



Our Mission: "To put Christian principles into action through programs that build healthy spirit, mind & body for all."

**Presenting the 2018
"Best of the Best"**

Mission Moments

A look back at the moments that defined our year and served as meaningful reminders of how the YMCA mission continues to positively impact our community.

Acknowledgments

This collection of Mission Moments highlights the top stories and impact we have on the community each month of the year. A big THANKS goes out to everyone involved. Whether it was a staff person, volunteer, member or program participant, we transformed lives and made a difference. In a world that can focus too much on the negative, this collection highlights all the positives displayed by every person involved. This book would not be possible or published without the support of all the following people:

All Staff. All Members. All Program Participants. All Volunteers. All Donors and Supporters.

A BIG thank you to all the staff! This book would not be possible without your work. The staff helped create these relationships, striving for our three focus areas and putting our mission into action. We strive and love to build upon those life-changing, tear-dropping and heart-enriching stories. Keep up the good work! ~ **Chad Knight, YMCA of Southwest Kansas CEO**

Member Testimonial

"My story with the YMCA started almost 16 years ago. I started at that time determined to improve my health, lower my weight and strengthen my back after having a vehicle accident a few years prior. Beginning this journey made me very nervous as I have always considered myself an introvert and was very hesitant to be in a group of people. With my goal in mind, I continued to power through the fear and each day became a little easier and in return I became much stronger both physically and mentally.

Little did I know that the beginning of my fitness journey would lead me to other areas of the YMCA. I began as part of a Moms' Morning Out group where we all met, our kids played and we stay-at-home moms began friendships that after 11 years have continued to grow. As my children grew older, they began to participate in the sports activities where I not only cheered them on from the sideline but began volunteering to coach the sports. This opened my heart even more for the love of the children and what was becoming so important: giving back to the community and reaching others.

Continuing on my YMCA mission, I became an employee for the Camp Dodge Summer Program, along with volunteering my time at the Fun Nights. My time spent during the summer with Camp Dodge gained me so much more than a paycheck. We became family to so many of the kids we were with day in and day out for the majority of the summer. I gained so much inside of myself by being a role model to the kids. The fun nights have opened my eyes to see the joy the "team" of YMCA employees and volunteers can give to so many families that don't have the opportunities to get out that many of us take for granted.

So where do I conclude this? Well, my life blossomed immensely on what started as a basic fitness goal and in turn brought me so many new values, hopes, goals and a vision for my life, thanks to entering the door to the YMCA.

So I encourage you to seek out what the YMCA has to offer, become a member, long for a new start, long for growth within, see the vision to become a better version of yourself and for others."

~Gretchen Torrez, YMCA Member, Volunteer & Employee

“Disco party in the Y van”

By Karla Springer, Membership Director

One day my daughter came home very excited about an incident that happened on the way to the Y from her school. The Y van had gotten stuck in the snow! Though some people would have panicked, the driver, Faviola, kept calm and cool. She went outside to check out the situation. Meanwhile the kids inside the van thought it was the coolest thing ever! They weren't afraid, but instead they were excited! They began to sing, dance, and wave to cars passing by! As the kiddos in the van broke out into a dance frenzy three good Samaritans showed up to push the van out of the snow. After a few tries they succeeded and the kids busted out their final but best moves yet! The kids waved good bye and said, “thank you!” to the helpers. The party was over until they scurried out of the van, and poured in to the classroom excited to tell all their buddies about the fun experience they just had! It's great to see kids turn an unfortunate experience into an opportunity for a dance party!

“Bonding with our youth”

By Stacie Droste, Healthy Living & Aquatics Director



One of our YMCA members, Ashley Apatiga, and three little girls walked into my office and Ashley asked for a pen and piece of paper. She then asked the little girls what their names were, what school they went to and what time their lunch was. Ashley then told me that they stopped her in the hallway and asked her if she would come to eat lunch with them sometime. She said yes, without hesitation. Ashley is so great with the youth. She truly cares about them and wants them to know she is here for them whenever they need her.

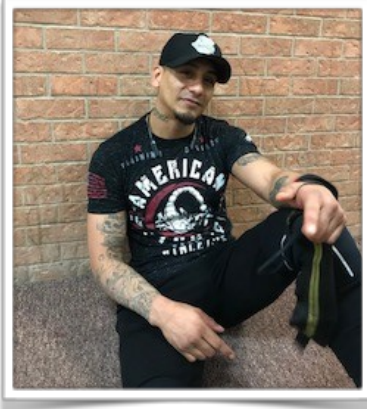
“Jackson Hobbs: Mini Fitness Instructor”

Jodi and Adam Hobbs came to my noon class and Jackson wanted to join. I said yes but wanted him to stand up at the front and help me lead class. He eagerly agreed. This little guy has been through so much in his young life and you wouldn't have known it, seeing him help me lead class that day. He kept up with everyone and had a smile on his face. Jackson is one of the strongest kids I know, and I now look up to him. Come back and help me lead class again soon, Jackson!!



“Ready to make a difference”

By Stacie Droste, Healthy Living & Aquatics Director



As we were starting our Annual Support Campaign one of my awesome team members, Jose Cardenas, posted on Facebook why the campaign is so important and why the YMCA is so great!

The post read: #BLESSED DAY FACEBOOK!! #FIRST AND FOREMOST I WANT TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO READ THIS POST AND THANK YOU SOO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR LOVE AND SUPPORT!!! #THIS YEAR I'M TAKING PART IN SOMETHING AMAZING!! #A WHILE BACK I JOINED THE #YMCA AND I COULDN'T OF MADE A BETTER CHOICE..#SOO INSPIRED WITH HOW IT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE I

DECIDED I WANTED TO GIVE BACK NOT ONLY TO THE #YMCA BUT TO MY COMMUNITY ..I HAD A SIT DOWN WITH Stacie Hageman Droste AND SHE NOMINATED ME FOR THIS GREAT CAUSE!!!.#THE DODGE CITY FAMILY #YMCA 2018 SUPPORT CAMPAIGN!! "BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS FOR EVERYONE" #THIS IS A FUNDRAISER FOR THE DODGE CITY FAMILY #YMCA HELPING HANDS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.. #WHO BENEFITS???! #THE WHOLE COMMUNITY!! #THE MONEY IS USED FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THOSE WHO NEED IT THE MOST!!!! #LAST YEAR OUR 15 CAMPAIGNERS RAISED OVER 3,862 FROM 198 DONORS..#OUR GOAL IS 20,000 THIS YEAR! #NOBODY I REPEAT NOBODY EVER DENIED THE OPPORTUNITY! #WOW IT'S SUCH AN AMAZING CAUSE THAT NOT ONLY AM I RECRUITING BUT IMA ALSO SPONSOR! #EVERYYY DOLLAR COUNTS!!!! #THERE IS NO MINIMUM!!! #IMA START BY MAKING A 50 DOLLAR PLEDGE MYSELF!! #I GOT 5 PPL I'VE NOMINATED BUT THE MORE THE BETTER!!! #IF INTERESTED PLZ PM ME!! #THANK YOU GUYS SOO VERYY MUCH!!! #GOD BLESS!!!

“A visit from Seattle”

By Jackie Regan, Branch Executive Director

As part of our YMCA Enhance Fitness program, a handful of YMCAs are chosen to have their classes observed by YUSA staff. Last week Stephanie, who is based in Seattle, came out and observed two of Tracy's Enhance Fitness classes. She had glowing things to say about the rapport Tracy has with his class members and how they all really enjoy the class and him. Overall, it was a great visit and we are so lucky to have such a dedicated instructor.



“Impressed with KOP”

By **Stacie Droste, Healthy Living & Aquatics Director**

As I was working in my office the other day, Mark Kelley, who is a regular swimmer, stopped in to see how we were coming along with the pool upgrade. He thanked me for taking care of the pool and even bragged on a couple of my lifeguards. He then went on to tell me that he works at one of the schools where we awarded KOP scholarships and that he really loved that we did this for our deserving youth. He said that gave those kids something to be proud of and that he hoped we could continue to offer these to the kids. I informed him that we plan to and our goal every year is to be able to give out more than the year before. He smile and said that was great and for us all to keep up the great work.

“Dinner with Randy”

By **Danny Finder, Sports Director**

Through one of my connections in Kingman, I was put in communication with Randy Albin. After an awesome conversation on what the YMCA’s mission was and one of the ways we would like to accomplish that, he decided to make several vinyl scriptures for us to display throughout our building. Not only was Randy ecstatic to help with this, he did everything for us free of charge as it was one of his ways that God used him to share God’s word! A couple weeks later, while my wife and I were in Wichita, we decided to invite Randy and his family to dinner with us. We met up to eat and had an incredible discussion on how God has impacted our lives along with why it is important to spread His message.

“KOP- So Excited!”

By **Jackie Regan, Branch Executive Director**

As we were giving out KOP scholarships this year, I couldn’t help but smile at one little boy’s reaction. At Sacred Heart the principal read a description of each winner explaining why he/she was nominated and picked. As she was reading one of them, we could see the other students start to point and whisper and say the little boy’s name. They recognized from what the principal was saying which boy was about to be the winner. When she announced it, and the little boy came running up (or should I say, bounded up) to get his award, he just kept repeating, “Oh my, God... I can’t breathe, I’m so excited, I can’t breathe...Oh my God...” It was a truly heartfelt moment on how happy we were able to make this kiddo!



"God has made you just the way you are to
impact others right where He has placed you."

~Tim Hiller

