



The Milwaukee Y ... FOR A BETTER US

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

August 31, 2016

Dear Friend of the Milwaukee Y,

These last several months have challenged our country as we were affected by tragic events which left many of us in a state of disbelief. We mourned with those in Orlando, Dallas, Baton Rouge and the Twin Cities and are grateful to our YMCA colleagues across the country who played pivotal leadership roles in these respective communities – and supported community members shaken by these events.

Today, we join so many of you who seek to understand and grapple with recent events in Milwaukee – particularly in the Sherman Park neighborhood. I am reminded of the YMCA's international cause to strengthen the foundations of community through youth development, social responsibility, and healthy living. The Milwaukee Y's urban mission is to enrich children, youth, and families throughout the neighborhoods of Milwaukee, and it is firmly at the forefront of our daily work – seven days a week.

The city we call home is 170 years old - and the Milwaukee Y has been an anchor here for 158 of those years – firmly rooted in our core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility. We do this through our organizational commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity which we believe ultimately leads to children and youth feeling safe, welcome, and engaged in meaningful and healthy activities that increase the likelihood of reaching their full potential. We intentionally carry on with this work as we recognize that our youth programming and mentoring are more critical now than ever before.

Despite what is happening around us, the Milwaukee Y along with so many other organizations are providing opportunities for the community to be successful. This summer at the Milwaukee Y:

- More than 9,000 young children, kids, and teens had safe, healthy places to grow, play, and learn
- More than 95,000 free, nutritious meals were served to community youth
- More than 1,300 kids and families learned life-saving drowning prevention skills
- More than 1,200 day campers practiced reading, math, science everyday through the Y's summer learning loss remediation programming
- More than 450 backpacks filled with school supplies were given to children and youth in Lindsay Heights neighborhood just two weeks ago
- More than 125 African-American youth are on-track to graduate high school and go on to a two or four-year college through the Y's Black Achievers program

We are encouraged to know that our stakeholders join with us in the future days and months as we remain steadfast in living our mission to strengthen the foundations of the Milwaukee community and the diverse neighborhoods we humbly serve.

In this climate of unrest in America's cities, we will continue to create safe and nurturing spaces, life-changing programming, and community partnerships. It is the reason we exist. It is the reason we have always existed.

Healing comes from working together and to being authentically dedicated to creating a better us. It is our hope that the Milwaukee Y can serve as a larger resource in this time of healing and recovery. Our young people can and must be the embodiment of hope, peace and wisdom and as we move forward together, we hope to achieve just that.

Sincerely,

Jack Takerian
Interim CEO
YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee

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