



## The YMCA Empowers Families

By Laura Garza

Eight year-old Jake Price's summer days begin early in the morning when he is dropped off at Trinity Baptist Church, a San Jacinto Family YMCA Day Camp site.

"It's fun and I don't have to stay home," said Jake.

His mom makes her way to work confident that her son is in a safe and caring place. This is Jake's third year in day camp; he has become an excellent swimmer, bonded with his camp counselors and developed his character.

"I know the five core values — caring, respect, responsibility, honesty and ... faith," Jake proudly stated.

However, Jake would have never experienced the rewards of day camp, if it weren't for the YMCA's Partners Campaign, which provides financial assistance to those who could otherwise not afford to participate in YMCA programs.

Last summer, more than 65,000 children participated in YMCA Day Camp thanks in part to generous Partners Campaign donors.

Chris Price, Jake's mom, is a single parent. Her oldest son, 18 year-old Cody, participated in YMCA programs through his 5th grade year; however, when Ms. Price suddenly experienced some drastic life changes, it was difficult for her to meet the financial responsibilities originally made for a two-income household. She believed she could no longer afford to take her boys to the Y.

"For families who find themselves trying to survive on one income with commitments made for dual incomes, times get rough and sometimes seem hopeless. I was there," said Price.

After searching for other child care options, Ms. Price went back to the Y. Dorothy Spicer, a San Jacinto Family YMCA staff member, sensed Price's frustration and suggested that she apply for financial assistance. The YMCA strives to turn no one away due to inability to pay.

"I did so but with very little hope of being approved. I had a high mortgage and debts on a single income," said Price. She was also reluctant because she had never asked for financial assistance. "My pride was getting in the way as I was always one to help others." One phone call later, Jake was making new friends at the Y and mom was at peace.

The YMCA promotes healthy families with programs that serve all ages, with an emphasis on helping every child develop positive values, a commitment to service and motivation to learn.

Chris Price appreciates YMCA donors' support. "Not only do their efforts and contributions help parents in need, they also benefit all the children who deserve the awesome care that the Y provides; it's been such a blessing," she said.



San Jacinto Family YMCA day camper Jake Price plays with new friends at the Trinity Baptist Church. The church is one of two day camp sites of the YMCA in Pasadena. This summer, the center mentored and cared for 200 children.

*"For these families who find themselves trying to survive on one income...times get rough and seem hopeless."*



Above: Chris and Jake Price benefit from the financial assistance provided by the Partners Campaign.

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YMCA Association Board Chair-Elect Beth Shea, YMCA President & CEO Clark Baker and children from the Northwest Family YMCA Day Camp pose with Giff Nielsen, holding a \$75,000 check for the Y.

# Dear Friends,

*More than 82,000 children came through the doors of the YMCA of Greater Houston this summer.* That's more than the



number of seats in Reliant Stadium. That translates into tens of thousands of children

who, through their participation in YMCA programs like day camp, resident camp, aquatics and youth sports, developed the personal qualities they need to grow up to be healthy, caring and responsible. The YMCA brings individuals, groups, organizations and neighborhoods together to form communities that support the success of all children.

Thanks to our generous supporters, volunteers, members and staff, we have enjoyed much success over the summer: the dedication and opening of the West Orem Family YMCA facility and the Cossaboom Family YMCA sound studio, coupled with the achievements of our new YMCA Water Wise swim safety

program. YWater Wise joined several community partners to teach drowning prevention to more than 4,000 children, most of them from low-income families who would not otherwise have access to swim safety instruction. The YMCA ensures that each community we serve has access to diverse programs and activities that meet its needs.

We could do none of this without the dedication of all of our board and program volunteers. If you are not already involved at your local YMCA, I encourage you to join us as we work together to encourage, empower and inspire all people to reach their fullest potential in spirit, mind and body. Our YMCA offers volunteers the opportunity to participate in a community that is based on the development of healthy relationships.

As summer ends and children head back to school, the YMCA will continue to help shape the lives of young people. I encourage you to think about who was there for you when you were growing up. At the YMCA, you could be that person for someone else.

Sincerely,

**Paul Van Wagenen, Board Chair**



## Donor Spotlight

**Bob Perry**

The excitement is building in North Galveston where the community anxiously awaits the opening of the new Perry Family

YMCA. The center will officially open its doors on October 20, 2007 and will provide area children and families a great place to grow, learn and stay healthy for years to come.

Since 1995, the former North Galveston YMCA was a storefront location, operating its programs out of nearby schools, churches and parks. "The Perry family is honored to aid in the growth of young people in the community," said Bob Perry, the Texas homebuilder behind Perry Homes. "The Perry YMCA is in an area where the population is underserved with thousands of youth without a safe and notable place at which to learn and grow. When I was made aware of the need, I was honored to help serve these families," he said.

Mr. Perry was an athlete in his youth and remains active today. He believes that developing the body through activity is an essential avenue to develop both one's mind and character. "The YMCA teaches kids things like teamwork. It offers programs that help them build character which will benefit both the child and society in the future," he said.

For the past 20 years, Mr. Perry has supported other groups including orphanages. He has been a long-time supporter of the University of Houston and is also involved in an effort to help employ disabled veterans.

"It is both humbling and an honor to be a very small part of the YMCA's history in America and the greater Houston area."

*Aerial photos of the construction progress of the new Perry Family YMCA, scheduled to open in October 2007.*



## YMCA Beneficiary of Roger Clemens-Giff Nielsen Day of Golf for Kids



KHOU Channel 11 Sports Director Giff Nielsen presented the YMCA with a \$75,000 check as a recipient of this year's Roger Clemens-Giff Nielsen Day of Golf for Kids tournament. The charity golf tournament was hosted by The Redstone Companies at Shadow Hawk Golf Club. The proceeds benefited The Roger Clemens Foundation, The First Tee Houston/Redstone and the YMCA of Greater Houston.

YMCA Board Member David Shindeldecker, of the Redstone Companies, has helped us with much support over the years and we thank him for it.



# YMCA Camps Help Heal Youth



The activities at Camp Hamman Ranch lifted up Sam Knodel during a difficult time. He enjoyed the outdoor fun, developed new skills and made new friends.



YMCA Camp Cullen counselor Justin Jackson, a former camper himself, helps teen onto the new Hammill Ropes Course.



The Hammill Foundation helped the YMCA provide a new ropes course for campers this summer. The course is now one of the most popular activities at Camp Cullen and helps youth build self-confidence.

Dear YMCA Camp Hamman Ranch Staff,  
I can't tell you how happy I am that Sam has a place he can go where he is so happy and that embodies the values we want to encourage in our children.

My son, Samuel Knodel, attended session 7 this year. This was his first summer camp experience, and of course, I was nervous until I met the staff. Instantly, I knew he was going to love it. When he got home, he was actually glowing.

The staff has really helped Samuel turn around from some hard times. He is a good boy, but has suffered much trauma in his life. Sam witnessed two tragedies. We did the therapy thing, but as you grow, you have to relive those experiences and deal with them time and time again. He was doing only so well in life, but not joyful. A child's life should be full of joy, not pain.

Sending Sam to camp was probably the best decision I ever made. Because of everyone's hard work, Sam has turned a corner. He is happy and doing wonderfully.

Your camp gave him a place to be a child, to bond and just to be happy. It also gave him confidence. Thank you!

Sam gained more healing from one week at camp than he ever accomplished with any counselor he had met with before. It helped him find himself again.

He still knows everyone's name and talks to me about them almost everyday- where they are from, what they are good at and even says good things about the food!

All your efforts gave him something to look forward to, knowing that no matter what is going on in his life, he will still get a chance to return to his "perfect place."

Sam is already talking about how he will help sponsor children to go to Camp Hamman Ranch in the future.

Thank you for all that you do. Your hard work has given my son the spark he needed to love life again.

Norma Briggs



Houston's largest back-to-school supply drive, YMCA Operation Backpack, kicked off on July 24th at a City Hall press conference. Last year, the YMCA of Greater Houston collected nearly 8,000 backpacks and 100,000 school supplies for children in need. More than 30 school districts will benefit from these donations thanks to generous Houstonians and with the help of partners like 89.3 KSBJ, ABC-13, Toyota, the Woodlands Development Corporation and Devon Energy. Local churches of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston also served as collection sites, as did the Houston Home Show, who chose the YMCA as its beneficiary this year.

## Helping Kids Make the Grade! YMCA To Assist 25,000 Children In Need



## Making Families Water Wise this Summer

This summer, the YMCA launched the Water Wise campaign, leading the effort to prevent drownings in Houston. Our partnerships with Texas Children's Hospital and the Houston Apartment Association helped raise water safety and drowning prevention awareness through publications and outdoor public service announcements.

YMCA water safety experts also visited with civic groups while the aquatics team traveled to several apartment locations to teach residents basic swim instruction and rescue techniques.



Photo by Erin Trieb



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Above right: The YMCA aquatics team with the Toyota Sequoia donated by Mr. Toby Hines for the YMCA Water Wise program.

Above left: Houston Apartment Association President-Elect John Ridgway, Houston City Council Member Jarvis Johnson, Lee Vela of Clear Channel Communications and the M.D. Anderson YMCA Family day campers unveil the campaign billboards at the Y Water Wise kick-off.

Below: An E.A. Smith Family YMCA swim instructor teaches a day camper how to float.  
Photo by Erin Trieb



**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.

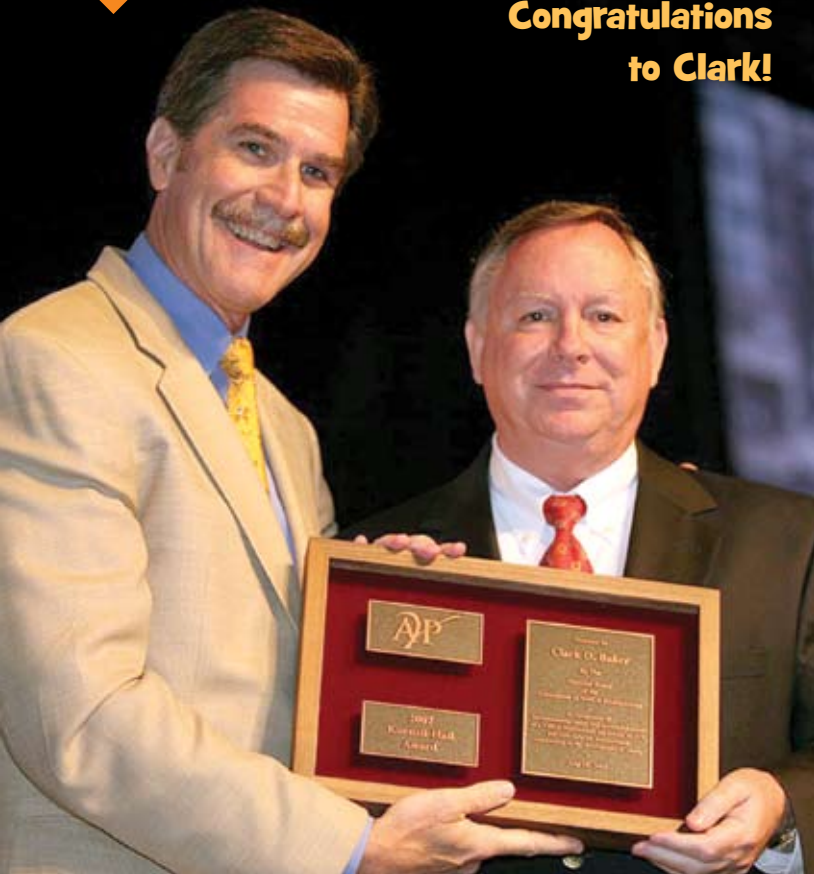
## Events

In July, the Association of YMCA Professionals (AYP) honored YMCA of Greater Houston President and CEO Clark Baker with the Hall Kinsley Lifetime Achievement Award. YMCA of Middle Tennessee President and CEO Journey Johnson presented Clark with the award.

It's AYP's highest honor and recognizes staff commitment and achievements, their volunteer development, work of a national scope and excellence in one's career.



### Congratulations to Clark!



The Cossaboom Family YMCA celebrated the opening of its new sound studio with a ribbon cutting ceremony on Thursday, May 24th with 60 community leaders, staff, and volunteers in attendance. The studio gives teens the opportunity to learn an interesting and rewarding trade. Through this program, the Cossaboom Family YMCA will help area students receive academic credit, motivate teens to pursue a career in audio engineering and develop their talents to their highest potential.

The new West Orem Family YMCA celebrated its dedication on May 17th. The center started in 2002 as an outreach site in the South Post Oak/ South Main area. Thanks to Rev. Kirbyjon Caldwell, the Windsor Village United Methodist Church and other donors, a new YMCA facility opened in April 2007 and now offers more resources for area families.

