WE´RE MORE THAN A GYM. WE´RE A CAUSE.

The mission of the YMCA of Metro Chicago is to develop strong children, families and communities across Metropolitan Chicago through academic readiness, character development, violence prevention, and fitness and healthy living.
Dear Friends:

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago reached a pivotal milestone with the opening of the YMCA Center in 2015, thanks to the leadership, partnership and generosity of many people. This hub of social innovation is where scholarly research about youth and family development will be translated into day-to-day practice.

Children, adults and families in many urban and suburban neighborhoods face challenges to living healthy and productive lives. Opportunity gaps in education, food insecurities, chronic health problems, and the cycle of violence are creating barriers to a better tomorrow.

In this report, we share inspiring stories of people who are overcoming these challenges through personal determination, the dedication of Y staff and the innovative programs and services made possible with your support. These stories of hope are happening across Chicagoland every day. We look forward to continuing our successful collaboration in the years ahead.

Richard H. Malone
President and CEO

Peter B. McNitt
Chairman of the Board
Our comprehensive array of programs and services engages individuals across the continuum of care by providing opportunities for increased knowledge, resources and positive relationships from birth to graduation, career and beyond.

View sources referenced in annual report at ymcachicago.org/ar15

Children who are exposed to a rich, stimulating environment show greater brain development during this sensitive cognitive growth period.

Helping youth develop strong mindsets both inside and outside the classroom improves their academic performance.

A strong mentoring relationship with a caring adult outside the home increases school engagement among youth and decreases negative behaviors.

Adopting healthy lifestyle habits in early adulthood can lower the risk of heart disease later in life.

Studies show parental influence play a significant role in the physical activity and eating habits of their children.

Maintaining social connectedness and satisfying relationships develops resilience to physical, emotional and cognitive stressors and promotes successful aging.
OUR REACH

MEMBERSHIP

- 200,572 INDIVIDUALS
  - 135,545 ADULTS
  - 65,027 CHILDREN & YOUTH

PROGRAMS

- 64,331 TOTAL PARTICIPANTS
  - 15,924 ADULTS
  - 48,407 CHILDREN & YOUTH

CAMPS

- 16,693 TOTAL CAMPERS
  - 8,547 IN DAY CAMP
  - 8,146 IN RESIDENT CAMPS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- 1,229 INDIVIDUALS SERVED
  - 713 SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANCY
  - 516 SENIOR HOUSING

INDIVIDUALS SERVED

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As a home away from home for many of our members, the YMCA of Metro Chicago is dedicated to nurturing a sense of belonging and providing the educational programs and social resources that empower families to stay together.

Young parents Brittany and Willie Preston, were juggling college classes, work and raising a family. Eager to provide more for their five children, ages 3 to 11, they sought a quality early-learning program with compassionate teachers dedicated to nurturing young minds in a safe environment. After months of searching and waiting, a baby carriage in the window of the Jeanne Kenney YMCA caught their attention and changed their lives.

"We can't live in this world alone," Willie says. "One thing Y kids benefit from right off the bat is learning how to deal with their peers and be part of a team setting. The Y has really taught the kids to share and understand that everyone is different."

The core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility underlie every aspect of YMCA programming, from sports leagues to before and afterschool care, and everything in between. This foundation is especially important for youth who may not have strong mentor figures within their own families.

"We are committed to providing a quality experience for children, but we also serve the family. That's what sets us apart from every other program. Supporting families and their children from birth through adulthood is what is so powerful here at the YMCA," said Dorothy Cole-Gary, executive director of Early Education and Care, YMCA of Metro Chicago.

"Every dollar invested in early learning can prevent $3 to $17 in future public expenditures, such as special education, child welfare and public assistance."

Learn more about the Preston family’s journey at youtube.com/ar15preston
The YMCA’s Community Schools Initiative (Y-CSI) is dedicated to involving students in the performing arts, as well as developing healthy living and fitness habits. The Y-CSI’s partnership with May I Have This Dance ballroom studio combines all these goals—with a little bit of a kick.

Dancing with Class, the youth outreach division of May I Have This Dance and a Y-CSI partner since 2012, is an afterschool program where students grades 4–6 learn ballroom dances such as merengue, swing, tango and waltz from Chicago dance professionals. The program focuses on more than dance skills; it also develops character and self-esteem through teamwork and positive peer interaction. “Students are taking these positive behaviors back to the classroom, where they then blossom into leaders and role models,” says Margot Toppen, director of Dancing with Class.

“In my first class, it was fun because I really got to express my passion for dancing,” says Cecil White from Carroll-Rosenwald Elementary. “I would sometimes get frustrated because I would get a part of the dance wrong, but that didn’t stop me, and when I got it right, I was really proud.”

In 2015, more than 100 students from eight of the Y’s Chicago Community Schools participated in the 10-week program. The students’ hard work culminated in the 4th Annual YMCA Community Schools Dancing with Class Showcase at the Chicago Cultural Center. The award for Overall Dance Champion was received by McKay Elementary School.

“It is such a joy to bring together our Community School partners, families and supporters to celebrate the hard work and achievement of our students,” says Eric Werge, executive director of Y-CSI. “This event creates such an electric atmosphere—everyone in the room wants to get out of their seats and dance!”

Y-CSI collaborates with numerous other quality program partners throughout Chicago to provide a safe and engaging environment for youth during critical afterschool hours and to expand students’ horizons through enrichment in academics, arts, culture, health and wellness activities, and community programming.

71% of YMCA youth reported doing the daily recommended amount of at least one hour of physical activity.
Christian describes the day he met outreach worker Devon Timms as one that changed, and saved, his life.

At the age of 7, Christian lost three very important people in his life: his mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. The tragedy left the young boy depressed and angry. His grades suffered, he misbehaved and he became more interested in hanging out with drug dealers and gang members than with other children from his school.

Two years later, Devon saw Christian outside the Kelly Hall YMCA and invited him inside. “At first, I didn’t want to go because I was dirty and bummy. I didn’t have a lot of nice things like the other kids,” Christian says. “Finally, I went there and that was the best decision I ever made. The kids and staff welcomed me right in.”

Thanks to the Teen REACH out-of-school-time prevention program, Christian joined the Y’s basketball team and developed leadership skills through the guidance of his coaches. He also enjoyed many first-time experiences outside of his neighborhood, such as canoeing, hiking, archery and camping.

The Teen REACH program provided him, and other underserved youth from low-income families, with tutoring, mentoring, college preparation and enriching activities in a safe environment with positive role models.

Now a high school sophomore, Christian is on the YMCA of Metro Chicago’s Teen Leadership Council and dreams of playing basketball in college.

“The YMCA is not just a Y, it’s my family. I never thought about college or even wanted to go before the Y.” He adds, “I would not be the person I am today if it had not been for the great people there who help me every day.”

The Teen REACH program was offered at the Kelly Hall YMCA, McCormick Tribune YMCA and Rauner Family YMCA. Due to state budget cuts, the program ended in fall 2015.

96% of Y teens feel like they don’t have to turn to gangs for support.

Watch Christian’s speech from The Y. So Much More™ 2015 Recognition Dinner at ymcachicago.org/ar15rdv
Teens in the Y’s Story Squad digital storytelling program are finding the structure they need to process trauma and analyze the causes of and potential solutions to community violence. Their stories include deeply personal anecdotes, poetry, explorations of issues and places, and profiles of important people in their lives.

“Young people of color in low-income neighborhoods are typically excluded from larger narratives about issues in their communities,” says Youth Safety and Violence Prevention operations coordinator Grant Buhr, who founded the program in 2014. “The fact that we can elevate their voices about their experiences is very valuable.”

Story Squad’s 16-week curriculum is rooted in structured narrative therapy designed to foster self-reflection, critical thinking and artistic expression. Teens develop skills in interviewing, creative writing, audio editing, media literacy, story construction and verbal communication.

Kevon and his older brother, Efferson, co-wrote a rap called “Growing Up Without a Dad.” They hope their story will help kids who share their experience of having an absent parent feel heard, understood and connected. “Some people are shy to get things off their backs, and that’s what this program is all about,” says Kevon.

Daniel was referred to the YMCA by his school counselor two years ago. Still reeling from losing his brothers to gang violence, he started acting out and heading down a self-destructive path. His poem, titled “Just Another Day,” recounts the afternoon when a friend was shot nine times.

“That’s what I’ve been through,” Daniel says, “but now, I’m trying to be my best and keep going on forward.” He hopes to someday enlist in the Marine Corps and also study journalism so he can continue sharing the true stories behind the headlines that come from his neighborhood.

Story Squad is currently offered in the Humboldt Park, Little Village, Pilsen and South Chicago neighborhoods, as well as the Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. Grant hopes to expand the program to other YMCA sites and reach even more youth in the future.
High school students are being prepared for entry into the 21st-century workplace with soft skills, such as collaboration, communication and professionalism, through a new culinary arts program at the Rauner Family YMCA.

Created by Vivian Perez, Pilsen Foodies teaches youth how to make nutritious Latin American-inspired meals and other foods, practicing leadership and team building in the process. This program was a natural fit for Vivian given her Guatemalan heritage and deep roots in the Y. She and her siblings grew up with the Rauner Family Y, where their mother still works today. There they participated in the C.H.A.T. Club afterschool program, which provides enrichment opportunities that help children build self-confidence and develop a healthy lifestyle.

As a teenager, Vivian narrowly avoided the temptations of street and gang life with support from teen program director Becky Need and street intervention specialist Jorge Roque. Instead, she enrolled in Lincoln’s Challenge Academy and earned her GED. She went on to graduate from Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts by age 16 and subsequently interned under several Latin American top chefs.

She eventually returned to the Y, determined to offer today’s youth the inspiration that she had received not so long ago.

“It is a privilege being able to see myself in these young teens and give them the advice or hug that they need to progress toward something positive in their future, which I received at their age,” Vivian says.

“PILSEN FOODIES: RECIPE FOR HEALTHY LIVING

“This next generation is going to be the best generation. I hope to be the example for them that the Y has given me.”

Vivian Perez

72% of Y teens feel they can make healthy choices like avoiding drugs and alcohol.
Research shows a healthy lifestyle can build bone density and strengthen the immune system.

My mother was a vibrant 45-year-old when she was diagnosed with an aggressive, advanced form of breast cancer. I was only 15 years old. She passed away within a year, and the tumult of that time reshaped the landscape of my life. Determined not to let my mother’s fate become my own, I began exercising regularly and developed an interest in healthy eating.

Years later, when my own children were young, my doctor called me with suspicious results from a routine mammogram. A battery of grueling biopsies and other tests revealed that I had a condition that produced atypical cells in my breasts. My risk for breast cancer was high: a one in two chance by age 60. I felt as if fate had me dangling over the edge of a cliff. Not wanting to play the odds game, I opted for breast-cancer prevention surgery, also known as a bilateral mastectomy.

Since I wanted to be as strong as possible before surgery, especially in my upper body, I signed up for personal training at the Y. I was already a dedicated member; since becoming a wife and mother, I’d placed an even greater premium on my personal health, and I wanted to instill this value in my children by modeling it for them.

The Fry Family YMCA in Naperville made it easy to exercise, even with little ones in tow. There, I could take a class, cycle or swim while my children were in child care or enrolled in their own activities. A veritable dream!

My personal trainer, Adrienne Parsons, was a godsend. She helped me get into the best possible shape for the big day, tailoring exercises to strengthen my arms and upper back. I went to the hospital believing my recovery would be strong and solid. And it was. My doctors and nurses said the regular exercise would make a world of difference. Indeed, I experienced very little postoperative pain and had a near-full range of motion in my arms right away.

I was back to lifting my children within three months!

I believe my recovery wouldn’t have been half as sound had I not pursued healthy choices after watching my mom slip away many years earlier. By staying healthy and fit, I believe I have a better chance of living longer. I also feel stronger physically and mentally. I’m grateful the Y has been a part of my path toward ever better health.
SYNCHRONIZED SWIMMING: BUILDING LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS

Nanette Zark, affectionately known by generations of swimmers as "Coach Nan," has been teaching synchronized swimming at the Lattof YMCA for more than 40 years. She has guided athletes to the finals at the U.S. Open, Age Group Nationals, Junior Nationals, Junior Olympic Nationals and the U.S. Masters Championships.

Synchronized swimming is a team sport that combines swimming, dance, gymnastics and acrobatics and is performed to music. Nan’s family became members of the Y in 1966 because of the diversity of its program offerings, which included synchronized swimming.

Along with her sister Jeannine, Nan was a standout synchronized swimmer in high school. She continued her swimming career at Northern Illinois University and went on to win more than 50 medals and receive the U.S. Synchronized Swimming Hall of Fame Mae McIwan Memorial Award, the USA Swimming Hall of Fame Paragon Award, and the Women’s Sports Foundation’s Coach of the Year.

“Coach Nan is one of the pioneers of synchronized swimming,” says Liz Miro, an Aqua Sprites assistant coach. “She’s always been my coach, so it’s really cool to get to work alongside her now.” Liz also competes on the Aqua Sprites masters team.

The synchronized swimming program is currently offered at the Lattof YMCA and the High Ridge YMCA and accepts swimmers as young as 6 years old as long as they can swim the length of the pool. Nan and her assistant coaches are aiming to increase the number of younger swimmers on the team and retain them through high school.

"You become really close with your team and learn to function as one unit. It builds wonderful friendships." Liz Miro

Nan created the YMCA’s Aqua Sprites synchronized swimming team in 1972, which her daughter and granddaughters later joined. Her fondest moments are when students come back to tell her how much they miss being part of the team.

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When plans began to take shape for the new YMCA Center, a part of the vision was a conference space that could nurture sustained, research-based collaborative learning supporting the Y’s four mission anchors: academic readiness, character development, violence prevention, and fitness and healthy living. From this vision, the YMCA Learning Institute was born. Finding the right partner for the journey was a crucial piece of the puzzle. Thanks to lead funding from BMO Harris Bank, the Y was able to create a space that reflects the vision and goals shared by both organizations.

“We are investing in the Learning Institute because we embrace its mission to drive transformative change by developing holistic and evidence-based approaches to breaking the cycle of poverty and creating economic opportunities for all,” said Peter B. McNitt, Vice Chair of BMO Harris Bank.

Located on the 7th floor of the YMCA Center overlooking stunning views of the Chicago skyline, the Learning Institute is the first of its kind in the region. This 8,000-square-foot collaborative learning space will set new standards for social services training and program innovation by serving as a central hub for youth development practitioners, management staff, funders and community members to come together to translate research into practice.

As a convener and collaborative leader in the nonprofit sector, the Y has made the space available to other nonprofits, partners and organizations to use for meetings and special events.

Like the other program spaces in the YMCA Center, “The YMCA Learning Institute is an inclusive community space for practitioners, researchers, partners and funders,” said Christina Krasov, vice president of Learning and Evaluation, YMCA of Metro Chicago. “Together, we can create interdisciplinary pathways for our youth that acknowledge the realities they face today and what the future expects of them. At the heart of this vision is the recognition that no single individual or agency can do this alone.”

The YMCA’s Teen Council discussing community initiatives in the new Learning Institute.
The YMCA Center represents a new and exciting beginning for the YMCA of Metro Chicago and the children, families and communities we serve. More than 60,000 square feet of innovative work space provides an excellent foundation for expanding our life-changing programs and laying the groundwork for best practices. The new YMCA Center is more than our association’s new headquarters. It is a living laboratory for innovation and growth that will expand the Y’s impact by increasing our capacity to disrupt the cycle of poverty in Chicago communities.

With eight floors of dedicated program and office space, the state-of-the-art facility is an innovative display of the Y’s mission and vision for the future. Y staff and community practitioners will move theory to practice in multiple programmatic areas, amplify the Y’s role as a thought partner and convener, and improve outcomes from cradle to career and beyond.

**The YMCA Center WHERE RESEARCH MEETS PRACTICE**

**Learning Institute (7th Floor)**
- Serves as a convening space for other nonprofits and community organizations to hold workshops, meetings and events
- Safe and collaborative space for youth, parents and community partners to come together for productive dialogue informing future programs and initiatives

**Healthy Living & Demonstration Kitchen (3rd Floor)**
- Dedicated learning environment, currently in design, for hands-on cooking and nutrition education for children, teens and families
- Hub for designing and implementing nutrition programming that can be scaled across the association

**Teen Opportunity Center (2nd Floor)**
- Youth-centered space focusing on adult mentoring, parent and family workshops and peer group activities
- Space for families to learn ways to reduce stress and expand protective factors that support positive development
- Safe and engaging alternative to the streets for teens

**Early Childhood Demonstration Center (1st & 2nd Floors)**
- Two-floor space opening fall 2016 featuring non-intrusive observation rooms to provide an optimal learning environment for children and training vantage points for staff and youth, development partners
- Will serve 75 children ages birth to five who are from low-income families and are eligible for Head Start and Early Head Start

**Green Space and Active Outdoor Play Area**
- Green space for teachers, families and children, opening summer 2016, with gardens and a playground to promote physical activity, social gatherings and educational opportunities

**Fitness and Healthy Living Demonstration Center (Lower Level)**
- Training area for YMCA of Metro Chicago staff to continually learn and improve fitness and healthy living expertise and member experience techniques

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More than 450 attendees gathered to support the YMCA of Metro Chicago’s mission at the second annual The Y. So Much More™ Recognition Dinner.

“We know that the best way to disrupt the generational cycle of poverty is through education. That is why tonight, we turn our attention to the Y’s work in early childhood education, after-school and teen development,” said Richard Malone, president and CEO, YMCA of Metro Chicago. “Throughout our network of Ys, we prepare youth for their next academic milestone—whether it’s entering kindergarten ready to learn, being on track to graduate high school, or enrolling and persisting in college.”

Emceed by NBC5 reporter LeeAnn Trotter, the Recognition Dinner shed light on the needs, struggles and triumphs of youth and families in the Y community.

Vince Foglia received the So Much More Than A Leader Award from last year’s honoree. Vince serves as chairman of Sage Products and honorary member of the Sage YMCA Board of Directors. For more than 20 years, the Foglia Family Foundation’s support has positioned the Y to better serve the community, most notably through the Foglia YMCA and Sage YMCA.

David Hiller, president and CEO of the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, was presented with the So Much More Than A Partner Award. Thanks in large part to the foundation’s investment, the McCormick Tribune YMCA and the Rauner Family YMCA are a haven for thousands of children and families. The foundation’s support of the Y’s Achievers, Community Schools Initiative, Healthy Kids After School and Urban Warriors programs provides afterschool education and enrichment activities for youth and teens who need them most.

In all, the event raised more than $1 million to promote academic readiness, character development, violence prevention, and fitness and healthy living.

“It is an honor for me to be with you here tonight, amongst the Y’s greatest supporters who firmly believe in your approach to disrupt the cycle of poverty, of violence, of not finishing high school. They are all threats to children, young adults and families throughout the city. Yet the Y is there through it all to offer not just a hand up, but a plan for a better life,” said David Hiller.
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH: The YMCA of Metro Chicago Associate Board hosted the first annual Sunday Funday to raise funds for the YMCA Annual Fund.

JULY: YMCA youth complete a service project following the Chicago launch of Let’s Move! Outside, part of the Department of Interior and First Lady Michelle Obama’s national Let’s Move! initiative.

JULY: Eddie Bocanegra, executive director of the Y’s Youth Safety and Violence Prevention initiative, congratulates an Urban Warriors program graduate.

AUGUST: Golfers participate in a ball drop contest at the Rauner Family YMCA Annual Golf Outing. Funds raised provided financial assistance for memberships and programs to individuals and families in need.

OCTOBER: Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined the YMCA of Metro Chicago in welcoming Y leaders during the YMCA North American Network (YNAN) Conference in Chicago.
2015 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

### Revenue

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Unrestricted</th>
<th>Temporarily Restricted</th>
<th>Permanently Restricted</th>
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<td>Contributions, United Way, local chests</td>
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<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
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<td>($26,598)</td>
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### Expenses

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<td>Supporting services</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
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### Change in net assets before non-operating

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<th>Total Expenses</th>
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<td>($7,138,248)</td>
<td>($26,598)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-operating income (expenses)</td>
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<td>Excess of revenue over expenses</td>
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### Assets

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<tr>
<td>Other assets</td>
<td>$1,815,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefit interest in charitable trust</td>
<td>$3,028,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land, buildings and equipment</td>
<td>$129,947,878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$288,720,756</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Liabilities & Net Assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accrued liabilities</td>
<td>$17,176,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred revenue and advances</td>
<td>$3,467,205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt</td>
<td>$673,748,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Liabilities</td>
<td>$3,448,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>$288,720,756</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Financial Assistance

- **$2.9 MILLION** TOTAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
- **$1.3 MILLION** PROGRAM ASSISTANCE
- **$1.6 MILLION** MEMBERSHIP ASSISTANCE

### Youth in Subsidized Programs

- **1,424** COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
- **1,375** EARLY EDUCATION & CARE
- **809** ACHIEVERS
- **350** YOUTH SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION
THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

The YMCA is able to expand our reach through the contributions of our compassionate volunteers.

In 2015 6,436 individuals volunteered more than 66,700 hours to support the YMCA’s mission.
THANK YOU TO OUR BOARD OF MANAGERS

The YMCA of Metro Chicago is made up of talented leaders from across the region whose dedication advances our mission.

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Peter B. McNitt

VICE CHAIRPERSONS
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Sharon R. Farley
Joseph E. Tilson

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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

The YMCA of Metro Chicago deeply appreciates the many individuals, families, foundations, and nonprofit and corporate partners whose generosity strengthens our children, families and communities every day.

For a full list of donors, visit ymcachicago.org/ar15donors

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In addition to these locations, the YMCA of Metro Chicago also offers programs at partner locations across Chicagoland.
Mural painted by youth in the Beat the Streets art program at the McCormick Tribune YMCA