



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## Grand Traverse Bay YMCA

### YMCA General Information

YMCA stands for “Young Men’s Christian Association”. Originally started as bible study groups by George Williams to keep wayward boys off the mean streets of London in 1844. First Y open in the U.S. in Boston in 1851. Today, YMCAs comprise the nation’s largest non-profit with more than 20 million members in 2,700 independent Y locations. The Y also has a presence in over 100 countries.

*In honor of George Williams, the YMCA of the USA endeavored to create a proprietary YMCA software system named “George”. It was a colossal failure, and forced the Y to examine what it was best at – helping kids, families, and communities, NOT creating technology. Out of this self examination came the new YMCA logo and renewed commitment to community.*

### “No One Denied” Financial Assistance Policy

More than 2 million Y members receive financial assistance. At the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA, that number is more than 500, and the amount of assistance averages \$120,000 each year. We call it our “No One Denied” policy – no one is denied access to our programs or membership for inability to pay.

*Joan M.<sup>i</sup> broke down crying in our office. As a single parent who had lost her job almost a year ago, she faced a choice – find affordable quality child care for her two young children and try to reenter the work force, or stay at home with her children and rely on whatever charitable services she could for food and shelter.*

*She knew the latter was a downward spiral from which there was little chance of escape. If she had a job, she’d have the opportunity to create her own destiny, but there was a short term problem. Because she hadn’t been working for some time, she did not qualify for DHS assistance with her child care. A large portion of what she would earn at a new job would go toward paying for child care. In the short term, without any help with these costs, it would actually make more financial sense for her to stay at home and not work at all, especially when the time and expense of searching for a new job are factored in. But Joan was thinking about long term. Joan was thinking about the day when she didn’t need any help at all. Joan just needed a hand up, not a hand out.*

*Of the 57 children now enrolled at the Y Early Childhood Education Center, 11 of them come from families with stories similar to Joan’s. The majority of our parents can afford to pay what*

*it costs to run a high quality, curriculum-based, values-driven program. Many others qualify for DHS, and need no other local assistance. But for Joan and others like her, the additional financial assistance provided by local donations makes all the difference.*

*Thanks to our community's generosity, Joan will be able to rest assured that her children are cared for in a safe, nurturing, educational environment while she works. Once established in the work force, she will again qualify for DHS assistance and no longer need our help with funding. As her situation improves, Joan hopes to reach a point where she needs no government help, either.*

*And that's why Joan was crying in our office. She was shedding tears of joy and hope for the future of her family. None of that could have happened without help from the people who donate to the Y.*

## **Mission and Values**

Our Y's mission is to put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. We do this with more than 65 programs that fit into one of three nationally-sanctioned areas of focus – youth development, healthy living, social responsibility. Our Y's programs fall into these department headings: Adult Sports, Aquatics, Camp, Child Care, Family, Healthy & Fitness, Teens, Tennis, and Youth Sports.

All programs are designed to teach the Y values of Honesty, Caring, Respect, and Responsibilities.

*Over 100 kids attend Y Day Camp each week during the summer, where they compete to attain all 4 colored wrist bands – blue for Honesty (true blue), red for Caring (heart), gold for Respect (the golden rule), and green for Responsibility (eco-green).*

## **Programs**

14% of Y's \$1.7 million in revenues comes from donations. Membership dues account for 17% of revenues, and program fees account for the remaining 69%. That's high for a Y, but it shows how in tune we are with meeting community needs with programming. We're not just a facility, we're the Y!

*Some program success stories:*

*Out of the entire 5 state region, only one district has two top-10 tennis players, and they're from the same club – our local YMCA!*

*When seniors approached us for a place to house a growing sport, we obliged, and now "pickleball" (like mini-tennis with a paddle and whiffle ball) meets the recreational needs of over 100 Y seniors with 3 indoor courts and 3 outdoor courts.*

*The YMCA girls gymnastics team won 14 first-place gold medals at last year's state meet!*

*When concerned parents approached us that their kids were playing roller hockey in the streets and parking lots, we did something about it to keep them safe. Now they play at the Y roller rink, which is shared with the pickleball players.*

*The number one identified need when speaking to area business owners? Affordable quality child care. As the nation's leader in this field, we had access to the best practices, so we started a program and we now have a full Early Childhood Education Center operating on Woodmere. Parents can go to work knowing their children will receive the best in licensed care and education.*

*One of our YMCA Youth WOW (Youth Working on Wellness) kids last year lost more than 40 pounds! It completely changed his life around. We change lives!*

## **The New Y**

The current Y was built as a metal shell building in the early 70s as a private tennis center, and was taken over by the Y in 1984 (the Y was chartered in 1964 but operated as a store front program-only Y for 20 years). Within 10 years the Y had grown beyond the capacity of the facility and the facility was not only approaching the end of its natural life, but was sinking into the swamp on which it was built.

Property was purchased on Silver Lake Rd (20 acres of the old Oleson buffalo farm) and \$6 million was quickly raised. Then the recession of 2008 and 2009 hit, and fundraising stalled. In August of 2011 a donor challenged the community to match his \$2 million pledge with another \$4 million by the end of the year. Nearly 900 donors stepped forward with gifts ranging from \$5 to \$1.9 million to meet the match, and as a result construction of the New Y will begin this spring!

*Phase I of construction of the New Y will include outdoor fields (already completed and in use!), six indoor tennis courts with viewing areas; natatorium featuring 6-lane competition pool with deep end diving well, zero depth entry splash pad, training pool for learn-to-swim, and hot tub spa; fitness center with dedicated youth and senior fitness, aerobic studio, and multipurpose room; teen center; small chapel; community meeting room; soft-play area; and child watch.*

*A survey showed that 40% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders cannot swim 25 yards, and the accidental drowning rate in our region is 3 times the state average. 30 years ago 1 in 20 kids was overweight. Statistics show that that number is now 1 in 3, and 1 in 5 is obese. The New Y is being built to meet community needs and solve problems like these.*

*And that's what we do at the Y – we meet community needs.*

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