



Telegram Photo

Digging for the YMCA

Despite chilly, misty weather Sunday noon, 150-175 persons turned out for ground-breaking ceremonies for the new Garden City Family YMCA facility and swimming pool. Breaking ground with a single shovel at the site of what will be the front door of the facility are two of the city responsible for the success of the project. That's Cliff Mayo at the left and Carlos Spikes, Mayo is the current YMCA president and he headed the capital fund drive for the pool and facility. Spikes is a long-time board member and immediate past president. Construction is now under way. Site is in northeast Garden City, across the street from Jennie Wilson.



2022

Year of Champions



2022 YMCA Champions Book CLIFFORD MAYO

Every year we select a person to dedicate our YEAR OF CHAMPIONS. In 2022, Clifford Mayo was the recipient of this honor. Clifford was one of our three founding fathers for the YMCA and passed away this year.

Please join me as we recognize Clifford Mayo as the 2023 YMCA Champion!



With his passing in 2022, it was a simple choice to dedicate our 2022 YMCA Champions Book to Clifford Mayo. What a GREAT man. I first encountered Clifford when I was a little kiddo running around the YMCA. I got placed on his son's youth basketball team. Steve Mayo was my Coach, and his sister, Susan, was on our team. When I first started as the CEO in 2000, Clifford and his wife, Pat, came in to visit with me. This was a great meeting! That's when I first knew that Clifford loved to tell stories. I would cherish those moments when he'd talk about the YMCA in the early days and the meetings they had. Our YMCA Champions Book last year was dedicated to Dick and Karin Henkle, so Clifford told me about the time Dick brought his weapons to a YMCA meeting. Through the years, Clifford would always make it a point to visit with me whenever he saw me. Whether it be at public events, over the phone, or a stop in the office when his wife was here working out for water aerobics. I loved visiting with him. I will miss those stories and his love for K-State. We would always harass each other about that. Now, let me tell you the real reason Clifford is such a GREAT man! Clifford, along with Bryce Roderick and Carlos Spikes started the YMCA. In fact, where the YMCA sits today was his farm ground. Our building was on the edge of town, and a ditch ran right through where Center Street sits. It was crazy seeing the pictures. What's even crazier is his story. He told me the first meeting he had with the "city folks" as he stated, didn't go too well. He said they called them, "A bunch of rednecks for trying to start this YMCA." I am here to tell you that it was an AMAZING idea, and to see how the YMCA has catalyzed our community is even better. I know Clifford is just beaming up there in heaven with his K-State jacket and hat on, cheering for his beloved Wildcats and our YMCA! We will forever be grateful for his intuition to get the YMCA off the ground and going in Garden City. Heaven received a GREAT man last year! THANK YOU, CLIFFORD! We are BEYOND grateful!!

Written by and Nominated by Chad Knight - CEO



2022 YMCA Champions Book

MERIT, SERVICE, TEAM, HEALTHY HEART, and MISSION CHAMPIONS

Mission: *Volunteer, Donor, Member, Team Member, or special friend who helped excel the YMCA mission for multiple venues and events!*

Sue Knight, Matt Richman, Terry Darden, Derrick Dahlke, Cozette Lewis,
Retired Senior Volunteer Program, and Dillons

Merit: *Volunteer, Member, Donor, or special friend who helped the YMCA*
Carol & Darrell Hauschild, Cindy & Jeff Jervis, Mike Popejoy, Jane Johnson,
Meyer Fitness, True Value, Mona Kaps, Russo Family, Rosina Houle

Team: *Team members who went above and beyond the call of duty!*
Jerry Strong, America Martinez, Jeremy Richardson, Caleigh Knight, Shyanna
Richardson, Remi Vargas, Alex Elchuck, Willie Clay, Valerie Molina, Esther
Selee, and Angel Bustos-Bravo

Service: *Team employees who hit a benchmark year*
20 years: Amanda Frick ; 15 years: Norma Martinez ; 5 years: Jerry Strong &
Shyanna Taylor

Healthy Heart: *Checked in the YMCA and/or DOME over 200 times,*
Quang Nguyen (512), Ann Hamlett (344), Bryer Livermore (307),
Raul Munoz, Steven Lynch, Chad Knight, Jose Alvarez, Bladimir Rivera, Daret
Burr, George Latt, Leonardo Tena, Derrick Dahlke, Miguel Rodriguez, Maria
Castillo, Arturo Villanueva, Richard Burns, Isidro Marino, Andres Sanchez,
Heriberto Navarrete, Marvin Alvarez, J.R. Atayde, Leo Ledesma, Ernie Ornelas,
Gyzelle Ortega, Miguel Cuaraque, Norma Gutierrez, Max Owen, Carlos Jimenez,
Geovannie Macias, Otto Mendoza, Ignacio Ibarra, Chad Weston, Antonio
Hernandez, Luis Perez, Vanessa Hernandez, Edgar Sanchez-Montez, Martha
Saldana-Martinez, Jacob Alvarez, Jaime Monarrez, Rosalia Del Rio, Daryl
Hamlett, Gerardo Tamayo, Juan Tristan, Jack Crook, Javier Valdez, Elbin
Palencia, Victor Viurquez, and Jose Ibarra

Past Board President: *Terry Darden*



2022 Community Healthy Champion

Dillons

To further our outreach and promote more from the “outside” instead of “in” our box, we will recognize a community organization, club, group, business, school, company, individual or whatever to recognize their efforts for promoting a healthy lifestyle in the community. They must have a voice or advocate for healthy living.

GREAT WORK DILLONS!

In 2021 we started a new program called Summer Food Service Program. This program entailed giving free meals and snacks for seven days away to kids under the age of 19. When I first approached the Manager, Clayton McAfee, on the plans, he was "All in." Then, we got slammed each week. It was organized chaos, to say the least. But we got through it. In 2022, we did it again. It was even bigger and more chaotic!

Clayton was
and
several
our YMCA.
books,
water to
food, and



However,
"All in" again
stepped up in
ways to help
He donated
products from
Gatorade to
some of his

equipment for us to use outside of the food program. Before we started in 2022, Clayton already had a plan in place to ensure we were better prepared each week. He continued to help us organize the meals and get everything ready. We came up with a new idea to order the frozen food early so we could start bagging this stuff. This took us the longest each week. Doing that helped us streamline our products much earlier in the week. It enabled us to start the bagging process on Wednesday and even earlier if we carried over products which we did. Clayton wanted us to order pallets of the main supplies, and this was a great idea. The program helped over 1,800 children and served 63,125 meals and snacks all summer in 2022. This partnership with Dillons was a big hit in our community and we only hope to make it bigger and better! THANKS, Clayton and Dillons for this great collaboration!

Chad Knight - CEO



2022 Ambassador Champion

Leo Ledesma

This award is given to an Ambassador of our YMCA. Ambassadors have been with the YMCA for five or more continuous years! The Management Team select a special Ambassador who helped the YMCA in some capacity, uses the YMCA on a regular basis or is just a great advocate for the YMCA. **THANK YOU LEO!**

Our 2022 Ambassador Champion, Leo Ledesma, has been an ambassador at the YMCA for a long time.

Leo started at the YMCA years ago when he worked with Joy Robinson in the early morning

lap swimming and helped her supervise the swimmers. This was probably in the early 90s is my best guess, but could've been in the 80s too.

As you can see, Leo has been around helping for a long time. He is still doing that to this day! Leo has

been swimming anytime he gets a chance. He worked full-time

for UniFirst and was limited to his time in the pool because of his schedule.

When he was on vacation, he was here every day and sometimes twice a day.

One of the main reasons Leo was nominated and won was his commitment and dedication to the other swimmers. Leo would carry on conversations with the other swimmers all the time. Great memories! This is a TRUE AMBASSADOR!! If

they were not there, Leo would ask about them. Then, if they continued to miss, Leo would call and check on them. He would ask me multiple times

throughout the year about this or that person. The real reason, though, is his willingness to help and supervise. One of our members, Kathleen McMillan had

hip surgery. She still walked gingerly and timidly. Leo stopped his swim, got out of the pool, and provided a shoulder to lean on and help her into the pool.

Then, she was ready to get out of the pool, and Leo stopped swimming to run over to help her. This went on for days and I caught it on the tail end one time

when Leo jumped out of the pool. I thought this was awesome of Leo! There

are also times when he continues to supervise the pool when a lifeguard doesn't show up. He is always our "eyes" on deck watching the other

swimmers. **GREAT JOB LEO!**

Chad Knight – CEO





2022 “Dana Polson” Employee Champion

Shyanna Richardson & Remi Vargas

This award is given to one of our special team members who provided outstanding leadership, great customer service, extremely dedicated to their profession or job at the YMCA and exemplified our core values throughout the year.

CONGRATS SHYANNA & REMI!!!



Shyanna started working for the YMCA back in 2017. She is an Assistant Teacher in the Four-Year-Old Room. Throughout the years since starting, she has added to her role. What started as a “Can you help here?” has turned into a daily routine for her. She stepped up BIG when COVID hit, and we did Remote Learning. Currently, she not only helps with the Four-Year-Olds but works the afterschool site at Abe Hubert. When we are in a pinch, which we have been quite A LOT lately, she has stepped up to fill in for Kid Zone as well as Fundays when school is out for the older kiddos. We are truly BLESSED to have her in all aspects of childcare, and everyone LOVES her. I am so proud of her and her accomplishments both inside and outside of the YMCA. I know she will be a GREAT leader one of these days. THANK YOU for ALL your work over the years, Shyanna, you deserve it!!!

Krystal Richardson – Chief Administrator

Remi Vargas has been working at the Dome as a MSA (Member Service Associate) since the Dome opened in 2019. She has been my right-hand throughout the whole process. Whether that be training new team members or always being ready and willing to fill in when I needed someone, she was there. Remi took charge when I had to be gone for a long period of time as well. She would learn new roles and was constantly willing to take the initiative to help make the Dome a better place. Which she has done perfectly! Remi is and has been a blessing to both me and the Dome. She truly and fully exemplifies our core values.

Stacy Castoe – Dome & Operations Director



2022 Humanitarian Champion

Mark Russo Family



This award will be given to a person who demonstrates the best campaigning efforts throughout the last year. At the YMCA, we have many fundraisers including the Annual Support Campaign, Capital Campaign and many other special events that deal with volunteers asking the community to give to our special cause. This person has displayed the passion, worked hard, and has the YMCA in their heart! ***YOU ARE TOO AWESOME RUSSO FAMILY!***



Over the summer, we have a program where we give free food to kids. It is a massive undertaking and requires many hands on deck. However we attempt to describe this event to you, it will not do it justice. That goes double for the work the Russo family puts into this YMCA. Their dedication has been clear to me ever since they attended our Easter Family Fun Night. They just wanted to enjoy a night out as a family. When the SFSP program started, Mark stepped up to help. Then his entire family got involved with every aspect of the program. Whether it was bagging during the week, or running food out to cars on Sunday, they were there. During our second year, we needed people we could trust to run one of the three stations. With myself handling the registration and counting at the first station, and our CEO running things over at Dillon's, we had to trust someone to operate the dry, soft, and canned goods area. The Russo family immediately came to mind. Once the two hours of handing out food were over, we still had to clean up. After cleaning up my station, I'd always walk over to find Eli and Olivia carrying the many milk crates back inside. They never wasted any time. It didn't matter how hot it got, they were there every single weekend. Their comradery and kind hearts to assist us was beyond appreciated. I cannot express the gratitude I feel for the Russo's contributions to our program enough, let alone the YMCA as a whole. You guys are one **AMAZING** family! Don't ever change!

***Caleigh Knight – Community
Engagement Coordinator***





2022 Family Champion Delehant Family

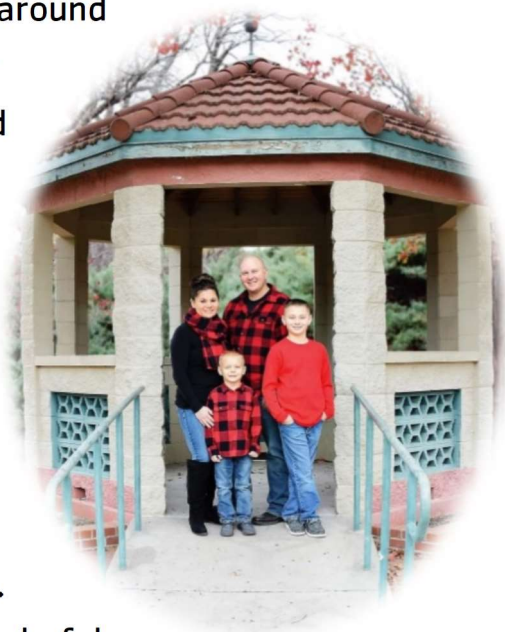
This award will be given to one of our family members who have demonstrated our mission and core values in their commitment to the YMCA through programs or general membership. These Champions are dedicated to Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility! ***CONGRATS DESIREE, JOSH, COOPER & AIDEN!***

I first met Desiree two years ago. At the time, she was a volunteer T-Ball coach for the team my son took part in. I was able to witness her love for teaching kiddos how to play this sport and have fun while doing it. Seeing her passion for igniting a love of sports in the children firsthand inspired me. Fast forward about six months, I started seeing her around

the YMCA more and more. I then noticed her coming in almost daily with her boys Cooper and Aiden. She would utilize the Kid Zone for the boys, while she went and worked out in BA Fit Factory each day. Or, sometimes, she would have her eldest Cooper oversee Aiden. I'd constantly see them playing basketball, racquetball, pool, foosball, or utilize the game room. On rare occasions, you might find them trying to work out side-by-side with Desiree. .

.SUPER AWESOME!!! I then realized that her wonderful

husband Josh would come and work out with her as well. Everyone of them were dedicated to staying active. This family is so AMAZING together! They not only utilize the YMCA to its fullest potential, but also play any sport they possibly can. Both Desiree and Josh have been volunteer coaches at the YMCA for varying sports. I am simply ASTONISHED by all of them! I am so HAPPY they have chosen our YMCA to become healthier, learn new things, make friends, and continue growing as a family.



Krystal Richardson – Chief Administrator



2022 Character Development Champions

Haidyn McMillan

This award will concentrate in the Child Care Department. The YMCA will recognize a youth in the program, a counselor or a volunteer in our program who best exemplifies the YMCA values of Caring, Honesty, Respect & Responsibility.

GREAT JOB HAIDYN!



My role as the Child Care Coordinator is to keep our team engaged and make it fun for the youth we serve. As a parent, you want your child to be safe, have fun, and learn as they grow up. I believe one of the best attributes of a parent is to hear your child doing great things. I would hope that Haidyn's parents are beaming when they read my remarks on their child Haidyn McMillan. She is extremely helpful in the after-school program, and she truly cares for others. Some kids do help and watch out for others, but Haidyn takes it to another level. She is AMAZING! She looks forward to coming to the YMCA every day. Haidyn appreciates how there is always something to do here. She also loves our team members. This girl constantly mentions how they are very welcoming and friendly. As the Child Care Coordinator, this makes me happy to hear our team members are making a difference. But the person who makes the real difference is Haidyn McMillan. Just seeing her helps brighten my day and the other staff here as well. That is the reason I chose her for our 2022 Character Development Champion. GOOD JOB HAIDYN!

Clarissa Garcia – Childcare Coordinator



2022 Youth Development Champion

Caleigh Knight

To highlight one of our focus areas, the Youth Development Champion is given to a member, volunteer, staff person or participant who demonstrated Youth Development. As one of our focus areas, it is important that we are striving to develop the youth in our community. ***GREAT WORK Caleigh!***

The Youth Development Champion for 2022 was an easy choice for me because it involved my daughter, Caleigh. We hired her in 2021 when she graduated college. She had multiple roles underneath Krystal Richardson, our Chief Administrator. To utilize her skills, I reorganized and gave her more duties with our website, advertising, public relations, and communications. Meanwhile, she still oversees the newly developed Community Engagement department. Since the new transition, Caleigh has been killing it! The biggest event, the Summer Food Service Program just blew up! We doubled what we did the year before. She was all about serving more

kids and helping more families. And it didn't stop there. She proceeded to push and promote an old program that she loved attending when she was a child running around the YMCA. It was our Dive-In movies in the pool. She was all in! She selected the movie, helped Aaron (Aquatics Coordinator) promote it, recruited kids to sign up, checked them in that night, and even went as far as cleaning the TV, the stand that holds the TV, and the windows. She busted her tail off to get this off the ground and running. She stayed and helped Aaron all night with it.

They had 26 participants, not including the parents since they get in for free when their kids sign up, at the first Dive-In. Meanwhile, in their last one, they just had, maxed out on registrations at 35, and still had more sign-up! She kept it going in her programs as well. Caleigh oversees Family Fun Nights. So, we finally had our Easter Eggstravaganza and she doubled her goal of attendees at 250. That night we entertained over 540 guests. On top of that, she took care of all the volunteers by checking on them and giving them water throughout the event. One of the best attributes about her is she is devoted to making sure the children in our programs and at the YMCA love being there. That is too AWESOME! Keep it up,

Caleigh Rose!

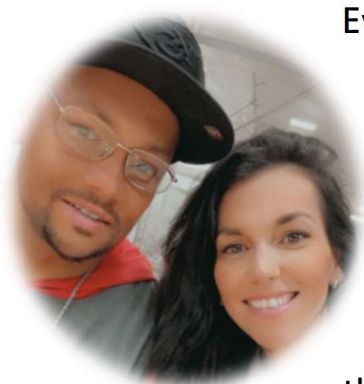
Chad Knight – CEO





2022 Spirit, Mind, and Body Champion Tiffany Wolf

The Spirit, Mind, and Body is essentially the Coach of the Year in our Sports Department. This is our longest running award as we started recognizing our coaches in 1999. The winner should be a positive role model and must serve in some capacity as a coach for any sport at the YMCA. *KEEP IT UP TIFFANY!*



Every year, the YMCA leans on many volunteers to operate our youth programs and, more importantly, lift up our mission. This is the backbone of our operation. We could not do what we do without our volunteers who help us in so many ways. For basketball this past year, we were falling short of finding volunteers for coaches. Usually, we have parents step in or friends of parents that will coach their son or daughter's team. This was not the case. Our new Sports Coordinator struggled to recruit and secure a volunteer to help. I know from experience this is a big headache and causes a ton of stress. One volunteer, Tiffany Wolf came to the rescue. She not only stepped up and took a team for our Boys League, but she also took a team in our Girl's League as well. She said between herself and her boyfriend, Andre Wright, they could tag team and get them going. That is why Tiffany Wolf is our 2022 Spirit, Mind, and Body Coach of the Year. To be honest, just getting started is a big process. The coaches must schedule their practices and get everything aligned.



Tiffany and Andrew were unable to finish with the traveling basketball team they were coaching at the time, but they took the initiative and got these two teams going when nobody else would step up to get them started. Tiffany and Andre continue to help us as officials too, and stepped up to do some long days for us. THANK YOU BOTH!!

Chad Knight - CEO



2022 Program Champion

JUAN GARCIA

The Program Champion recognizes someone who coached, volunteered, and/or participated in multiple programs throughout the year. This could be an individual, family, or multiple people.

Programs is one vehicle for us grow our mission.

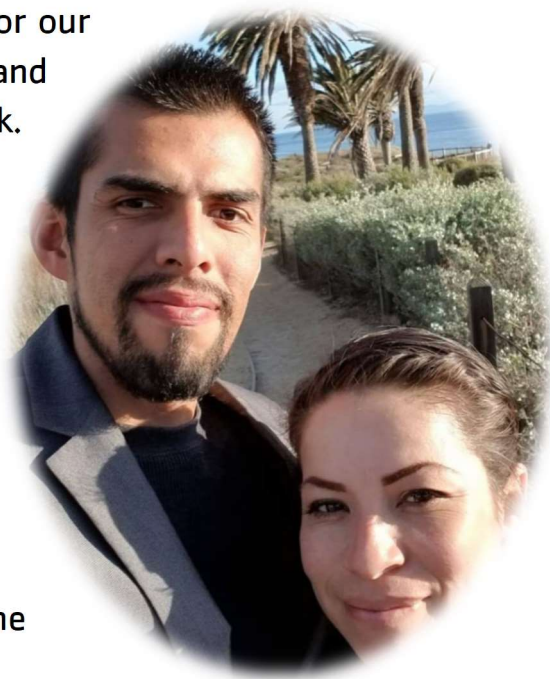
GREAT JOB JUAN!

For our program Champion, our past winners have been a youth in our program and a coach. Our 2021 Program Champion comes from our Adult Sports department. Juan Garcia is being recognized for his commitment, dedication, and support for a variety of sports at the YMCA. For our adult leagues, it takes a coach or manager to organize the team and get everything set up. In today's world, everyone is so busy and doesn't take time to do any of this. But not Juan Garcia. He is generally bust as he has multiple jobs, owns a couple of businesses, and still finds time to gather his friends and form teams in soccer and volleyball. Isn't that AMAZING! That is why Juan Garcia is our 2021 Program Champion. It doesn't stop there. He also helped with the following:

- Formulate activities at his paintball park for our Corporate Cup challenge. He contacted us and allowed the YMCA to host events at his park.

It was a HIT!

- Participated in the Corporate Cup Challenge and just filled in wherever the team needed him most. He and his wife played pickleball for the first time, and showed up and had a blast!
- Allowed us to use his blowup soccer balls for our Family Fun Night at no charge! Convinced his daughter to work for the YMCA and help get her teams formed in the Women's Soccer League.
- Offered our YMCA members a discount to his Paintball Park.



You can see from his involvement why I chose him to be our Program Champion. WAY TO GO JUAN!!!

Manuel Guzman – Sports Coordinator



2022 Healthy Living Champion Chad Ulrich

To highlight one of our focus areas, this award is given to a member who demonstrated Healthy Living in his/her workout or commitment to the Y. This member was dedicated to health and is a living proof of their workout at the Y. **KEEP IT UP CHAD!**

We have members hard to healthy and do the exercise each day.



many who work maintain a lifestyle right thing to

One of them is our

2022 Healthy Living Champion, Chad Ulrich. I nominated Chad for several reasons. First of all, he has a cool first name. I'm just kidding. Chad has been a member since 2009 and is a local youth preacher. My heart pours out for other non-profit workers. We all know our mission is of the utmost value in our jobs. For Chad Ulrich, it is the top! Chad comes in the early morning to do his workout. He has a routine. I caught a glimpse of Chad on our cameras in the gym. He does his version of boot camp-style exercises in the cardio room and it was pretty intense. One day, Chad told me he was trying to cut some weight and was close to his goal. Obviously, he hit it because he won Body Transformation of the Year through his nutrition company Isagenix. Isn't that AWESOME? Another reason I nominated Chad was that he passed on his love for working out to his son, Eli. As soon as Chad would leave, his son would show up to do his workout too. Life father, like son! I thought Chad deserved to get recognized as a leader for Healthy Living. Having heard of the powerful messages he taught youths when my daughter attended, I know it is just an other thing he excels at. GOOD JOB CHAD and keep it up!



Chad Knight – CEO

CHAD ULRICH

2022 U.S. IsaBody Finalist
Challenges Completed: 2
Age: 48

ISABODY

Year Partner in Health Champion

Dream First Bank



This award honors companies for their Corporate Membership with our Partner in Health program. More importantly, this company has devoted endless time and commitment to their employees and to the YMCA to help promote healthy spirit, mind, and body in the workplace. **CONGRATULATIONS DREAM FIRST!**



Dream First Bank®

Dream First Bank, AKA First National Bank, has been chosen to receive the “Partner in Health” award for 2022 due to its outstanding commitment to the Garden City Family YMCA and its employees. Dream First Bank has three memberships with the YMCA. They have several employees who are involved with the YMCA, not only as members but who help with volunteering for different events. They are one of our small division teams for the Corporate Cup. Their team captain Erika is always on top of the events. Dream First helps with promoting our specials of the month and trying to get their employees involved with the YMCA. Dream First is a donor for different events. The employees that are members now use the facilities to their fullest potential. Those with a family membership bring their family to be involved in our free swim lessons and love to utilize both of our swimming pools. Dream First has always been willing to continue to support the YMCA and their employees. Dream First is not yet on a Level Membership but they do offer payroll deduct for those who choose to sign up with the YMCA Thank you, Dream First for your support in all areas of our partnership. I hope to have many more years to share in our partnership.

Crystal Erives – Membership Director



2022 “Darlene Mathias” Volunteer Champion Manuel/Valerie Terrazas

This award is given to a volunteer who demonstrated outstanding service to the Y in the past year. This could be a program volunteer, board member, committee person or general volunteer activities.

Volunteers are the BACKBONE to our operation!

THANK YOU, MANUEL & VALERIE!

In my department, I rely heavily on the help of volunteers for my events to function. Finding people to volunteer has long been a struggle. However, there are two people I have always been able to rely upon ever since I got hired here. Manuel and Valerie Terrazas. They both have been part of our YMCA family for a long time now. They’ve always been willing to lend a helping hand. Then when SFSP started last year, I needed every pair of hands I could get. They were both more than willing to help even in over 100-degree weather. On top of that, they always attend and assist with the Family Fun Nights as well. For our October Halloween at the YMCA night, we were incredibly low on volunteers. This proved difficult since we also planned to hand out free coats to everyone who needed one. That’s when Manuel and Valerie showed up. Manuel covered two of our inflatables while Valerie handed out the coats. She even assisted with organizing them before



the event started so they were all relatively in the same order based on size and type. That day they even drove six hours to pick up someone from the airport and had been up since 5:00 am that morning. Despite it all though, they still came to help. I could not be more grateful to the two of them for always being there when I needed them. THANK YOU so much, Manuel and Valerie!!!!

***Caleigh Knight – Community Engagement
Coordinator***



2022 Social Responsibility Champion

Julie Valentine



To highlight one of our focus areas, this award is given to a member, volunteer, staff person or participant who demonstrated Social Responsibility. It is one that focuses on giving back to the Y and our community. As many people know, it is our responsibility to make sure good and positive things are happening.

GREAT WORK JULIE!

Ever since I started working here, we've been in desperate need of extra help. Whether it be more workers for our day-to-day operations or volunteers for our many free programs, the YMCA needed assistance. Luckily, quite a few people heard our desperate cry for aid and came running. One of those people was Julie Valentine. Our SFSP program is an absolute monster of work and some madness. We need all hands on deck just to get everything functioning, let alone ready for our Sunday meal handouts. This requires volunteers to come in during the week to bag the food into separate servings for each kid. This job is normally covered by the volunteer group of that week, but even then can end up not being finished in time for Sunday. Julie showed up every day of the week to separate and sort the food into their respective bags. Anytime I would come into work, I'd see her at the back, packing up the food for that week. Considering every kid receives six bags of different types of food and we fed an average of 973 kids a week that summer alone, that was A LOT of work to do. Yet Julie was there throughout the whole summer assisting wherever and whenever she could. Her contribution to making this program work was beyond vital. Who knows if we would've been able to finish all that needed to get done without her? Julie was a godsend for the YMCA and this program especially. You're absolutely INCREDIBLE JULIE, thanks for all that you do!!



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Caleigh Knight – Community Engagement Coordinator

2022 Member Champion

Maria Castillo



To recognize and highlight one of our members based on their workout history, relationship building within the YMCA and community or serves as a great advocate as a member. This special member demonstrates all three of our focus areas and follows our core values. ***YOU ARE TOO AWESOME MARIA!***

Maria has been a YMCA member ever since KB's Sweat Started started here with the YMCA. They are now known as BA Fit Factory. Maria loves to use BA's, the pool, the cardio, and the weight room. She is an avid runner and LOVES to run outside. Then an issue occurred. Her feet started to have problems, and this is the main reason as to why she switched to swimming. It allowed her to stay active, while taking a break from running so much. Due to her having a YMCA membership, she was able to switch it up. It didn't matter that she couldn't use one area every single time, she could utilize our full facility and run, swim, use BA's, or lift weights. She knows as she gets older, she must remain active. This is especially important for her not to end up being put on medications for diabetes, high blood pressure, or cholesterol which runs in her family. She does value the ability to run outside when the weather is nice, but running on the treadmill is easier on her knees. Maria treasures getting older, and the YMCA makes it easier to achieve her fitness goals. She is also appreciative for the benefit of traveling out of town and still being able to use whatever YMCA she comes across in a different town. On top of this, Maria adores the staff greeting her as she walks in and out of the YMCA, providing that personal connection she craves from a gym membership.



Crystal Erives – Membership Director



2022 Sports Character Champion

RICKY NAOVORAVONG

This award recognizes a participant or volunteer in our sports department who displayed the best sportsmanship and character throughout his/her sports participation in our programs. Character counts in our programs and this person exemplified great character in their program. **GREAT JOB RICKY!**

There are two things I can count on in my adult leagues: Ricky Naovoravong has a team in basketball and volleyball, and Ricky always smiling. This is a fact. Ricky will always call me to form a team in our basketball or volleyball leagues. I know he will always be there with his team. Now the smile. If you haven't seen his smile, well take a look at his picture. It is a classic for sure! It is beyond genuine. I came across this quote the other day



"Smiles are free so share them." This quote made me think of Ricky. This guy always has the biggest smile on his face. It doesn't matter if he is getting beat by 25 points in basketball or just lost two games in volleyball, he is smiling. Like I said in my opening statement, you can always count on Ricky smiling when he is playing, arriving, leaving the game, and walking into his office at work. When it comes to playing sports, your character is revealed in many ways. Some are great. Some are bad. Some are okay. For Ricky, he falls into the extraordinary role. For most people, you can tell when they just lost. They are upset, mad, and have sad faces. Others don't talk, or won't even shake hands at the end. Not Ricky. Sportsmanship is Ricky's middle name! This guy has the best attitude and is always friendly to everyone he encounters on the court. And the best part is, it doesn't matter if he won or lost. That is why Ricky Naovoravong is our 2022 Sports Character Champion! Keep smiling and bringing over the teams Ricky! It's not an adult league without you!!

Manuel Guzman – Sports Coordinator

2022 Committee Champion

Terry Darden



The Committee Champion is given to volunteers who served on a YMCA Committee during the year and demonstrated outstanding leadership, dedication, and service. This Champion went above and beyond the call of duty and was always there to support and provide input for the Department Head. *THANK YOU, TERRY!*

Throughout my 24-plus years at the YMCA, I have witnessed many volunteers who go above and beyond. But Terry Darden surpasses them all. This guy does everything from cooking at our racquetball tournaments to delivering popsicles to childcare kids to securing many auction items for our silent auction. He is like the Energizer Bunny. He just

keeps going and going. For our Committee Champion for 2022, I nominated Terry

Darden. Terry served on three committees: Finance,

Racquetball, and Building & Grounds. He

was also the Chairperson of the

Yet Terry didn't stop

bunny! He also served

President, Annual

Chairperson, and led

selling raffle tickets.

though, and neither was

EVERY SINGLE meeting and

committee with gumbo, ribs,

He brought salad, some special

bread loaves, and other side dishes. Then you guessed it, Terry still kept pressing

on. Many times throughout the year, Terry will notice something at the YMCA that needs to be done, or we need something repaired. Then he will run to his

shop and get some chemicals or tools to help us fix the problem. The staff here has long since dubbed him the YMCA Dad, which is fitting. Terry has been a

valuable volunteer and it goes above being the Committee Champion. He is a

huge advocate of our YMCA, building, grounds, finances, fundraising, public

relations, conflict resolution, and much, much more! Remember the Energizer

bunny because he will still be here! THANK YOU, TERRY!!



Chad Knight – CEO

2022 “Mac Foreman” Courage Champion

Cyndee Pfeifer



This award will be given to a YMCA member, program participant or a volunteer who demonstrates courage in their activities at the YMCA. Whether it be a person who has severe arthritis, a person who is blind, a person who can't hear or a person who beats all the odds, we want to recognize his/her commitment to health!

KEEP IT UP CYNDEE!



When we review nominees and decide on a Champion for that year, we base it on the courage it takes for that person to do everyday duties. This can be as simple as brushing your teeth and going to the bathroom. The namesake of this award is Mac Foreman, who had severe arthritis and could barely see. But it didn't stop him from coming to the YMCA to swim. Later in life, he had to be driven

here every day. The same can be said about our choice for 2022 in Cyndee Pfeifer. Her inability to see and function stood to be a challenging task and deserving of our 2022 Mac Foreman Courage Champion. She does not allow her disability to deflate her attitude or stop her from doing her water exercises. Cyndee has a rare disease with her eye that makes her blind. She is also transported to the YMCA by bus to get here every day. I caught Cyndee walking out the other day, so I followed her out to catch up. We started visiting, and I asked her if she was getting around well. She said she can still see, but it is very cloudy and blurry! Cyndee told me to imagine walking around with glasses on that were extremely dirty or if it was foggy outside. Basically, anytime you squint to see, everything is blurry. That is what she sees all the time. She also said her son had surgery to give him more eyesight and it worked. Could you conceive growing up and through most of your life being able to see, then coming across this rare disease? I believe most folks would be absolutely devastated. But not Cyndee. She continues to come to the YMCA in rain or shine to get her workout done. That is too AWESOME!! Keep it up Cyndee, and we hope to continue having you here!



Chad Knight – CEO

The BEST of the BEST

The next 12 pages signify the BEST of the BEST Mission Moments. Our Mission Moments are YMCA stories from our members that are heart-enriching, tear-jerking, life-changing, and mission oriented. The stories are then selected in our weekly Management Team meetings. At the end of the month, we vote on which story managed to express our values and move us the most that month. We know everyone has a YMCA story and we hope by sharing these 12 we can inspire others as much as they inspire us.





2022 MISSION MOMENTS

January

"AN UNEXPECTED TIP"

One of the most important things I talk to team at the Welcome Center about is Gym-Gem. Which stands for Greet Your Member and Go the Extra Mile. This is our policy and goal when it comes to interacting with every single member of the YMCA. Since I started here, Chad has always made it clear we need to follow this policy to the letter. I make sure to stress this with my staff at the front desk the moment they get

MSA

hired. One of our team members, America, does an outstanding job in this area. She is unfailingly friendly and talks to everyone. America acknowledges them all and always helps them the best she can. She has built a great relationship with one of our members in specific, Michelle Hawkinson. Michelle treasures her talks with America each time she sees her. Whenever America isn't there, she consistently asks where she is. But if America is there, her smile brightens as Michelle is excited to see her, and the feeling is mutual.

America will see her and yell out, "Michelle!" They both appreciate each

other. One day, Michelle came in and was

excited

to give an amazing gift to America. The reason?

Just because. This present happened to be a red Coach bag. This was an incredibly surprising and generous gift. We as a team NEVER expect to receive tips, let alone actual gifts. We simply do our job as best as we can because we love building relationships. But this moment was one of pure joy between these two. Way to go America, and thank you, Michelle! You are both wonderful!

Written by Crystal Ibarra – Membership Director



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

February

“Pickle. . .ball?”

Ever since I was a child, I have loved sports. Any sport I could play, I went full throttle towards. One sport I had never even heard of until this past year was Pickleball. At first, I thought it was just some joke or slang term for another sport. Turns out I was wrong, and the game is, as everyone likes to describe it, just like “human-size ping-pong.” Which I consider very accurate. Still, my love for sports took over and I tried it out. Due to my background in racquetball, I had a decent handle on the game. This impressed one lady in specific, Jane Johnson. She saw my skills and began nurturing them as a coach. She’d give me advice and tell me what I needed to work on. At the time, I tended to hit the ball too hard and make it go out of bounds. Then she invited me to be a guest coach for the Pickleball & Jamming program. This was a free event we had where kids could come and learn how to play pickleball. They’d even get to eat pizza afterward. Jane got amazing turnouts, leading to her needing some extra volunteers. When I got there, I was greeted by a horde of enthusiastic children all dying to play pickleball. I was so happy to see everyone so excited about a sport nobody had heard about. To top it off, Jane’s coach instincts began to kick in. She sneakily started pairing me up with the young kids to train them. This way, I would instinctively hit the ball softer when I played with them. I did and it helped me learn better control over this hollowed ball. Jane even admitted that she had done it on purpose after the first session I went to. I am proud to say that my “home runs” in pickleball have died down a bit since then. This is all thanks to Jane. Her enthusiasm for not only the sport but for getting kids involved was inspiring and rather contagious. Jane herself is just an incredible inspiration to me. I’m beyond elated to have her in our YMCA family.

Caleigh Knight – Community Engagement Coordinator





2022 MISSION MOMENTS

March

“Never Give Up”

Cru Castoe is a 5-year-old energetic little boy, who is also my son.

This year he decided he wanted to play basketball because his friends were, and he wanted to be on the same team as them. Keep in mind, Cru has never played before, so this was exciting for him and me. Throughout the season it was a struggle for him to understand the concept of dribbling and trying to get the ball in that basketball hoop. He tried and tried, and we even practiced at home with his own basketball. It was a Friday night, and it was going to be our last practice for the season as he was practicing, he accidentally got cut on the eye. Cru at this point was just tired and ready for basketball season to be over. He looked up at me and told me he didn't think basketball was his sport. This broke my heart. The next day and it was the last basketball game of the season and Cru was not excited at all, he didn't want to go to his last game. He wanted to go over to his cousins Leo's house to play. I called my mom and explained the situation and that he was over at Leo's house playing. My mom called me back and said Cru will be at the game along with Leo to watch him. During the game Cru played his little heart out, he scored two baskets and even blocked a shot from going in. He was so excited he played his best game EVER!



Written by Stacy Castoe – Dome & Operations Director



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

April

“NOT ME”

Steve Linenberger comes to the Dome every morning to do his walk. Recently,

Steve has been coming in late morning or early afternoon to do his walk, sometimes twice a day. One morning I saw Steve leaving the Dome as I was coming to work, I stopped him and told him the good news that he was our Dome member of the month for April. He smiled and looked at me and said,

“Thank you, but I have a better person for you to be the member of the month.” Shocked and excited at the same time as this has never happened before, I asked Steve who he had in mind.

He said Homero proceeded to tell me every morning to the how he has lost Steve continued to tell knives and that he had pocketknives with him he got home, he could not his mind trying to find it,

came to the Dome to do his walk, he saw Homero, and Homero stopped Steve and asked if he has been looking for this. It was Steve’s knife that he had lost,

Steve was so thankful and appreciative that Homero had found it and returned it. I told Steve, that is a great story and a great choice. I got a hold of Homero to tell him the good news and put his picture up at the Dome and when Steve came in and he saw the picture, he said “that is more rewarding seeing this then anything.” Great job Steve!



Palomino, Steve that Homero comes in Dome to work out and almost 30 pounds. me that he collects one of his one morning and when find it. Steve was losing until one morning when he

Written by Stacy Castoe – Dome & Operations Director



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

May

“MR. OFFICIAL”

Chuck Reinert is epitome of a sports official, hence the title! I officiated football and umpired fast-pitch and baseball with and relied upon. Chuck was MR. OFFICIAL in my mind in the area for a long time. He was probably one of the best, if not the best wrestling umpire in the area. I worked quite a bit with Chuck over the years with his involvement as the Lakin Recreation Director for my District and State Baseball Tournaments for Cal Ripken and Babe Ruth Baseball. One day, Chuck walked into my office and sat down. This happened frequently, but this was a different conversation.



Chuck told me about his battle with cancer and that it came back in full force. I knew Chuck was battling some sickness and couldn't work. We decided to give a scholarship to his granddaughter for our Summer Camp program all summer. He told me childcare provides some normality for his granddaughter, and she loves coming to the YMCA. He said, "This is such a blessing, and it helps us out so much." He then went on to talk about his first experience in our YMCA. Every year, we do a Prayer Breakfast to honor our Christian heritage, and one time Chuck showed up to listen to our speaker. The speaker had died, saw the gates to heaven, then miraculously came back to life. It was quite the story. Chuck told me how much he appreciated his story. He went on and on about his Christianity and its importance. He just raved about having a place like the YMCA. Chuck lost his battle a few months later, and I wore my football uniform to his funeral. It was odd. However, when I showed up, there were like 50 other officials in wrestling and football uniforms. It was a GREAT occasion! I am sure one that had Chuck smiling as big as his impact on all of us was. THANKS for everything, Chuck!



Written by Chad Knight – CEO



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

June

“UNEXPECTED VOLUNTEER”



Here it was, the start of another week to distribute the food for our Summer Food Service Program. It was excruciatingly hot! We only had two runners to run the food to the vehicles, and I was one of them. This day, a lady showed up and said she wants to help with our program. I said, "You couldn't pick a better day." She jumped in and started helping. Her name was Frankie Cox. When we finished, she was still running around helping and doing everything. I stopped her to thank her, and she thanked me.

Frankie went on to tell me the story about her experience moving to Garden City and what the YMCA has done for her. HOLY TOLEDO's BATMAN, this was

AWESOME! She told me that she moved in 2021 to Garden City and shortly afterward lost her job. She had a family to feed. Frankie heard about our food program and came. She could not believe the food she was provided. It made a HUGE difference for her and her family. They were fed all summer long, and she made it through her situation. Fast forward to 2022. Once she heard we were doing this program again, she came down to help. She said you guys saved my family from starvation and provided this program when I needed it most. It was time for me to give back and help. I was BLOWN AWAY! I have witnessed many challenges with members and families over the years, but I have never witnessed a program being so powerful and making such an impact. Now, it has been reversed, Frankie Cox made a huge impact on us by coming back and volunteering. She said it was the least she could do. But she didn't stop. Frankie continued to come and even brought her child who came in the middle of the week to bag bread and bags. They both did. It was AMAZING! Thank you, Frankie Cox!

Written by Chad Knight - CEO



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

July

“C & J MAKES IT HAPPEN”

During the summer, we have the Summer Food Service Program, hence the story last month with Frankie. Anyways, this is a large undertaking and takes tons of volunteers to make it happen. Before anyone shows up on Sunday to get their food, we have already prepared all the bags and coordinated everything to be ready for at least 1,000 people. This takes about 60-man hours with a few people. The chilled and frozen foods do not show up until 5:30 a.m. on Sunday, so this puts a damper on getting everything ready. We have a group of volunteers who show up and do the bulk of the work to get it ready on Sunday mornings. One of those volunteers is Cindy and her husband Jeff. Cindy asked me during our noon swimming if we needed help. I said, "Yes, we would love to have your help." Cindy showed up that Sunday. She noticed all the work and prepping we had to do. The next week she brought her husband down and they helped us. For the next two weeks, Cindy and Jeff hammered out most of the carrots and lunch meat before anyone else showed up. They were AWESOME! Cindy and Jeff questioned why we did so much prep and cut the carrots. Cindy asked if we could just give them one more bag of carrots. This idea helped expedite our bagging of chilled products exponentially. Jeff also created better ideas to get the other products packaged and ready, as he got all the cheese sticks cut and packaged into three in a box. As you can see, Cindy and Jeff made it happen and they LOVED doing it! They were both great helpers and had great attitudes. They were both astounded by the number of people this program helps, but truly they were magical in lending a helping hand. THANKS, CINDY AND JEFF!



Written by Chad Knight – CEO



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

August

"BLESSED"

Christine Schmidt is a long-time YMCA member and now a Dome member as well. A couple of years ago, Christine started playing in my pickleball league with her husband. Recently, she started coming in on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to play pickleball with the group of ladies that always

come. Christine has been such a breath of fresh air to be around. She is so caring and always willing to help. I told her

I was going to be on vacation for a week, not going anywhere just needed to use my days up before I lose them. Every time she came in, she would ask me, "Are you ready for your vacation, you deserve it." I would tell her yes and we'd laugh. When I returned from vacation on a Monday, anything that went wrong would go wrong. Christine came into my office after she got done playing pickleball and asked how my vacation was. I simply told her it was ok. She let me know how hard it is to go on vacation when you constantly worry about work, if team members are showing up, and so on. Christine proceeded to tell me that I do a great job. Plus, since she retired, coming to the Dome and playing pickleball has been so good for her. She worried about what she would do, but having the

YMCA for aerobics classes, the Dome for pickleball, and even a few personal training sessions with one of our trainers has been such a blessing for her. At that moment, all my thoughts of everything going wrong went away. Hearing her tell me that what we do has helped her in so many ways, was such a blessing. THANK YOU, Christine!! You are a blessing too!

Written by Stacy Castoe – Dome & Operations Director





2022 MISSION MOMENTS

September

“A COACH INDEED”

On September 14, 2022, William Oliver came into the Dome to check in and play some basketball with his friend. During this time, we were getting ready for tackle football and were in desperate need of coaches. I looked William in the eyes and asked what he was doing in his spare time and if he liked football. He looked at me and said, “Well, nothing really.” So I asked him if he would like to coach a youth tackle football team. William’s friend that came in with him said, “We were just talking about finding something to do outside of work.” At that moment, it was fate that William needed to coach a football team. William contacted our youth sports coordinator and got all the equipment, rosters, and practices set up. He was revvin and ready to go. Throughout the season, we were told how William had this energy on the field with his kids, cheering them on, being positive, and showing the YMCA's core values and mission. After the season was over with, William came back into the Dome to return his equipment. I asked him how it went. He said, “It was great! I really enjoyed coaching the kids.” William then proceeded to tell me he grew up playing sports for the YMCA. Now that he was coaching a YMCA team he felt he come full circle. That is AWESOME! THANK YOU, WILLIAM for all your assistance and amazing attitude!



Written by Stacy Castoe – Dome & Operations Director



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

October

“MISS BUBBLY”



Many times, I will venture up to the Welcome Center to check my box, deliver something into one of our Department Head boxes, or write in our Daily Details. It never fails that I am put to work helping our Member Service Associates (MSA) at the Welcome Center. Well, today was the day I was stuck up there helping the MSA who needed to run to the restroom. That usually happens to me as well, LOL! In walks Phon Huber.

I said, "Good morning, how are we doing." Normally, I get some feedback from members. Some members just say, "Hi" while some are grouchy and don't say anything. Those members must be too busy, have too much on their minds, or simply don't understand me. But not today!

Phon was all energetic, happy, and glad to be at the YMCA. She said, "Good morning. This is a GREAT way to start your day!" HOLY TOLEDOS! I was just blown away by her amazing attitude and her outlook on life. I thought this was AWESOME! As people exit the YMCA, we have a sign that states, THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE. I am sure Phon will make an impact on everyone she meets. She made a difference for me that day for sure. GREAT JOB PHON!!

Written by Chad Knight – CEO



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

November

"YMCA OUTLOOK"

I love to go swimming every day. Some days I make it to the normal swim time but here lately it has been much later. Well, today I jumped in late and started singing and whooping and hollering like I always do. The swimmer next to me joined in. It was Arlie DeFreese. Arlie was smiling and cherishing it. He told me how much the pool lets him relax and makes him feel so much better. He went on to say the YMCA has been a godsend. He told me he wouldn't know what he would do if he didn't have the luxury of swimming and using the pool. It was awesome to hear this from Arlie. As I was

swimming, Arlie reiterated to me how much he loves the YMCA. I was

astounded. I kept swimming, and

Arlie jumped out. After my workout, I went to the Men's Locker Room to steam, hot tub, and shower. Arlie caught me in the dressing room part and went on to show his appreciation for the YMCA. He

mentioned the story about Miguel Rios and how the YMCA saved him and helped him with a scholarship. He went on to say that he was getting help and thankful for the YMCA too. Arlie loved knowing it was helping Miguel as well.

Arlie expressed how he was going through some medical issues and health problems himself, and the YMCA helped him get through those bad days. Arlie thanked me and told me the YMCA has changed his outlook on life. Again, I was beyond blown away by Arlie telling me all of this. So, that is why Arlie DeFreese's story was our Mission Moment Champion for November. It is because of our donors; we get to encounter these special times with our members and tug our heartstrings!



Written by Chad Knight – CEO



2022 MISSION MOMENTS

December

“FREE IMPACT”

When I came back in 2000 as the CEO of the YMCA, I wanted to start a program where we could award a FREE membership to youth. Eventually, my goal is to provide swim lessons to every 2nd grader and a free membership to every middle schooler. Someday it will happen! Until then, we have our Keeping Our Promise (KOP) program. This program started in 2001 with one student at Victor Ornelas Luis Galvez. Today, we have over 160 youth receiving a FREE membership. Back in the early 2000s, Luis Meza's brother Hugo received a KOP scholarship. Hugo's whole family decided to join as well. Hugo and Luiz would come to the YMCA almost every day. Luiz still comes to the YMCA today and just participated in his first racquetball tournament. During the tournament, we host a Saturday night dinner. We ask the participants to talk about their experience in our tournament or anything else. Every year, we have someone who steals the show with his story. This year it was Luiz. He talked about coming to the YMCA and watching Chad and Jared play racquetball. He became fascinated and wanted to learn. He said he would come to the YMCA with his brother to do everything. They would hang out, play soccer, swim, go hit balls on the court, and do anything else. He said he had no clue how to play until Chad showed him and his brother the game. Luiz has played ever since and loved it. He said, "I was scared to play in my first tournament and just nervous. But Chad helped me and convinced me I would be okay." I thought this was AMAZING! You never know the IMPACT you have on a youth until they grow up and tell you later. This is the reason I love working for the YMCA. I am so glad it has helped you Luiz, and congratulations on being recognized as our December Mission Moment Champion. KEEP ON PLAYING Luiz!



Written by Chad Knight – CEO

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YMCA

