



# READY, SET, THRIVE

IMPACT REPORT 2015



## FOOD = FUEL

Without access to foods that nourish the body and mind, studies show that kids and teens may struggle academically, socially or emotionally. Through generous support from Cargill and UHG, the YGTC and partner Chef Marshall O'Brien tackle this issue by offering healthy meals and interactive lessons on nutrition.

Every day, the Harold Mezile North Community YMCA provides well-balanced meals to fuel kids for success. Beyond addressing food insecurity, this Healthy Living program also seeks to educate young people and build a foundation for healthy lifestyles.

Part of this curriculum incorporates indoor vertical garden space that allows kids to get involved in the planting and harvesting while learning about the benefits of making the right food choices. As well, they have the opportunity to play a role in selecting the featured fruit and vegetable each month.

Through this unique, hands-on experience, young people are both fueled to thrive today and prepared to thrive throughout adulthood.

Energy begins with potential and, once activated, requires fuel to sustain it. Beacons and School Success, Youth Intervention Services, and the Harold Mezile North Community YMCA Youth & Teen Enrichment Center provide safe environments that support young people in feeding and positively channeling these energies.

Hands-on experiences—whether “stretch activities” like riding minibikes or dynamic classroom learning—help harness this energy potential within our young people, activating their natural curiosity in the world around them. Feeding this energy is essential to creating tomorrow’s community leaders.

For our young people to become these leaders, however, we believe they must first see themselves as leaders. To this end, youth are always at the table to help improve our programs and suggest new experiences and activities. This opportunity for youth to “buy” stake in programs not only makes them more invested but also gives them a forum to develop collaboration and leadership skills.

The impacts highlighted here align with the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities’ vision to “serve relentlessly with our community until all can thrive in each stage of life.” What’s more, these programs seek to develop vigorous young leaders who recognize the potential greatness within themselves and all those around them.

## thrive

(v.) to grow or develop  
**vigorously**

## vigorous

(adj.) strong, healthy,

## full of energy

*Met R 16/21*

# DISCOVER OUR IMPACT!

## Youth Intervention Services

Youth Intervention Services offers a platform of supportive services that target young people (up to age 23) experiencing barriers as a result of homelessness or involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems.



## Beacons/ School Success

The Minneapolis Beacons Network and St. Paul's School Success programs transform public schools into active youth centers, offering free enrichment programs after school and in the summer that encourage youth to become lifelong learners and leaders.



## Harold Mezile North Community YMCA Youth & Teen Enrichment Center

The Harold Mezile North Community YMCA Youth & Teen Enrichment Center is the nation's first youth-only YMCA, offering engaging and innovative programs that work to build healthy habits early while eliminating disparities that affect the communities we serve.



4,847

Young people experiencing homelessness were connected to housing, food and YMCA professionals



376,

Healthy meals are



95%

Of young people in Y programs say they have an adult to talk to when needed



37,000

Physical activity hours

## Supporting Youth in Crisis

## Promoting Healthy

4,700

youth experience homelessness each night in Minnesota

75%

of homeless youth are involved in the foster care or the juvenile justice system

92%

of elementary schools do not provide daily physical education



000

and snacks served



5,294

Young people are engaged in high quality YMCA programs



455

Water safety and youth swimming lessons



108,000

Academic program hours; including STEM focused classes

oting  
y Living

## Eliminating the Opportunity Gap

9,000

people in Minnesota visit food shelves each day

1/3

of African-American, Hispanic and Native American students in MN test at grade level in Reading and Math

219,211

Minnesota youth are alone and unsupervised during after-school hours

# RESPONSIBILITY SPOTLIGHT

**NANCY NYAKERI**

*Youth Intervention Services*

**“We work so hard to help youth see a brighter future.”**

**—Nancy**

Nancy Nyakeri first engaged with Youth Intervention Services when transitioning out of foster care, connecting immediately with Elements of Transition. As part of this program, she advocated to representatives at the Capitol on behalf of youth in foster care. She also mentored others and helped deliver a curriculum to social workers, youth agencies, foster parents and foster youth around the state focusing on best practices in supporting youth in transition out of foster care.

In 2015, Nancy was accepted to serve with the Sioux YMCA Initiative at the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.

There, Nancy helped implement the Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH) curriculum, the #1 childhood health promotion and obesity prevention program in the nation.

Nancy now works as a Youth Development Staff within Youth Intervention Services and continues to help young people build the skills necessary to lead healthy and independent lives.

**Thrive on, Nancy!**

## CANOE DIG IT?

Seven years ago, two siblings were placed in separate foster homes and, over time, lost contact. But when they both arrived at the Wilderness Inquiry canoe launch for a group expedition down the Mississippi River, they recognized each other immediately.

This surprise family reunion started as an annual service adventure hosted by Wilderness Inquiry and YMCA Youth Intervention Services, sponsored by Heartland Realty and Courtyard Marriot Hotels. This year, fifty-four adventurers embarked on an urban canoe journey down the Mississippi River, starting at the Brooklyn Park canoe launch and ending at Boom Island, stopping off at the Mississippi River Fund to help restore butterfly and bee habitats.

For many youth, this voyage was their first. But the team environment that’s created in sharing this new experience helps build strong, healthy relationships, whether with long-lost siblings, peers or positive adult mentors. (This experience makes an equally deep impact on the adult volunteers, too.)



## POSITIVE MOTOR-VATIONS

Since its creation in 1969, the National Youth Project Using Motorbikes (NYPUM) has grown into a powerful, nationwide youth program that incentivizes positive change through access to weekly minibike riding lessons.

To participate, youth ages 10 to 18 must first create a personal goal plan, maintain attendance and good grades in school, and comply with any justice-related orders (when applicable). Once there, most youth find that the thrill of this new experience—and the promise of revisiting it—is motivation enough to make the small steps necessary to affect big change.

Integral to NYPUM's design is an essential mentoring component proven to be highly effective in supporting healthy decision-making. This new experience in shared, safe space helps build healthy relationships with peers and positive adult role models, making the program a powerful change agent. This summer, Brooklyn Park Police officers served as mentors.

When all lessons are complete, families, friends, supporters and community partners gather to watch the graduating riders show off their new skills at the annual NYPUM Rodeo, held at the end of each summer.

## NEED HELP? KNOW A YOUTH WHO DOES?



Call the Youth  
Resource Line  
8 AM-8 PM  
7 days/week

**(763) 493-3052**



## LADDERS FOR LEADERS

After Lily was moved up a grade to third grade, she had a hard time adjusting to the age difference between her and her classmates. Lunchtime was often the hardest, loneliest part of the day. Lily would regularly make up excuses to leave class, heading instead for the Beacons office. This behavioral pattern often got Lily in trouble with her teacher.

When a high school Beacons team member recognized Lily's natural leader instincts, he pulled her aside and gave her ideas for taking on leadership roles in class and Beacons, even among those who are older than her.

This small yet insightful act of recognition ignited Lily's imagination. She has since become a powerful and inspiring force in the program, helping not only the group leader but also her fellow students.

**“Beacons has helped  
me to feel good  
about  
myself.”**

**—Lily**



# WITNESS OUR IMPACT



**MEZILE CENTER**  
**northcommunityy.org**

Or visit <http://goo.gl/xt67y1>

**BEACONS**

**beaconsminneapolis.org**



Or visit <http://goo.gl/OGXw2y>



**YOUTH INTERVENTION  
SERVICES**

**ymcayouthintervention.org**

Or visit <http://goo.gl/mJHpUr>

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

