

ROI: REPORTING OUR IMPACTS



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

MEETING WATERS YMCA

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR SUPPORTERS OF MEETING WATERS YMCA

SUMMER 2016

WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MEANS

"One day a man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking up and gently throwing things into the ocean. Approaching the boy he asked, 'Young man, what are you doing?' The boy replied, 'Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them back, they'll die.' The man laughed to himself and said, 'Do you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? You can't possibly make any difference.' After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the surf then, smiling at the man, said, 'I made a difference to that one.'"

~ adapted from Loren Eiseley



At times like these, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the circumstances in which so many in our communities—especially children—find themselves. As parents, community or business leaders, educators, and, yes, even youth and family development specialists, we can be excused if, from time to time, we find ourselves wondering, how can I "possibly make any difference?"

As a supporter of Meeting Waters YMCA, please know that you ARE making a difference... not just for one, but for many. Here are a few examples from just the past few weeks:

- Last year, donors to our *Reach Out to Youth Fund* helped two children of a mom struggling with cancer attend our Y Day Camp so they could, in the mom's words, "Have a normal summer like all kids and not have to focus on my challenges." Sadly, a year later, mom's health is even worse. When we learned of this, we reached out with financial support for the children to attend camp again this summer.
- A teacher at a local middle school felt that a summer camp experience with kids from communities throughout the region would be helpful to two brothers who are New Americans. Working with the teacher, we presented the family with scholarships for both boys to attend camp and helped their mother complete the registration paperwork which was a challenge given her limited ability with English at this time.

"This is our daughter's fourth summer (at Y Day Camp). She started with KinderCamp and is going to be a third grader in the fall. She absolutely loves camp, and has learned so much; how to respect herself, others and our world. We love that she is so engaged throughout the day, without televisions or iPads. Sue, Steve and their staff are amazing! We are thankful for the scholarships and the donors; without them, our daughter may not have been able to attend." ~ parent, Springfield

OTHER MWYMCA NEWS

SHAPING NATIONAL POLICY FOR HEALTHY KIDS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

As we have shared in the past three quarterly ROIs, Meeting Waters YMCA has been chosen as a national model for excellence in meeting national Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards in our Youth Development programs (Y-ASPIRE and Y Day Camp) and for family engagement. In those roles, we have guided and supported the other 2,700 Ys in America in their implementation efforts.

Last month, our ongoing commitment to make "the healthy choice is the easy choice where ALL people live, work, learn and play" were once again recognized at a national level. Voices for Healthy Kids, a partnership between the American Heart Association and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, invited Steve to a national summit on advancing approaches to equitable access to healthy foods and safe ways for people to walk to school, work, the grocery store and other important institutions. According to Steve, "The sustained efforts and models of our Healthy Communities Coalition continue to serve as a national resource."

In 2011, the CDC and YMCA of the USA chose our Healthy Communities Coalition of Windham County as one of "four model success stories" of healthy communities initiatives nationwide.

**TOGETHER,
WE ARE STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATIONS OF COMMUNITY!**

LOOKING AHEAD

Last year, we celebrated our founding 120 years earlier. The year before that, we celebrated our 50th consecutive summer of day camp programming that has touched the lives of more than 12,000 area young people. As you've read in previous ROIs, as well as this one, we continue to make such significant impacts in the Fall Mountain, Bellows Falls, Springfield and Brattleboro regions we are often held up as a national model and engaged as coaches, mentors and trainers for other Ys.



But, there's no slowing down! From our solid foundation, our volunteer and staff leaders are continuously looking for new opportunities to "strengthen the foundations of community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility," as well as family strengthening. Here are a few things we're working on for future impacts:

- With support from the Holt Fund, we are going to leverage our status as national "HEPA Champions" (Healthy Eating and Physical Activity) to guide and support dozens of other local child care, afterschool and recreation providers to implement HEPA standards in their programs. This will positively impact hundreds of area children and their families. Our training, self-assessment, and mentoring services will launch this fall.
- With support from the John Cooper Hubbard Trust, a few months back, we received the results of a Market Research Study we'd commissioned to guide us on how we could deepen and broaden our commitments and services for the people in the Great Falls region (BF and Fall Mountain areas). We are currently translating the results of the study into a strategic plan to guide our work in the northern part of our service area for years to come.
- With several of our Y Day Campers in their 'tween and teen years, we are designing a few Adventure & Specialty Camps for 2017 and beyond. We're in conversation with a former Y Day Camp staff member who is now leading adventure camps and learning expeditions for a private school for teens with learning disabilities in North Carolina. He's expressed interest in coming back to lead Adventure & Specialty Camps for Meeting Waters YMCA. We'll spend the fall looking for grant opportunities to underwrite some of the financial assistance that will be needed to make these camps accessible to all—especially since many of the prospective participants will be too old for their parents to qualify for child care financial assistance from VT and NH.
- Internally, we'll be focusing a lot of time and energy over the next year on strengthening our volunteer leadership and financial development structures and processes. We'll tap into YMCA of the USA's vast financial development resources with the vision of raising substantially more money so we can help significantly more youth and families with our quality services. And, we're looking to expand our Board of Directors as well as engage many non-board volunteers on our committees. If you are interested in serving but are not sure how/where your skills, passion and talents can best be utilized—or if you know of someone whose assets match up well with our mission—please be in touch with Steve (steve@meetingwatersymca.org or 802-463-4769).

BETTER TOGETHER

PLEASE JOIN US

Our final Y Day Camp Family Night of 2016 will double as a camp Alumni event. We'll be reaching out to campers from the past 52 summers to come back together, reminisce, and celebrate the positive role the camp has played in over 10,000 young lives. To celebrate your vital role in these accomplishments, we invite you to join us. The Alumni/Family event takes place on **Thursday, August 11th from 7:00-8:30 PM** at our amazing camp facility on Missing Link Road in Springfield. Please contact our main office if you have any questions.

LEAVING A LEGACY OF SUPPORT

Over the past year, three long-time supporters of Meeting Waters YMCA have passed on. But, their legacies live on—not only through their volunteer leadership of the past, but also through either writing us into their will or their families choosing MWYMCA as the charity to which their families and friends could donate in lieu of flowers. Please consider Meeting Waters YMCA in your estate planning.

PAPERLESS ROI

To help us reduce our costs and our environmental footprint, we're offering to email ROI to you as a pdf document rather than sending it by mail. If you would like to opt in to the email distribution list, please email Steve at steve@meetingwatersymca.org with "ROI" in the subject line. Thanks!



To see how we are living our cause every day, please follow us on facebook.