offered at hundreds of sites citywide. This work promotes academic readiness, character development, violence prevention, fitness and healthy living. Come to the Y for personal fitness, sign up for a family program, or play a more active role in our community service mission. When you join the Y, you’re part of something big.

Learn more at ymcachicago.org.