

# YMCA COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

The YMCA  
For Youth Development  
For Healthy Living  
For Social Responsibility

The YMCA builds strong kids, strong families and strong communities

The question was asked **"Who can do what the YMCA does?"**

## **MORE THAN JUST A SWIM AND GYM**

The YMCA of Van Wert County has been an integral part of the Van Wert community for over 109 years. It has a long and rich history of serving the community beyond swimming and basketball. The YMCA was just that, a Young Men's Christian Association, reaching out to young adult males and empowering them with Christian values.

Over the past 109 years the YMCA has grown into an all-inclusive, mission driven organization that continues to impact all in the community. Sports, swimming, social programs, quality of life, educational programs, toddler to senior programming and numerous other programs continue to help our YMCA and community thrive.

In an effort to have a much larger community impact and help improve the quality of life for many others in the community, the YMCA has branched out and is involved in many community outreach programs, collaborations and efforts to enhance opportunities for all in our community.

This report focuses on the numerous contact points the YMCA has in Van Wert and surrounding counties. A strong YMCA means a strong community and is just one way the YMCA impacts economic development and strengthens the Van Wert community.

Each day we work side by side with our neighbors to make sure everyone, regardless of age, income, religion, gender or race, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive in an inclusive environment. The YMCA strives to empower all in the community to feel accepted and part of something much greater than any individual. **This outreach and community impact is listed below**

- The YMCA provides 4 free floating memberships to our local crisis care/abused women shelter. These memberships provide a safe and anonymous opportunity for women and their children to enjoy family time, step away from the stressors of daily life and give them the ability to socialize with others. Identity free access cards insure privacy for this population.

- The YMCA is filling the void left by the YWCA eliminating their homeless women program. We currently sponsor 3 adult women who are homeless. This outreach includes financial assistance, free memberships and help finding affordable housing.
- The YMCA has collaborated with the YWCA and is providing free/anonymous memberships for all of their women receiving help in the YWCA battered and/or trafficked women and children's programs. The goal of this outreach is to provide a better quality of life for those in need.
- The YMCA and the Van Wert Hospital work together to provide warm water pool options for the physical therapy department at the hospital. Hospital clients that need aquatic therapy are brought to the YMCA for these services.
- The YMCA has taking an active role in a collaboration between the Y and Haven of Hope (HOH), Van Wert's men's shelter. Initially the YMCA opened its doors during the coldest days to provide a warming station for the men at the shelter. Over the past year that has grown into providing daily warming spots, recreational activity time and guidance in navigating the social services available to them. The YMCA has also been involved in helping these men learn job skills and resume writing. The YMCA and its staff have also helped guide HOH in providing some guidance with its overall operations, guidelines and best practices. Without the YMCA these men would be wandering the streets.
- Each year the YMCA provides over \$100,000 in financial assistance to children and families as well as other individuals and groups listed below. In 2023 441 children and families were provided financial assistance. While some of these families have just hit hard time, most of them are the neediest and most at risk in our community. Access to the YMCA, our programs, activities and social opportunities are important elements in family success. Having a safe and fun place for family activities is therapeutic for the families and allows them to escape from some of their daily pressures. The financial assistance program also allows these children the opportunity to participate in YM activities with peers and develop social and communication skills.
- The YMCA donated 5 acres of ground to the Van Wert City Parks Department bike trail program. This bike trail was paved and connected the Smiley Park bike trail to Richie Road.
- The YMCA of Van Wert County has a very unique military outreach program that was implemented in 2009. This YMCA program was the first in the state to recognize this population and develop an outreach specific for them. This program focuses on "serving those who served for us" and making spirit, mind and body a priority with our service people. The YMCA program offers free access to the YMCA for all enlisted soldiers waiting for assignments, currently enlisted or on leave, and families of soldiers who are deployed also get free access to the YMCA. Disabled veterans are also eligible for free memberships to the Van Wert YMCA.

- The YMCA offers 5 free Adult Memberships to the Department of Jobs and Family Services for individuals they identify as in need. The Juvenile Probation Department also has an agreement with the YMCA and has 3 floating memberships that they can use with different at risk youth in our community. For some of these youth it is important to come to an environment that provides some normalcy, a healthy Christian atmosphere and some age mates that they may not have chosen to surround themselves with outside of the YMCA.
- The Van Wert YMCA has a membership agreement with the Marsh Foundation. This agreement gives Marsh staff a 50% discount on their memberships. The students at the Marsh Foundation get discounted rates for YMCA pool use, golf course driving range and free access to the foot and disc golf courses at Hickory Sticks
- Camp Clay hosted the Ray of Hope Grief Camp. This camp was developed to address the needs of grieving children who have had a loss of someone in their family. Other Day Camps are closed to provide privacy space for the Community Health Professionals Grief Camp.
- Economic Development and Economic Impact are directly and indirectly impacted by the YMCA of Van Wert County.
  - The YMCA was the first YMCA in the country to become 24/7 and has helped facilitate numerous other Y's ability to serve their communities 24/7. New businesses and potential businesses want to know what is available for their employees when it comes to health and wellness for all shifts.
  - The YMCA also has the only pool in Van Wert and host numerous groups including several other schools for VW Swim team and YMCA Marlins swim meets. The pool is also used by our local hospital for therapy, special needs classes from Van Wert High School, local churches for baptisms, and has been used by local businesses for family fun days. All of these activities generate many visitors each year to the downtown area.
  - The winter boys and girls basketball leagues and tournaments bring hundreds of visitors each week to the Van Wert Community
  - Camp Clay twice a year hosts the Black Swamp reenactors and provide free activities for the local community and brings hundreds of people to the Van Wert community.
  - Over 70 kids from Van Wert and surrounding counties participated in the two week free camps for children of first responders. This free activity brought families into the community for shopping and meals.
- The YMCA hosts a yearly Good Friday Prayer Breakfast and 2023 will be the 20 celebration. This breakfast is attended by community members who enjoy a motivational/inspirational speaker who have been moved to share their story and how Jesus has impacted their lives.
- The YMCA provides free swim assessments for all children and families once a year. This one-on-one assessment helps families understand where their

children are regarding swim ability. The YMCA takes this very seriously, as 75% of all drownings are children under the age of 5.

- The YMCA and Camp Clay partners to provide families free access to 9 weeks of summer camps. The YMCA wants to reach these children before they become a statistic or get involved in drugs, crime or other less than productive behavior. Summer Camps keep these children engaged in adult supervised activities that have a Christian emphasis, social skills development and help these children learn how to communicate with others. In 2023 over \$4500 was donated to help children attend summer camps.
- The YMCA partners with the West Ohio Community Action program in job training and mentoring, for boys and girls ages 15-24. This program also introduces program participants to volunteerism and community support.
- The YMCA partners with the First United Methodist Church in hosting the 5<sup>th</sup> quarter. This program has been running several years and allows students a safe place to hang out and participate in a Christian environment with age mates following all home football games.
- The YMCA hosts a Ladies Day Out. Working with small businesses throughout Van Wert and surrounding communities, the YMCA provides a free venue for women owned small businesses to promote their products.
- The YMCA has partnered with Youth for Christ and the Kingdom Basketball Association. The teams practice and play their games at the YMCA. This program began in 2016 and has impacted hundreds of children lives.
- The YMCA partners with Thomas Edison and the Special Olympics and provide facilities for practice and games. Special Olympians are given free memberships to the YMCA. In 2022 this collaboration became a national initiative for all YMCA's.
- The YMCA provides free child watch for members, children are supervised in the care of an adult and certified STNA. This allows adults to work on their own mind, spirit and body, without worrying about the care of their children.
- The YMCA hosts Fun Days on days school is out of session for holidays. This allows a safe place for kids to come while their parents are at work.
- The YMCA is also very involved in the senior population in Van Wert and surrounding communities. Quality of life is very important for this age group and our goal is to reach as many seniors as possible and keep the cost as minimal as possible. The YMCA has over 300 registered SilverSneakers. The Silver Sneakers programs include certified senior specific trainers, land and water classes, workshops that include bone health, navigating Medicare/Medicaid, social security, fraud awareness, self-defense and numerous other workshops facilitated by local experts. For seniors who have spouses who don't qualify, we offer 50% discounts on those memberships.

- The YMCA collaborates with the Department of Jobs and Family Services and Ohio Means Jobs program. This collaboration provides a work site at the YMCA, Camp Clay and Hickory Sticks Golf Course. This allows teenagers and young adults the opportunity to work in a facility that provides adult supervision and teaches job skills. These individuals come from low income families and tend to struggle academically and in social skill development.
- The YMCA collaborates with Synergy Schools and works with the at risk population of students. Working together to both provide recreational and volunteerism opportunities for the youth.
- The YMCA in 2022 developed a free afterschool program for at risk youth , 2022 enrollment was 25 students who needed additional academic help, social skill development and adult mentors to guide healthy living and decision making.
- The YMCA is a partner in the Van Wert Libraries Get in the Game and Read program. This program focuses on getting children involved in staying healthy both physically and mentally.
- The YMCA and Hickory Sticks golf course opened the Frisbee golf/foot golf course to the Van Wert community free during the pandemic. Over the past 2 years over 700 participants have taken advantage of this free opportunity.
- The YMCA and Hickory Sticks golf course also hold a free golf clinic for children and this event has been well attended. There have been over 400 children who have participated in this free event.
- Throughout the winter we hold basketball tournaments every weekend. Other non-profits (9) in the Van Wert community received money from the door proceeds. Another way the YMCAs reaches out and supports other charities.
- Christmas time is also a busy period of collaborating with the community.
  - The YMCA is a collection site for the local coat drive
  - The YMCA collaborates with Lee Kinstle Chevy as a drop off site for the Toss a Toy program, that collects gifts for Van Wert youth.
  - police/fire department Teddy Bear Drive has a site at the YMCA
  - The YMCA raises money for the American Legion Care Package program.
  - The YMCA has held community Christmas activities throughout the years like, horse carriage rides, live bands on the front lawn and hot chocolate and cookies for kids.
- The YMCA collaborates with the VFW and had a Home Town Hero Free day. Recognizing all veterans with a free fun/fitness day.
- The YMCA is also very involved in the numerous daily community activities and fundraisers. The YMCA prides itself in being a leader in supporting the community through programs that build a healthy mind, spirit and body.

Below are some additional outreach programs and collaborations the YMCA is involved in to help the community through economic growth, quality of life and community enhancement.

- The YMCA conducted Outreach Yoga, this class worked with those suffering with PTSD
- The YMCA worked with the Humane Society to fundraise for supporting dollars for the animal shelter. These activities included kitten yoga and cash donations from joining fees of over \$1000.
- YMCA Healthy Kids Day. Free event held each year the last Saturdays in April
- YMCA free Kids Zone at the Van Wert County Fair
- Clothing drives for the Salvation Army
- The YMCA assisted the United Way with food deliveries to local schools during the pandemic
- YMCA has been involved in lunch program at Lincolnview Schools
- YMCA hosts the Red Cross Blood Mobile twice a year
- The YMCA participates and supports the flag program in the downtown area
- The YMCA participate in the Christmas light event at the fairgrounds
- The YMCA participates and support the downtown Chocolate walk
- The YMCA, Camp Clay and Hickory Sticks Golf Course are all active members of the Chamber of Commerce
- The YMCA and Hickory Sticks gives discounted golf rates to any non-profit holding golf tournament fundraiser. These not for Profits include but are not limited to DARE, Ohio City Volunteer Fire Department and Youth for Christ.
- The YMCA collaborated with Youth for Christ and held a New Year's lock-in. This service provides a safe place for parents to leave their children while bringing in the new year.
- The YMCA is the physical education and health class location for local homeschool programs. This allows parents who choose to homeschool their children to have physical education requirements for the state of Ohio met.
- The YMCA works closely with the local schools and provides free training site for off season team sports, spinning room and pool.
- The YMCA collaborate with local churches and Fountain Inn to provide an activity site for homeless families and individuals.

- The YMCA Camp Clay provides free access to splash pad and Aqua Park for all nursing home residents. This allows some fun for seniors and helps bring back some wonderful memories.
- The YMCA has provided free personal training for residents at Homestead Village (subsidized housing for seniors). These individuals have limited access to transportation and/or are restricted to the facility.
- The YMCA donates Y passes, Aqua Park passes, free rounds of golf and program passes weekly to different charities and fundraisers.
- The YMCA provides free indoor golf practice to Van Wert , Lincolnview and Crestview golf teams at the new golf simulators that were installed at Hickory Sticks.
- The YMCA Camp Clay hosts a free fishing derby at Lake Rotary, partnering with the Van Wert Peony Committee.