Stepping Up To Serve

“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members.”
- Coretta Scott King

When COVID-19 spread throughout the Valley, we attentively watched for direction from news sources and government officials. As an essential agency, YWCA Mahoning Valley staff continued to work in modified ways. Like other organizations, we adjusted our schedules, our hours of operation, and in the beginning, had to postpone events and programs. YWCA leadership emphasized the importance of maintaining a balance of safety, work, and proper care for self and others.

Although some aspects of our jobs had been put on hold, it seemed as though working through the pandemic demanded more from us. More time, more planning, more giving. This moment required us to step up. With a diligent team and network of faithful partners and supporters, we made sure our housing clients had food and supplies. We assured them that their current living situation did not have to change because of the shutdown or sudden job loss. This was the time to act, and act compassionately. We did not do it alone.

Individuals and organizations such as United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley partnered with us for giveaways and food drives. We also received grants from several foundations to keep our lights on. Thank you to the Coca Cola Foundation, Chemical Bank, Thomases Endowment Fund, Raymond John Wean Foundation, Health Path Foundation of Ohio, Bank of America, Delta Dental Foundation, Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania & Eastern Ohio and Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley Swanston Charitable Fund.

We continue to move forward with caution and determination to serve our great community.

Action through Advocacy

Stand Against Racism
YWCA Mahoning Valley joined with YWCA Greater Cleveland and other associations to present the 21-Day Racial Equity & Social Justice Challenge. With more than 150 participants involved in the challenge, we learned more about confronting injustices and inequities through readings, podcasts and videos. The overarching themes included voting, criminal justice reform, education and health care. The challenge led us into a discussion for Stand Against Racism where Kristen Olmi, Tammy King, Justin Jennings and Michelle Edison spoke as panelists in their respective fields. Tim Francisco served as the moderator.

YWWomenVote
YWCA USA and the Ohio Council of YWCAs convened virtually for an Ohio Women’s town hall on October 27 to discuss Ohio initiatives for declaring racism a public health crisis. Three hundred people attended.

Nonviolence Initiatives
YWCA is a proud partner of Ohio Nonviolence Week. This year in addition to participating in the parade, we hosted a 5-Day Reading Challenge and panel discussion. YWCA USA’s Week Without Violence was the following week and underscored ending gender-based violence. YWCA also cosponsored the Trumbull-Mahoning Domestic Violence Collaborative seminar where 188 people attended.

Antiracism Training
YWCA Mahoning Valley partnered with Sojourn to the Past to offer Sojourn’s antiracism workshop entitled, “How To Be A Difference Maker.” The socially distanced workshop was open to YWCA board and staff and members of the community.
Senator Sherrod Brown Joined STEAM Virtual Camps

YWCA Mahoning Valley’s Y-Girls STEAM Ahead camp engaged middle school girls in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math for two weeks this summer in a virtual camp format. Students participated in the Summer Manufacturing Institute in collaboration with Oh Wow! Children’s Center for Science and Technology. The camp also included Biz 3D and Entrepreneurship component that was supported by the INVENTORcloud Program, a portfolio company of YBI and member of America Makes. Girls used computers, laptops or Chromebooks to participate in the 2020 virtual camps. They received DIY kits with supplies for projects before the camp began.

Biz3D & Entrepreneurship
Campers made business plans for a product or service and learned what it would take to become an entrepreneur. From designing their logo, understanding competition, marketing and advertising to coming up with a presentation and an elevator pitch, the campers learned all aspects of starting a business. They even 3D printed sample merchandise for branding their business.

The A in STEAM
Girls participated in several art projects during camp. They used acrylic paint on a mini canvas for a live paint-along, did natural tie-dye using household goods, and upcycled bags or purses by sewing and using fabric and bag hardware.

Bioengineering in SMI + A Special Guest
Campers got an inside look into the world of Bioengineering with PITT BioE and Case Western Bioengineering through virtual tours and discussions. They also had the opportunity to speak with a special guest the second week of camp.

Senator Sherrod Brown joined a Thursday morning Zoom call to talk with the girls about what they learned. He explained how Mahoning County was the first to host a manufacturing camp out of about 100 other camps in Ohio. He also expressed how manufacturing can be used to make a difference. “We know how important manufacturing is,” Senator Brown said. “It can save lives and make a good quality of life for people.”

The conversation led to students sharing their knowledge about how to protect against the coronavirus. They each made modifiable masks and filters while learning the difference between sanitizing, disinfecting and cleaning. They also made their own disinfectant spray.

YWCA plans to offer similar camps next year. The virtual camp was sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Warren, Neckerman Foundation, PHRMA, the William J. Bruder Trust, the Walter E. and Caroline H. Watson Foundation, United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley and the Community Foundation of the Mahoning Valley Swanston Charitable Fund. The camps were provided to the girls at no cost.

Wish Upon A Star
Each year, thanks to the caring donations of individuals and organizations, YWCA brings a smile to the faces of low-income and homeless children served through our programs.

You can help make a difference for a child this holiday season through our Wish Upon A Star project. Monetary contributions allow YWCA to purchase gifts for children in our programs. Gifts in any amount are appreciated by December 8 and can directed to:

YWCA Mahoning Valley
25 W. Rayen Ave.
Youngstown, OH 44503

Call 330-746-6361 x 110 for more information.

Upcoming Event: Lunch & Learn
YWCA Mahoning Valley is hosting an online racial justice focused Lunch & Learn series. Our first session is November 16 at 12 PM and features Margaret Mitchell, President & CEO of YWCA Greater Cleveland, who will speak on Understanding Race in America. Email Michaela Write at mwrite@mvywca.org if you are interested in learning more about this series.

Leave a Legacy
You can leave a lasting legacy for women and girls when you include YWCA Mahoning Valley in your will. For more information about planned giving, please contact Varada at 330-746-6361 ext. 112.
Art selected by juror Janice Lessman-Moss was showcased in an online exhibit on the YWCA Mahoning Valley website this year. A gallery of all submitted pieces and 17 Under 17 artwork were also displayed. Elayne Bozick, Elizabeth Ford and Elise McKeown Skolnick were the co-chairs of the event. Despite the lack of a physical show, we were able to reach a wide audience through the virtual show. We were proud to support women’s art in our valley in a new technological way. The $2,600 in award fund money was awarded to 19 artists, including the People’s Choice Award which was contested on Facebook. Major sponsors were Farmers Trust Company, Frank & Pearl E. Gelbman Charitable Foundation, Nancy K. Morris Endowment Fund, Pollock Personal Foundation and Stifel.

Judging Carla Baldwin, Mayor Catherine Cercone Miller and Councilwoman Samantha Turner spoke at this year’s Y’s Women: Power of the Purse event on harnessing our collective power. The virtual event included client testimonials and ended with an online purse auction presented by Byce Auction. All proceeds from Y’s Women support the programs offered in the areas of economic empowerment, youth development and supportive housing.

Sessions for Young Women With Bright Futures began in January. Although the banquet originally scheduled for March could not be held in person, participants were able to share their future plans and their appreciation to their families and school administrators for supporting them on video. An online event for the young women was held in May where the scholarship winners were announced. Kasey Sheridan, a Girard High School graduate, was the first place scholarship winner. She attends Cleveland State University and is majoring in Communications with a minor in Theater. Kaitlyn Helt, a graduate of McDonald High School, won the second place scholarship. She is attending Youngstown State University with a major in Business Administration. Scholarships were awarded through the Thomases Family Endowment Fund of the Youngstown Area Jewish Federation. Major sponsors were Akron Children’s Hospital, Compco Industries, Fibus Family Foundation, Home Savings Bank, State Farm, The Vindicator and The Youngstown Area Jewish Federation.
Rental Space Available in Youngstown
YWCA is offering rental space for your next event, meeting or party.
1) The Youngstown Foundation Historic Lobby—up to 25 people
2) The Edward W. Powers Historic Gym & Community Room—up to 25 people

Both spaces have an attached kitchenette.
Special rates for nonprofits available.
Call 330-746-6361 x 110 for details.

YWCA Discovery Place Youth Development
YWCA Mahoning Valley, 25 W. Rayen Ave., Youngstown
- Serving children ages 6 weeks to 5 years
- Open Monday—Friday 8 AM to 4:30 PM
- Nutritious meals and snacks included
- Certified and Degreed staff
- Special Needs inclusive
- ODJFS welcome
- STEAM Curriculum for preschoolers
- Up to 10% discount for employees working within 1-mile radius of YWCA
- Low ratios following pandemic protocols

Call 330-746-6361 ext. 126 for more childcare information.

YWCA Email List
YWCA e-blast offers news, updates and information about our upcoming programs. To subscribe visit www.ywcamahoningvalley.org or email Michaela Write at mwrite@mvywca.org

Barbara M. Wick Transitional House & Warren WINGS Wish List
- Sheet sets
- Comforters
- Laundry soap
- Bath soap
- Cleaning spray
- Light bulbs
- Stationery
- Envelopes
- Diapers of all sizes
- Cold medications
- Slippers
- Toothpaste
- Dish Cloths/Towels
- Pots/Pans/Dishes
- Forks/Knives/Spoons
- Dishwashing soap

Our Voice is published by YWCA Mahoning Valley. Comments and address changes to Communications Department at 330-746-6361 x 109.