



CONNECT TO THE CAUSE



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT TO THE HERNANDO COUNTY YMCA

MARCH 2020

WORTH THE HYPE

At the Y, we love to share stories that we get to witness every day so that you can better understand the tremendous impact your donations and involvement in the Y make on our members every day! Six year old Gracie is one of those stories.

Gracie is homeschooled and suffers from anxiety. Her parents wanted to help her socialize and learn better coping skills, so they checked out the Y. They fell in love with the branch and all that we had to offer particularly our homeschool program, HYPE, which they thought would be a good place to for Gracie to socialize. A friend had told them about our scholarship program which could make the membership and programs like HYPE affordable to them.

The first day of homeschool class, which is a mix of physical activity, science and art, did not start off so well for Gracie. Even though her mom was right outside the room and she could see her through the window, Gracie became overwhelmed with fear and anxiety and began to cry and shut down. After some time, a hug from mom and a pep talk from the instructor, Gracie joined the group and slowly started to let her guard down. She was interacting with the other kids and laughing. Mom Michele said, "As I looked through the window at my shy little girl laughing and talking with other children, my heart just exploded with joy and I knew the Y was right where our family needed to be."

Gracie made it through the first class with only a few more tears but by the time pick up came it was her mom and the instructor who were sharing tears of joy. Michele shared some of her thoughts after the first class, "In just two hours at the Y you have unlocked a part of our little girl we weren't sure would ever open and we can't thank you enough for making this all possible." The blonde little girl smiling on the left in the photo is Gracie at her third homeschool class. Her mom was out swimming in the pool, because Gracie told her it was ok to go. Without you, your generosity and open hearts, kids like Gracie might not find a way to unlock their potential inside. We can never say thank you enough.



WAYS TO PARTNER

Did you know there are many ways you can give to your local Y? How about gifting stock, matching gifts through your employer and more. For more information visit ymcasuncoast.org/give-better-us or contact Amber Slusser at aslusser@suncoastymca.org or 352-688-9622.

TAKE A TOUR

If you would like a tour of our community YMCA or would like to know more information about our programs and services that are strengthening the community, contact Amber Slusser, Executive Director, at 352-688-9622 or aslusser@suncoastymca.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Breakfast with bunny – April 4th
9AM-11AM

Healthy Kids day- April 18th
9AM-12PM

Muffins with Mom- May 9th
10-11:30AM

Donuts with Dad- June 20th
10-11:30AM

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT



With more than 20 years of experience in non-profit leadership roles and community engagement, Melissa Kehler is a perfect fit for the YMCA Advisory Council. Melissa moved to Hernando County in 2019 from Upstate New York where she served in many different roles for many years at the YMCA Tri-Valley. Melissa's experience with the YMCA started back when she was a baby in the YMCA's swim program in Utica, New York in the 60's. Melissa has never stopped supporting the YMCA in one capacity or another, so when she moved to Florida one of her first stops was the Hernando County YMCA to see where her time, talent and treasure would fit in. Melissa met Amber, our executive director, and hit it off right away. Amber invited Melissa to a meeting to get to know her better and once Melissa heard all the great things that were going on, she wanted to get involved right away. Amber mentioned that the advisory council had an opening and that Melissa would be a great fit.

Melissa loves to serve on the Advisory Council because she gets to work alongside the other members who are quickly becoming her new family. She feels that she can be part of the positive change for her community. Melissa encourages YOU to get involved in one way or another because the YMCA is a positive and encouraging place that has something for everyone. The YMCA truly makes stronger communities where people flourish at their own pace.

SILENT HEROES OF SUMMER

For kids summer is an exciting time to take a break from the pressures of school and just be a kid. For parents though this can be a stressful time of year worrying about care for their children. The Y offers a variety of summer camps at our school age sites as well as at our branches and we pride ourselves on ensuring we are able to serve as many kids and families as possible.

Our summer camp kids get to participate in various activities like, swimming, crafts, science, and sports, while creating lifelong friendships and learning life skills. One of our campers Jacob recently told us about his camp experience here at the Y this past summer: "When my mom first read me the different themes for summer camp last year I was not too happy about some of them but she said I had to go to all them. I was kind of nervous too because I didn't know if I was going to know any of the kids at camp but after the first week I met my new best friend Ryker! We don't go to the same school but we have play dates now and we got to play soccer at the Y on the same team! I'm so glad I got to go to camp at the Y and I actually liked all the weeks and so happy to have my new best friend! The summer before I came to the Y wasn't so good. We had to go to different people's houses everyday while my mom was at work and it made me nervous a lot. I couldn't wait for summer to end, but now I want it to be summer all the time so I can be at the Y all the time!" Without sponsorship from donors like you Jacob and many other children in Hernando County would not have a safe place to be during the summer and would miss out on so many opportunities to help them flourish as individuals. Thank you for being the silent heroes to these children.



SUPPORTING OUR CAUSE

Every year it is our goal to impact as many as we can that want to be healthier, who battle chronic disease, who need a safe place to go after school, and who need to be safe in and around water. If you know of an individual or business that would be interested in connecting to our cause and giving back to our community, please contact Amber Slusser at aslusser@suncoastymca.org.

ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Aaron Ciccarello
Cherie Creamer
Joel Fritton
Seton Hengesbach
Mike Irvin
Herb Johnson
Melissa Kehler
Jennifer Lopez
Manny Nieves
Tobey Phillips
Derek Saunier
Joseph Sotomayor
Ashley Thomas
Gerry Whitted
Lucinda Yoder

MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

Your support of the YMCA of the Suncoast will help our community learn, grow and thrive for generations to come. For more information on planned giving, please contact Ben Prewitt, Philanthropy Advisor at bprewitt@suncoastymca.org or (727) 467-9622.