



HAPPENINGS

a newsletter for friends of the YMCA of Greater Houston



Youth Find Comfort in YMCA Apartment Outreach Program

By Alexa G. Valencia

School is out for the day and 12 year-old Preston Johnson runs rapidly through the Bayou Landing Apartments to unit 17 for some after school fun. "I like the games," he says after catching his breath while joining a group of others for games and good times.

Preston is one of 50 children who benefit from the South Central Family YMCA outreach program at the Bayou Landing Apartments.

Originally, the YMCA provided swim lessons at the apartments. When former property manager, Thelma Guzman, saw the success of the program, she asked the Y to provide more activities for the children. "We surveyed the property and built programs around the needs of the residents," said Kimberly Chretien, South Central Family YMCA Program Director. With support from the Partners Campaign, the program launched in October 2006.

If it wasn't for this [program], the kids here would be running around, fighting."

Currently, the complex provides the YMCA with two apartment units where kids and families participate in after school tutoring, bible study, parenting classes, teen leadership activities and a gang prevention program at no cost.

Temika Garrison, a tenant and working mom, lives next to the outreach site. Everyday, she witnesses the impact the Y program makes on the children.

"When I first came to see the apartments, I noticed they had the Y here and it was one of the reasons why I moved in. I wanted something like this for my child. If it wasn't for



Thanks to the financial support of the Partners campaign, the YMCA outreach program at the Bayou Landing Apartments has benefited residents like Temika Garrison and Preston Johnson.

this [program], the kids here would be running around, fighting," said Garrison. "These kids need more eyes on them; their parents work and some kids stay home alone."

In all, the YMCA of Greater Houston has 19 apartment outreach sites making YMCA programs and services more accessible for families in need.

The week of Easter, site coordinator Anna Paul planned Easter games and activities for the children. "They love to color; it keeps them busy," she said. Paul is a Sugar Land elementary school teacher who commutes to town every



During Holy Week, the children enjoyed Easter games and treats.

afternoon to mentor youth at Bayou Landing.

Healthy snacks like bottled water and low-fat chips are provided after a good game of basketball at the complex. "It's good exercise for them and it helps them learn how to work as a team," said Paul.

"Building strong kids, families and communities is what the YMCA is all about and this is just another way we fulfill our mission," said Mark Boudreaux, South Central Family YMCA Executive Director. Boudreaux hopes to add GED and aerobic classes during the summer to provide additional support for the apartment residents.



Monday through Friday, from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., the YMCA apartment outreach program at Bayou Landing provides after school fun for youth.



Inside Scoop

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Amen! Ricardo Patterson and Debreunna Brown of the Texas Medical Center YMCA Theatre Under The Stars Program delighted everyone during the 25th Annual YMCA Prayer Breakfast with a special scripture reading.

Dear Friends,

Thanks to your generosity, the YMCA of Greater Houston has made history.



For the first time ever, we have surpassed more than \$5.2 million in donations

to our Partners Campaign. While the final count is not in, I can tell you what those millions of dollars represent; we will be able to help enrich the lives of more children and families than ever before.

The 2007 Partners Campaign united volunteers, donors and participants in the opportunity to support children, families and communities to tell their individual stories. At the YMCA, those stories are woven together with the threads of **empowered families, children who value equality and integrity and communities where each person is appreciated for their unique gifts and abilities.**

As Board Chair, I am proud to have been a part of many wonderful YMCA stories already this year, including the 25th Annual YMCA **Prayer Breakfast**

and the dedication of the **Thelma Lay Anderson Family YMCA** in Alvin. The opening of the **new West Orem Family YMCA** at the end of April provides even more opportunities for new chapters to be written in the lives of the people we serve.

As we look forward to this summer, it is worth noting that **thousands of Houston-area children will be cared for, mentored and nurtured** in the safe hands of our YMCA volunteers and staff in summer day camp, resident camp, aquatics and youth sports programs. These YMCA programs allow memories to be made, character to be developed and lives to be changed for the better.

Once again, thank you for your tremendous support of this year's Partners Campaign. **Your gifts are proof that there are angels among us** who are willing to make an investment in the children in our community.

Sincerely,

Paul Van Wagenen
Board Chair



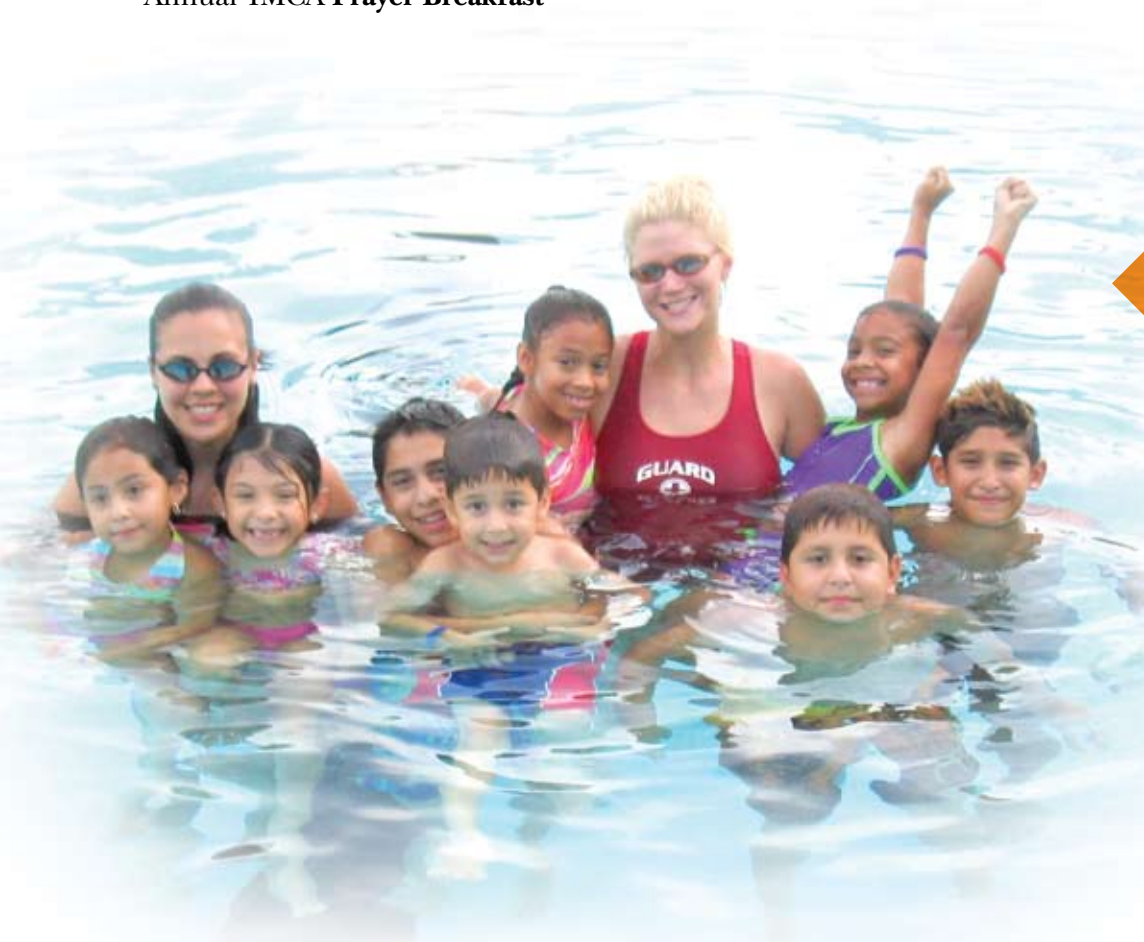
Donor Profile

Ron and Maggie Burleson Corporate Printing

"You can't expose kids to too many positive values," says Ron Burleson, owner of Corporate Printing, "If we don't invest now to build strong kids, we'll pay later."

Maggie and Ron Burleson have been around the YMCA most of their life, though not directly involved in programs or services. While printing brochures, flyers and marketing pieces for the YMCA, Ron and Maggie learn a lot by reading the material. The Burleson's support the YMCA financially because they believe in the YMCA's mission. "The YMCA appeals to many people, but its mission and Christian values are what set the YMCA apart from other organizations," says Maggie. "I'm amazed at how many kids and families are going in and out of the YMCA each time we drive by."

"We are fortunate that we could afford to send our kids to YMCA sports programs and summer camp. We give so other kids can enjoy the activities that the Y offers. **Kids need positive programs that help keep kids out of trouble.**" The Burleson's are grateful for the experiences their own kids had at YMCA Camp Cullen. "Our daughter loved the relationships she developed with her cabin-mates and her camp counselors. She admired and looked up to her counselor and wanted to be like her."



Baytown Family YMCA

For the past three years, the Baytown Family YMCA has been providing **free swimming and water safety lessons** to children and families who otherwise could not afford them. Last year, 21 children and three adults took part in the swim lesson outreach program, which is funded by donations to the Partners Campaign and through Community Development Block Grants. "Our goal is to teach the kids to swim, keep them in the program and eventually train them to become lifeguards," says Donna Bowdoin, Baytown Family YMCA Senior Program Director. "This is a great thing. I truly believe the kids would not have an opportunity to learn to be safe in the water if we were not doing this."

Partners: Your Donations at Work

We are so excited to share that with your help, since 2004, the YMCA has increased its Partners goal by 25 percent!

In 2004, the Y set its sights on raising \$3.8 million ... in 2007, the campaign just rolled over \$5 million.

What is driving this growth? The need in the Greater Houston area for the kind of impact the YMCA makes on the lives of children, families and the community. By giving to the Y, you help bring opportunities to kids and families throughout our neighborhoods. The YMCA is pleased to share early reports of the impact of your gifts. Thank You.

Tommy Parker and Robert McFadden
2007 YMCA Association Partners Co-Chairs

\$5.2 million



78%

Youth Development
\$3,900,000

7%

Family Programs
\$350,000

15%

Community Outreach
\$750,000

Here's an overview of the YMCA programs that are offered throughout communities and neighborhoods all over our city.

Youth Development

Empowering and developing children is one of the most important goals of the YMCA of Greater Houston. To this end, we **have devoted more than 78% of all funds raised in our Partners Campaign to youth development.**

In all YMCA children's programs, caring adults and volunteers create an asset-rich environment in



which children learn and practice core values while growing healthy and strong. YMCA AfterSchool ensures a safe place full of creative, yet constructive activities. Our youth sports programs emphasize family involvement, team building, as well as individual development and a positive self-image. In our aquatics programs, the focus is not just on teaching children to be safe around water, but imparting lessons in self-confidence as well. Our day and sleepover camps allow kids to make new friends while growing in self-reliance and an appreciation of teamwork.

At the YMCA, teens are viewed as assets to our community — with abilities and leadership to offer. Through programs such as Youth and Government and the Teen Values Conference, **teens are given opportunities to enhance positive life skills, leading to wise and healthy choices.**



Community Outreach

Inspiring dreams and encouraging a new vision for the community is foundational to the YMCA. The Y views each child as a resource to be developed, as an individual with hopes and aspirations and as a leader in the making. We believe that an environment where caring adults engage kids in activities that build self esteem, teach leadership skills and instill core values **helps kids to make wise choices, commit to learning and avoid high-risk behavior.**

Apartment outreach programs bring the Y into communities long overlooked for their potential. In partnership, apartment owners, YMCA staff and apartment residents build communities where children are safe, young people reach their fullest potential and families flourish. Currently offered in 19 complexes throughout Houston, more than 40,000 families are strengthened through these on-site outreach centers.

Family Programs

Today's families are under great pressure. The YMCA offers a place where families can come together in a positive environment, **strengthening the lines of communication and growing together.** When we are able to build stronger families, we ensure healthier kids, adults and communities. The Y offers programs that engage parents with their children, and encourages intergenerational connections. Our "Membership for All" plan welcomes all households, regardless of income, to be a part of the YMCA family. A portion of our Partners donations goes to ensure that the YMCA is available for all families, regardless of their ability to pay.



Students strike a pose during their weekly karate lesson

at the Gregory Lincoln Education Center as part of the Downtown YMCA's AfterSchool program. The program is funded, in part, by the Partners Campaign.



Children enrolled in the Lake Houston Family YMCA's AfterSchool program

take a break from fun and games to smile for the camera. Nearly 50% of the Lake Houston Family YMCA's Partners donations support after school care.



YMCA of the Greater Houston Area
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Our Mission: To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. We strive to turn no one away due to inability to pay.

25th Annual YMCA Prayer Breakfast

The 25th Annual Prayer Breakfast was held on April 5th for YMCA staff, volunteers and friends to join together and celebrate Holy Week. Downtown YMCA member and executive director of Mission Houston Steve Capper shared an inspirational message with the group. The collections from the prayer breakfast offering benefitted the Cossaboom YMCA Teen Media Project to help educate youth in music, audio and visual engineering and more.



Events



Official Renaming Ceremony of the Post Oak YMCA

Jack Trotter and his daughter Barbara Collins celebrated with the Y family the re-naming of the Post Oak YMCA to the Trotter Family YMCA on March 27th. Jack has been a long-time friend and benefactor, and was one of the founders of the Post Oak YMCA. Plans for a renovated facility are underway and a new Women's Center is already open.

2007 Achievers Scholarship Award Recipients

On March 16, 13 high-school students were awarded \$1,000 scholarships for their academic excellence and active participation in the YMCA Achievers program. Achievers is a Y program that assists high school students in pursuing a higher education. This year, Achievers provided over 120 participants with several opportunities like college tours, SAT/ ACT preparation, mentoring and more.

