



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

Presenting our 2017 **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 different stories and impact we have on the community each 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, CEO

OUR FOCUS AREAS:

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

OUR MISSION:

TO PUT CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE THROUGH PROGRAMS THAT
BUILD HEALTHY SPIRIT, MIND AND BODY FOR ALL."

OUR MOTTO:

"WHERE VALUE MEETS VALUES"

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	January 5	Finding Hope Through Exercise
	January 12	Early Morning Members
	January 19	The Email
	January 26	Youth Basketball
	Perspective from the Board President	Aaron Conrardy
Chapter 2	February 2	Linda Jones
	February 10	Lasting Impression
	February 16	Sweet Girl Moment
	February 23	The Testimonial
	Branch Executive Director Highlight	Jackie Regan
Chapter 3	March 2	Excited to be Recognized
	March 9	Conquering Fears
	March 23	New Family In Town
	CEO Highlight	Chad Knight
Chapter 4	April 6	Excited Student from Beeson
	April 13	Northwest After School ROCKS!
	April 20	Overcoming Obstacles
	Sports Director Highlight	Danny Finder
Chapter 5	May 4	Slayton Smith Drafted
	May 11	Devonna Playing Blastball
	May 18	The Wonderful Call!
	May 25	<i>Community Bond</i>
	CMO Highlight	Sarah Waller
Chapter 6	June 1	Determination
	June 8	Nathan Schulte Turns a Triple Play
	June 15	Ford County Job Fair
	June 29	Proud Dad
	Healthy Living/Aquatics Director Highlight	Stacie Droste

Chapter 7	July 8	DC Chat Raving About Danny
	July 13	To Be A Kid Again
	July 20	Camp Dodge Good Sam
	Property Manager Highlight	Gabriel Del Real
Chapter 8	August 3	Slayton Wanting to Help Coach
	August 10	Ramon Surprised
	August 17	Educating Our Youth
	August 24	Why I Love The Y
	August 31	Camp Dodge Kids
	Family Director Highlight	Cassie Roths
Chapter 9	September 7	Life Changing
	September 21	Building Lasting Bonds
	September 28	Olivia's Enthusiasm
	CFO Highlight	Karen Berry
Chapter 10	October 5	Biggest User
	October 12	Corporate Cup Conversation
	October 19	Haitian Kid Painting Ghosts
	October 26	High Fives for Founders Day
Chapter 11	November 2	Guest Pass for Students
	November 9	Sorority Ladies
	November 16	Helper with Cornhole
	Membership Director Highlight	Jodi Conrardy
Chapter 12	December 7	Getting Back After Surgery
	December 14	The Extra Mile
	December 21	The Best KOP
Chapter 13	Honorable Mention Stories	<i>Various</i>

Chapter 1

January 5

Finding Hope Through Exercise

Stacie Droste

I had received a call from Matthew Addison, wanting to meet with me to see if I could possibly help him control some back pain he was having. I told him I would do my best and we set a date to meet. When he came in to see me, I had him try different exercises to make sure that he was not in pain when working out. After working with him for an hour, I was able to develop a program for him that we both felt he could be successful with. As we were finishing up, he thanked me. He told me that coming in to see me he really didn't think I would be able to help him, but now he truly feels that he will be able work out without back pain and eliminate his back pain all together. Man I love what I do!!!!

January 12

Early Morning Members

Jodi Conrardy

It has really been nice to be able to connect with our early morning members. We were without an early morning person to open, so I was opening. It was great to be able to interact with the early birds and be able to get to know them by name. Love the dedication!

January 19

The Email

Chad Knight

During boy's basketball, we had a change in leadership within our Sports Department at the Dodge City Branch. The Boys Basketball season was about to begin and we were having a coaches meeting. DeWayne, the Branch Executive Director stepped in and ran the meeting. Meanwhile, Mandy Camacho was filling in and helping DeWayne get the rosters and all the coaches lined out. Mandy found all the coaches for the whole league and kept them in the loop when the coaches meeting was and was getting all the stuff ready for DeWayne. One of the responsibilities is the rosters. For about two days straight, Mandy and I worked on the rosters and got them ready. It was a little past the meeting they were ready but she worked hard to get them done. After it was all said and done, Mandy sent me an email to thank me. This was pretty AWESOME!! Here is the copy of the email:

"I just want to say thank you for being positive with me and very patient. I appreciate it."

Thank You! Mandy Camacho

That's what it's all about baby!! Helping move our mission into action and developing our staff to do the right thing. THANKS MANDY!!!

The first weekend of youth basketball had several highlights but was capped off by a half-court shot from 6th grader Isaiah Taylor. As the third quarter was winding down, Taylor's team was leading by a slim margin and was inbounding the ball from the other side of mid-court. Isaiah received the pass, took a couple dribbles, shook a defender and then buried a long shot as the buzzer sounded to put his team in firm control going to the final frame. All of the kids on his team ran out to him and celebrated like they had just won game seven of the NBA Finals. Moments like this are exactly why I decided to pursue a job in this field.

Perspective from the BOD President

By Board President Aaron Conrardy

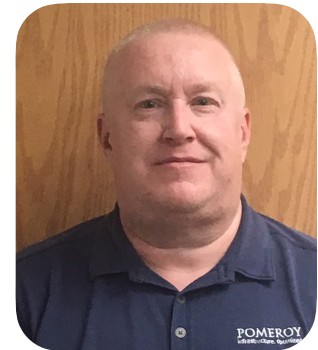
What does serving as the YMCA president mean to me?

I had the pleasure of serving as the president of the YMCA for a total of eighteen months. I found that time to be extremely rewarding to me as the YMCA continues to grow and serve the community. There are several groups of people that made my time as President truly rewarding.

Our YMCA and the services that we provide to the community would not be possible without the amazing volunteers that help with everything at the YMCA. From the volunteers that serve on the Board of Directors to the volunteers that help with the Family Fun Nights, each one of you truly makes a difference. The YMCA could not do what we do without all the support from our amazing volunteers!

Our YMCA would also not be the amazing place that it is without the wonderful staff that make each day special for those that spend time at our buildings and participate in our programs. I have gotten to know the staff very well and would like to thank each one of them personally. The YMCA is really like a second home to me and that is because of the amazing staff. Thank you!!

I am excited for what the future holds for the Dodge City Family YMCA as it continues to serve the community through our focus areas of "Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility."



Chapter 2

February 2

Linda Jones

DeWayne Donaldson

We were honored to receive this letter from Linda Jones, whose children participate in our child care programs:

"My children have been going to the YMCA for a few years now participating in the after school program, Camp Dodge, Fundays, and fun weeks, and they love it! They enjoy being able to go to a safe place and enjoy the company of great people. I'm very glad we have a program like this, as a parent it is nice to know that my children are safe and get to go on so many fun adventures with some awesome people. They learn respect, honesty, and responsibility and have been bringing it all home with them. They also learn a lot while they are there. The after school program is great for my oldest who has problems in school. He gets extra help with his homework and reading during the time he is there. It has been one of the best programs I have ever had my children in and they absolutely love it!"

~ Linda Jones

February 10

Lasting Impression

Katelyn McClure

While working my other job, I recognized a lady sitting at one of my tables. As I approached the table we both gave each other that "I know you from somewhere" look. As we got to talking we realized that we knew each other from the Y. Her kids were in my swimming lessons class over the summer. She told me that the kids still talk about swimming lessons and how much they missed being here! It was really great to hear that we can leave that much of an impression on kids!

February 16

Sweet Girl Moment

Cassie Roths

Ms. Corwin is one of our site leaders at Ross Elementary for the After School program. One day she had a young girl come up and sit with her. She asked if something was wrong and she pointed to her tummy. Then she talked and talked; there was nothing wrong with her. Ms. Corwin told her "I don't think there's anything wrong." So the young girl told her that she needed Ms. Corwin time. Then they chatted some more. What a sweet moment for both of them.



Loretta McDonald sent us a touching handwritten testimonial detailing her and her late husband's experience with our YMCA:

"My husband, Scott, and I joined the YMCA in September of 2013. It cost us only \$16 to join because that was the date and they were having a special that you paid the same amount as the date you joined.

I had wanted to go see the YMCA ever since it took over the Sheridan. One day we were just out and about when I said to Scott, "I want to go see the YMCA," so we went. I don't remember who it was that showed us around, but it made Scott interested. So we joined!

We would go to the YMCA once or twice a week. He always finished his workout before I did. It seemed like I never got a full workout in but I kept going.

In the summertime, I would take off and travel with my sister's carnival. In the meantime Scott kept going.

In August of 2014 Scott had a triple heart attack. The first one destroyed the whole backside of his heart causing a hole to be blown in the septum (the muscle that divides the right side of the heart from the left side). He passed away Thursday, August 7, 2014.

I was in shock and I didn't go back to the YMCA until April of 2015. I went back with the idea of dropping the membership.

I don't remember who I talked to but I discovered I could have one membership and it was half the price. While I was there I was told about a class called Yoga Light. I agreed to give it a try.

I went to my first class in May of 2015 and have been going ever since. After the first class, I went to Walmart and bought my own mat.

This last July I had basal cell cancer on my face and had to take radiation. While there, one of the ladies told me about the YMCA's LiveStrong Program. So I joined. It was not easy but I enjoyed it.

I still go to Yoga Light and then to the weight room when I work out for another hour twice a week. I gained five pounds over the holidays and am just now taking it off. I feel so much better after I take the yoga class and work out.

I will forever keep my membership and who knows what I will tackle in the future!"

Thank you, Loretta, for sharing your experience with us, and for your commitment to the YMCA!

Branch Executive Highlight: Jackie Regan

July marked my eleventh year with the YMCA of Southwest Kansas. Five years as Sports Director for the Garden City branch, one year as Senior Program Director for the Garden City branch and helping get the program side of Dodge City started. A handful of months as the "Associate Director of Programs" for the YMCA of Southwest Kansas, and a little over 4 years as Chief Operations Officer. I suppose that averages out to almost three years per title- we know Chad LOVES to make changes.



In January of 2017, Chad approached me about changing roles from the COO to the BED of the Garden City branch. I was open to the change, but as we started to transition, I was really struggling with letting go of the DC side of things. I won't go into much detail, but ultimately, I felt like I was deserting them, and I wasn't comfortable making the switch. I expressed my concerns to Chad and the Association council, and we backed off the transition and planned to put things on hold until we had YUSA audit our operations.

In March of 2017, the Dodge City branch had a major change with the departure of the BED, and Chad talked to me about taking the position in the interim, until we received the results of the audit with YUSA. So, just a few short months after thinking I was going to take on the GC branch, I accepted the Interim BED position for DC. The plan was for a 90-day interim period, at which point we would re-evaluate and go from there. In April, the YUSA assessment came back and recommended that we extend it through December. I agreed, why not, right? Just another curve on the old roller coaster we call the YMCA! However, as a loophole, another recommendation was to hire a branch exec. as soon as possible for the Garden City branch, so Chad's role could focus on the fundraising campaigns. This sped decision making up quite a bit. Chad gave me the opportunity to decide which branch I wanted to go for, as the audit recommended eliminating my current position. I never realized how stressful it would be to have the job that you know, and love be eliminated, and have make a choice on what to do next.

This decision had me in knots- I truly thought I had a lot more time to decide and weigh the pros and cons for both positions and how they would fit for my needs and goals, but with needing to fill the GC position, my timeline suddenly got much shorter. After a lot of praying, some tears, and talking to friends and family I decided to only apply for the Dodge City position. I truly felt this was the best decision for me, to make a major life change and start over, as well as for the Association as a whole. I knew that with this change, Chad could focus more on training the GC BED and know that I could focus on helping get DC operations on track. The DC staff and board made this seem like a no brainer as they were supportive and encouraging, and I could see the MAJOR potential we have in Dodge City. So, in the May board meeting, I officially accepted the position of Dodge City YMCA Branch Executive Director.

That done, I was driving back and forth from Garden to Dodge daily- and I REALLY was struggling to get all the things done I wanted to while losing two hours a day to windshield time, (Note to self here- I don't like commuting) so I ramped up my apartment/house search while I tried to get my house ready to sell in Garden. During this time GC hired a branch exec as well, and both of us were trying to learn the ropes of the new positions. It was a CRAZY couple of months and I was stressing over all the changes and trying to get a grip on the learning curve of new responsibilities, while letting go of things that had been very important of me in Garden!

Luckily in August, I found a house I loved, and made an offer. Of course, it couldn't be smooth and easy, as we were leaving for staff retreat the day after I saw the house, and I was trying to coordinate things with my realtor and bank, all while trying to play Chad's road games and have fun with staff. But, it all worked out, and I moved over in mid-September. Luckily, after one very tough week, where I packed my whole house, suckered some of GC staff members to help me pack and move, and hauled everything over, things calmed down for the most part.

I have done a lot of reflecting over the last few months, 2017 was probably one of the hardest in my life, but also one of the best. I am SUPER excited to start my first full year in 2018 at the Dodge City Family YMCA as the BED and work with the amazing staff and board to make our Y the best it can be! We truly have an exceptional staff and board and have a chance to really do some amazing things for the community of Dodge.

Chapter 3

March 2

Excited to be Recognized

Stacie Droste

The After School kids were playing in the gym and I spotted Tessa. I stopped to tell her that she was nominated as youth of the month. She asked what that meant so I explained that it was for a youth that represents our core values. Then I thanked her for being a good leader when I came to exercise with the After School kids. She was so excited to get this recognition that she asked me to go and tell all of the After School teachers. Now I have a friend for life with this young girl!!



March 9

Conquering Fears

Stacie Droste

I saw James leaving after his morning swim and asked how it was going. He said it was a good swim. We got into a deeper conversation and he shared with me that he taught himself to swim in the last four years. I was surprised by this because he was such a good swimmer. He went on to tell that when we first open he decided to conquer his fear of the water, so he started with water aerobics. Once his fear had lightened, he started swimming laps just in the shallow end. With the help of the lifeguards he worked his way up to swimming the length of the pool and learning all the different strokes. He continues to set goals for himself to help improve. James is a true inspiration!!

March 23

New Family In Town

Cassie Roths

Carrie was new to town and she was looking for childcare. She called up to the YMCA and asked if I could help her with childcare while she went to several interviews. So I told her to bring her family in so we could talk about it. Carrie came in that next day. She was so happy that I was able to help her out and give care to her children. She didn't know anyone in this town and was very thankful that I could come through and help. Carrie's children now attended our After School program and have made many friends.

There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it."

— Edith Wharton

CEO Highlight: Chad Knight



First, let me explain that I require every Management staff member to read **The Energy Bus**. The first rule is "You're the Driver of the Bus" and the second rule is "Desire, Vision and Focus move your bus in the right direction." As the CEO, I wear many hats for our small association. One of my hats is staff development. I am a firm believer that staff is our greatest resource and we must do everything in our power to guide them. This year embarked some changes in personnel. The toughest hat is the fiscal management and making sure as an association we are operating in the black. This is a tough job!

For one branch that has been operating for 50 years and the other branch that just finished their fifth year, this is a battle to keep funds separate. Let me tell you, the DC community does not want their money spent in GC and the GC community is the same mindset. So, trying to run an Association as one has been a battle! Two more rules on the Energy Bus are Don't Waste Your Energy on those who don't get on your Bus and "No Energy Vampires Allowed" on your Bus. I had to concentrate on these last two rules a majority of the time because of some negativity. I also concentrated on three others; Fuel your Ride with Positive Energy, Enthusiasm attracts more passengers and Energizes them during the Ride and Love your Passengers. To top it off, we are dealing with two communities, who do not always see eye to eye, in Dodge City and Garden City. They are big rivals and trying to make us one Association and keep everyone happy is a full time job in itself. This has been a struggle for the last five years, but it came to fruition this year as we are trying to become one Association. This led me to another rule; Invite People on Your Bus and Share your Vision for the Road Ahead. This was a tough vision to get everyone convinced and focused on, but we did it and we are not looking back.

To help us balance this new transition, we utilized our Resource Director, Jonie Welle to give us an analysis of our operation and finances. Jonie worked with YMCA of USA and brought in some advisors from Boulder Valley and Treasure Valley to give us a synopsis. When they came, the feedback was not positive. I feel like this defines my year in a nutshell! In addition we lost the Branch Executive Director in Dodge City in March. It was definitely a challenging year! Between balancing both communities as the CEO, trying to move into one association and worrying about the finances, my head was spinning all day and night! Plus, I had the assessments to review and needed to present some options and ideas to the Corporate Task Force. One segment of the assessment was staff structure. We listened to what was recommended and reorganized. This involved many changes and moving to a new corporate structure with two Branch Executive Directors at each branch and an Association staff with the CEO, CFO and a newly-created position the Chief Marketing Officer. I wanted to make Jackie the Branch Executive Director in Dodge City, but she was having reservations. After posting two positions at the start of the summer and getting these filled by July, we had all the passengers on the bus. I believe my highlight of the year was when the DC Branch Board allowed me to appoint Jackie as the Branch Executive Director. There are many other opportunities we need to take to make our association stronger, but one step at a time. I believe if we make some additional changes and are supported by the board, our association will be at its strongest.

CEO Highlight Continued...

Another hurdle was to move into an association budget. The complication with this change is getting everyone to comprehend and support that this is needed to run an association. Each branch should be sufficient enough to operate and cover the association costs to fly the YMCA flag as one association. The problem lies when both branches are not able to cover and even more difficult when one branch has a surplus and the other one is a huge deficit. Being a non-profit organization it is always a struggle to cash flow from month to month. We did fantastic the first six months. Our last six months was very challenging but we ended up okay. This leads to another chapter *Drive with Purpose!*

The management staff responded and made the necessary adjustments to keep the bus moving. Now, we must put everything together and make everything work. Getting everyone on the same page was critical for us. However, the bus had some problems along the way. I was back to not only wearing more than one hat, but fulfilling multiple positions. This was tough! I feel I have an amazing and positive staff, but they were down, numbers were atrocious and the overall morale needed a big boost. I did what I could and the staff supported me, however I had the looming task of our Capital Campaigns. I was in the middle of both campaigns and trying to raise money for both branches, and it was a struggle. Then, we received news that the GC Campaign was about \$600,000 off the original budget. This was mind boggling! I guess they say when it rains, it pours! We kept prodding along and making adjustments along the way. Then, we had a fantastic opportunity for the GC branch with the Match Day. If moving Jackie to Dodge City was my highlight, then the GC Match Day was the overall spotlight! I had tons of fun with this event and we ended up being the top money raising organization that day. We ended up with over \$50,000. It was AWESOME!! Then, if that was my spotlight, we moved the barometer for both branches quite a bit in the final quarter. I was able to get Dodge City close to \$400,000 and Garden City hit over a million. Things were happening!

When the bus stopped in December, we were able to finish the year as an association down 6% income and down 7% in expenses. With all the trials and tribulations, we were down from the year before, but our contributions were up 28%. Isn't that AWESOME? This led me to the last energy bus rule: Have Fun and Enjoy the Ride. The staff really stepped up to the plate this year in many aspects and did an excellent job working with the hands they were dealt. I am so thankful for all of you. I am fortunate to work with such amazing people. Thank you all for everything. Words cannot express how grateful I am to each and every one of you. As the CEO, I am proud to lead this wonderful organization and look forward to more exciting chapters yet to be written. Keep up the GOOD WORK!!! We can always improve more, but it takes everyone doing their job and hitting their numbers. We don't want the wheels to come off the bus!!

The Energy Bus: 10 Rules to Fuel Your Life, Work and Team with Positive Energy!

- 1. You're the Driver of the Bus.**
- 2. Desire, Vision and Focus move your bus in the right direction.**
- 3. Fuel your Ride with Positive Energy.**
- 4. Invite People on Your Bus and Share your Vision for the Road Ahead.**
- 5. Don't Waste Your Energy on those who don't get on your Bus.**
- 6. Post a Sign that says "No Energy Vampires Allowed" on your Bus.**
- 7. Enthusiasm attracts more Passengers and Energizes them during the Ride.**
- 8. Love your Passengers.**
- 9. Drive with Purpose.**
- 10. Have Fun and Enjoy the Ride.**

Chapter 4

April 6

Excited student from Beeson

Cassie Roths

I have monthly meeting with my staff, during which Mrs. Lisa shared a story with us about one of her after school students. Jose had moved away from Dodge City. He was very sad that he was leaving. They weren't gone for too long, and then they moved back to Dodge City. Once he returned to school he asked Mrs. Lisa if he could come back to the After School Program because he loves that part of the day. The passion he has for the program is so amazing.

April 13

Northwest After School ROCKS!

Stacie Droste

Cassie had asked me to visit all the after schools site and do some sort of exercise with them, and Northwest was the last school I attended. I would definitely say that I saved the best for last. I was immediately greeted with a warm smile from Kasey, the site leader. She pointed me in the direction of where to set up and then warned me that the kids might be a little wild. As I reached the gym, all of the staff was getting the kids lined up and ready to exercise. Not only were the kids excited to exercise, but the staff was as well. Every single kid participated and staff did as well. After we were done exercising the kids thanked me for coming to hang out with them. I went in thinking that they would be wild and crazy and they were any but. They were a joy to workout with. Northwest after school has great kids and staff...you guys ROCK!!!!



April 20

Overcoming Obstacles

Stacie Droste

Miranda had called me up to the Welcome Center to talk to a member who wanted to support the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program by buying some LIVESTRONG bands. Patricia and I got started talking about the program and she shared that she could relate to the survivor's because she had Fibromyalgia. I sat down and talked with her to get her story. She went on to tell me that she had almost always had problems but wasn't diagnosed until after her kids were out of school. At one point the pain was so bad that she didn't want to leave the house. Then her son had a baby boy and he struggled the first part of his life and watching her grandson and son be so strong, it moved her to do the same. She started coming back to the YMCA to the water aerobics classes and doing a little in the fitness center. She says she still has bad days, but she doesn't let it get her down anymore. Such an inspiring woman!!

Sports Director Highlight: Danny Finder

The sports department has changed drastically in 2017. Several improvements have taken place enhancing the quality of all our programs and promoting youth involvement. Some of these changes are highlighted below:

- ★ In 2017, the Dodge City Family YMCA partnered with both the Dodge City High School and Dodge City Community College in hosting youth nights at a high school football game, college football game, and a college volleyball game.
- ★ We worked closely with several of the high school coaching staffs in holding practices/workouts for some of our youth sports. This included four football practices at the high school, two volleyball practices, two girls' basketball practices and an evaluation workout with the baseball coaches at Demon Field.
- ★ We were assisted by some of the high school coaches and booster clubs to provide four new sets of football game jerseys that will be checked out to kids every football season. This assistance also allowed us to just recently purchase 35 new basketballs to use for youth basketball programs.
- ★ Along with those donations and a donation of 50 new soccer balls from the city, we also upgraded our baseball/softball equipment. We purchased 32 new batting helmets, 21 bats, 21 sets of catchers gear, and 20 batting tees.
- ★ Our participation numbers in youth sports increased in several programs. Most notably, our numbers jumped 48 participants in youth football, 29 participants in youth volleyball, and 71 participants in t-ball/blast ball to go along with improved numbers in several other programs as well.

The last twelve months has shown great promise in things to come in Dodge City youth sports. As the main provider for youth sports in Dodge City, we have merely begun to scratch the surface of things that are possible for the future.

In regards to my own personal life, moving to Dodge City was one of the toughest but best decisions I have ever made. Initially I was very hesitant to move out to western Kansas to take on a tough situation and definitely had my doubts about it. It, however, was quickly made clear to me that God had a plan he was working in my life. Since moving to Dodge City last January, I have strengthened my faith, been given a platform to positively impact lives with God's word, and even met my wife (just married in March 2018). Taking the risk of moving out to a place where I did not know anyone, had little knowledge of the situation I was inheriting, and had no idea what the future would hold has, without a doubt, reaffirmed my trust in God and provided an incredible amount of opportunities in my life!



Chapter 5

May 4

Slayton Smith Drafted for Baseball

Danny Finder



Slayton Smith is an outstanding, hardworking and determined young man. Despite having some obstacles with his physical health, Slayton has overcome the odds to play baseball in Dodge City this summer. During our youth baseball draft, the coaches discussed many kids while drafting their teams as they did not know most of the kids or their abilities. When Slayton's name was discussed, the conversation took off about how great of a kid he was and how the coaches would really like to have him on their team. Slayton was drafted shortly thereafter by Steve Latham who was ecstatic to have him be a part of his team.

May 11

Devonna Playing Blastball

Danny Finder

Devonna has shown incredible resolve in beating the odds to play blastball this summer. Devonna is in a motorized chair but has not let that stop her. I spoke with her mother about her playing blastball this summer and we have found a way to make it possible. I spoke with her mother a couple days after enrolling and Devonna was super excited about having the opportunity to play. She was so excited that she was telling everyone that she saw that day that she would be playing baseball this year. This included all of the teachers at her brother's school and everyone she saw while going through Wal-Mart.

May 18

The Wonderful Call!

Chad Knight

I received a call from Doug Keller. Doug pointed out to me that Danny, our Sports Director did an excellent job following up with him about a potential sponsorship opportunity. He thought Danny was very professional and was very thorough about the potential sponsorship. Doug was very pleased and though I should be aware of the excellent job he did. I told Doug thanks for calling me and letting me know. When I mentioned this to Danny and the staff during the staff meeting, Danny thought he was just doing his job and trying to secure a sponsor. I told him to keep it up and make that impression on everyone and the Dodge City YMCA sports programs will explode!

“There’s nothing so rewarding as to make people realize they are worthwhile in this world.”

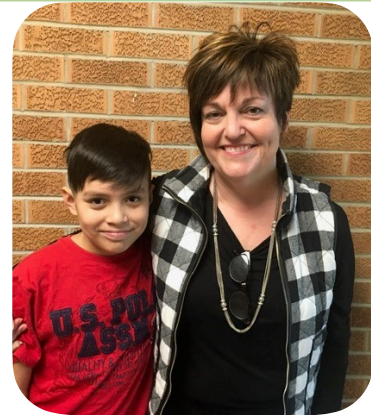
~ Bob Anderson

May 25

Community Bond

Cassie Roths

Camp Dodge is our Summer Program. I got a phone call from the Librarian at Northwest Elementary one day. Elaine was wondering if we had any spots left for a young boy who needed care while his aunt went to Mexico. I talked with Elaine a bit more and told her we could get the child in the program. She was very happy with the YMCA being able to help. It's awesome to see in our community how many people really care for other children in need and are willing to help. Thank you for helping a child to know he matters.



CMO Highlight: Sarah Waller



Looking back on the past year I can't help but smile. While full of change, all the changes were welcome, and I can honestly say my family's lives have improved since I began working for the Y.

I joined the YMCA as the Integrated Marketing & Communication Director (later renamed to CMO) in July. While I live in Garden City, I travel to the Dodge City branch once or twice a week. This helps me to not only "be in the loop" and form relationships with the staff, but to ensure the processes are consistent at both branches which is crucial for our association.

My newly-created position required continuing most of the YMCA's previous marketing efforts, while building on them to find new opportunities for exposure. My role involves assisting program directors with getting the word out about their program deadlines and events, soliciting media coverage, updating and managing our online and social media presence, ensuring brand compliance, leading marketing and membership meetings, coming up with new membership promotions, and most importantly, telling our story! It has been a challenge to juggle it all with two very active branches, but I've truly enjoyed navigating this role. Not only do I enjoy the work I do, but I feel honored to get to work alongside incredible people who exude positive energy and compassion, and grateful for a boss who gives me his full trust, support, and encouragement daily.

I always knew the YMCA was an organization that promoted healthy living and provided opportunities to those in financial need. However, working in these buildings and witnessing the difference the YMCA makes in our communities has given me a new respect for the entire operation. The Y doesn't just make a difference for people financially; it changes lives in ways that money can't, and I'm proud to have a small part in making a big impact.

Chapter 6

June 1

Determination

Stacie Droste

I was doing the swim test for the Camp Dodge kids, so they would be ready for the summer. I was doing a test on an older boy, and as he was getting into the water he informed me that he did not know how to swim. I told him that I would help and to not be scared. After we completed the swim test, he asked me if I would show him how to swim. I gave him some skills to work on while he waited for the group to be done. When the group got done, I announced that it was time to get out of the water and he said "Man, I almost had it!" He practiced the whole time, instead of playing with the other kids. I could see he was determined to learn to swim. The excited and proud look in his eyes said it all!!

June 8

Nathan Schulte Turns a Triple Play

Danny Finder

One of the greatest plays I have ever seen made by a 9-10 year old was Nathan Schulte's triple play. With runners on 1st and 2nd base, nobody out, Nathan Schulte got his team out of a jam nearly all by himself. The ball was hit sharply to Nathan at shortstop who caught the ball and proceeded to step on 2nd base and throw it to first before either base runner could tag up.

June 15

Ford County Job Fair

Jackie Regan

Last week Cassie and I attended the Ford County Job Fair. We had a great time visiting with people within the community and talking about all the great things happening at the YMCA. We gave out a ton of passes and by far the most popular question was about our pool and the water aerobics classes we offer. There were also a ton of requests for info about our upcoming sports and swim lessons! We hope to see many of the people we talked to come check out the Y and try on of the many great things we have to offer.

June 29

Proud Dad

Jodi Conrardy

I was up front working my Director on Duty shift when Leonardo Loya came in with his daughter Natalia. He handed me a KOP Gift Certificate that Natalia had earned this past school year. He told me that this was the 3rd straight year that she had earned one of these. He was so proud, and was telling me how great of a student she is. Way to go Natalia!!!

Healthy Living/ Aquatics Director Highlight: Stacie Droste



Going into my fourth year at the YMCA, 2017 had been full “firsts” and “news.” As I continued to manage both the healthy living and the aquatics departments, I also acquired more responsibility.

In January, we opened the Functional Fitness Center, which allowed a more spacious area for our members to work out. With a punching bag, battle ropes and squat rack, this area was instantly popular. It was nice to give more space for members to work out, so we added our Y Express, which offered members a quick circuit in a more private setting.

As we moved into summer, I was preparing to run my first swim meet which was a two-day event. I went to Garden City to help and learn a little bit about running a meet and then felt more prepared to run my own. With the help of my wonderful parent committee and the rest of the swim parents, the meet was a success. The two days ran smoothly and all 14 teams seemed to really enjoy the meet. Then in August, we hosted our first triathlon, called Lagoonathon. Since I was away on staff retreat, David Snodgrass and again my wonderful swim parents ran the event and did a great job. Both events wouldn't have been successful without our great partnership with the Long Branch Lagoon.

Once the Lagoonathon was over, I turned my attention to the 6th annual Corporate Cup Challenge. I would have to say that this year's Corporate Cup was the best year yet. We had a record number of teams participate, so we ended up having a small and large division. All the teams were great, as everyone chipped in to help volunteer when needed. This required me to let go of some control and trust that my volunteers could handle things without me. I am truly blessed by all the help from the teams!

While Corporate Cup was going off without a hitch, Diamonds Athletics and Flip Zone were finally moving into their own buildings. Both coaches were excited to be in their new buildings and were ready watch their programs grow.

Through all the changes in each department, I also was given some more responsibility behind the scenes, as we had made some structural changes in the association. Jackie moved over from Garden City to take over the Branch Executive Director position and I was asked to step up and take on the Senior Program Director position. This meant I got to be little more hands on with each department and I was now involved with board meetings. Though I have loved the added challenge, I am still learning how to juggle it all.

As my work life continued to get busier so did my home life. Being a mommy to an active little man has been the best job I've ever had. Broxton went through some firsts, as well, from standing on his own to learning to walk. My favorite first was in May, when we celebrated Broxton's first birthday. Since then life has been crazy! Broxton loves coming to the Y and playing “ball” and showing off to anyone who will watch. Brad and I continue to work as a team to raise the greatest blessing we could have asked for. As another year starts, and we have more news and firsts, I look forward to seeing what lies ahead for both my work and personal life!

Chapter 7

July 8

DC Chat Raving About Danny

Molly Johnson

I came across a post on DC Chat about the YMCA Sports Director and staff. It said this: "Thanks to the YMCAs sports director (Danny) and staff helping him, this summer seemed to run a lot better than previous years. He worked hard to get new equipment and managed to keep things organized, even with multiple rescheduled games due to weather. He took on a big job with a bad reputation and has done a great job. As a coach, I found him to be easy to get along with and quick to get back to me with answers. So, if you previously have chosen to stop Y sports because of poor organization please reconsider and get your youth involved! And thanks to everyone who volunteers their time to coach!" Some of the following comments mentioned things like the text updates, the water park party and praising the YMCA. It was neat to see such positive feedback.

July 13

To Be A Kid Again

Stacie Droste



I was walking through the gym and Molly was organizing a game of sharks and minnows with the Camp Dodge kids. I asked if I could join them for a bit and they all screamed yes. First round was a minnow and was instantly targeted by one of the sharks, didn't even make it across the "pond". Then second round I was a shark. Every kid wanted me to catch them and then would snicker when they were caught. I managed to catch them all eventually. After the game was over, they all thanked me for playing with. It was a nice break in the day and made me feel like I was a kid once again.

July 20

Camp Dodge Visits the Good Sam

Molly Johnson

Molly told us how excited the nursing home patients were at Good Sam. They really enjoyed the Camp Dodge kids coming for a visit!

Property Manager Highlight: Gabriel Del Real

2017 went so fast and it was my first year as a "true" YMCA employee. I will say, it was a very nice year. There were some big changes and some up and down moments, but I have to say overall it was a very good experience as a full time YMCA employee. I met a lot of new members and kids from our youth programs, especially the After-School kids. When I take my baby to school all the little kids recognize me from the Y and that is amazing for me. Thanks to all of our members for being so nice.



Chapter 8

August 3

Slayton wanting to help coach

Danny Finder

I was walking from my office to the copy room right as the Camp Dodge kids were walking around to the bathroom. Slayton came up to me and asked me when football was going to be starting but that he wasn't sure if he really wanted to play. He mentioned that he knew a lot about the game and wanted to help and was wondering if he could help coach instead of playing. I told Slayton that we would love to have him involved anyway possible, and that we could put him with a team to help coach. Slayton's eyes lit up and he was ecstatic about how he would have the opportunity to coach the game that he loved so much.

August 10

Ramon surprised

Gabriel Del Real

Ramon Pena was so happy to be chosen for our Member of the Month for August. Ramon is always so friendly and always has time to talk. Thanks for being a great member, and congratulations, Ramon!

August 17

Educating our Youth

Stacie Droste

Jodi and I were sitting at our booth at the DC3 college community fair when this young gentleman came up wanting to ask us a few questions. He said that he was from Dodge City, so he still thinks of the YMCA as the Sheridan (like a lot of other people in this town do) and wanted to know when our Y would look more like the one in Garden City. Then he immediately said "You are still going to get my business." He has been to another place in town and said he wouldn't go back. I then explained to him that we are a non-profit and the Garden City YMCA has been there 50 years and we have only been around 5. Then I also explained that we must raise money for improvement to our facility and that we are currently going through a mini capital campaign to update the locker rooms and hopefully add a bigger strength center in our fitness center. Then he asked if it would be like Garden's and I informed him that it would be better. He thanked me for explaining all that to him because he was unaware of how it all worked.

**Live in the moment and make it so beautiful
that it will be worth remembering.**

August 24

Why I Love the Y

Stacie Droste

I read this post that one of my employees added to our staff page and I had to share to show how great it is to work for the YMCA. "So a while back, I got to work early and I wanted a drink from the vending machine. While I was there a very small girl came up to me and asked me if there was anything from the vending machine that was a dollar. I was showing her all the food items that were a dollar, once she finally decided on what to get, I pulled a dollar from my wallet and paid for it. I didn't get a drink, but I did get to make someone's day. After that, I went to go clock in and grab the keys to the pool. I was walking towards the pool when she ran up to me and asked me if I was a lifeguard. I told her I was and then she smiled and ran away. Today was my first day shadowing a 1st grade classroom at Soule for this school year. I walked inside and I saw the little girl in there sitting on the carpet along with everyone else. As I was walking around the room, I came by her desk and she told me, "I remember you. You're the lifeguard from the Y." It really made my day."



August 31

Camp Dodge Kids

Cassie Roths



Gretchen Torrez said, "While working at Camp Dodge, I am always reminded of why God put me there." We took our older group yesterday to visit residents at the Good Samaritan. I could not have my heart filled more, watching these kids eager to talk to the residents and hand them their flowers they made. I was so proud of the love they wanted to share. One kid commented that we should do this more! We don't give kids the benefit of their love to share enough. My heart was overflowing watching the residents smile. Never forget our elderly, one day we will all be there.

"Choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life."

~ Confucius

Family Director Highlight: Cassie Roths

The Dodge City Family YMCA has been a big part of my life. This August will be five years that I have been employed at the Y. In May it will be two years as the Family Director, and I'm blessed to have the opportunity to grow in an environment that provides fun, learning, character education, social surroundings and lifelong lesson on what it means to be a caring and respectful person. I am able to have the opportunity to raise my sons in a Christian based organization. We provide a variety of unique and challenging activities in all kinds of settings and we strive to help each and every child flourish to the best of his/her ability. We want these kiddos to discover amazing memories with friends, a greater respect for themselves and others, increased sense of self-worth, and a better understanding of teamwork. Our core values of the YMCA are respect, responsibility, caring, and honesty!



- ★ We continue to offer the after school, which took a big hit losing the 21st Century Grant which means losing three of our after school sites, tutors and raising fees. On a side note, we were able to gain another site at Soule Elementary to split Northwest and Soule. Northwest is one of our big programs serving over 100 students this school year in 2017-2018.
- ★ Camp Dodge: We served 121 students this year, which increased from last year.
- ★ Starting a Special Needs Camp in 2017 was a success; we served nine students, with the help of Western Plains Medical Complex and Honey Nails.
- ★ Our Fun-Days have been a huge success this year, serving 138 students
- ★ Mom's Morning Out served 38 students throughout the year.
- ★ We offer six Family Fun Nights yearly; and we've increased our participants with each event.
- ★ Ceramics continues to partner with 4-H students and provided more services to a variety of ages. We will continue to have a summer program and program through the holidays in November and December.

We continue to make a difference in the lives of our families by giving them a safe and drug free environment, while they build a stronger foundation for tomorrow. We welcome you to join us in our quest for a much better tomorrow as we strive for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We want each and every person that walks through our doors to feel like they are a part of our little family here at the YMCA, so we hope you'll embrace us and this opportunity to be a part of your child's life!

Overall, I feel that 2017 was a challenge which has helped me grow and experience the impact that the YMCA can make every day in our families' lives. It has made an impact in my personal life with raising my boys and striving to be the best person I can be daily. I'm looking forward to 2018 and believe it's going to be one of the best years yet.

Chapter 9

September 7

Lifechanging

Jackie Regan

The other day I texted Aaron, our board president, and thanked him for everything he does for the Y. Not only does Aaron serve as a leader on our board, he actively volunteers at multiple events. He cooked for the HS football coaches when they volunteered to help at equipment checkout, he serves on multiple committees, he is at EVERY corporate cup event and is always willing to help. When I thanked him he said, "I Just like doing it for the Y, the Y changed my life." I thought that was an amazing thing to say. Thanks for all you do again, Aaron, by giving back to the Y, hopefully we are also helping to change someone else's life!

September 21

Building Lasting Bonds

Stacie Droste

Shannon was going to a doctor's appointment to get the results from her tests; one of her class participants took it upon herself to go with Shannon to her appointment because no one else was able to go with her. This class participant thought enough of Shannon to go with her so she wasn't alone when she got the results. The bonds that are made here at the Y are amazing. We are so lucky to be a part of something more!



September 28

Olivia's Enthusiasm

Jackie Regan

I had told staff during our regularly weekly meeting that Danny had been bragging about how GREAT his flag football team was. I had also mentioned it to a couple board members as well. One of them told me that he had been up here taking pictures and Danny's team was looking a little rough. One kiddo was doing cartwheels instead of playing. When staff heard this, Karla started laughing and told us that it was her daughter, Olivia and that she was so excited that when she was playing, she was doing cartwheels during the game. Way to have some fun Olivia!

**"People will forget what you said,
people will forget what you did, but people will never
forget how you made them feel."**

~ Maya Angelou

CFO Highlight: Karen Berry

"Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself." — Leo Tolstoy

Change...And plenty of it! No, I am not referring to coins in one's pocket, wish I were. I am referring to the Young Men's Christian Association of Southwest Kansas in the year of 2017. After an assessment done by Y National our reorganization began. Some of the feedback was helpful while some of it was most discouraging. A committee was organized, and new employees were put into place in both branches.

Shortly after all of this, we went on staff retreat. We went to Oklahoma City, to do team building exercises, visit other Y's for new ideas and enjoy both our co-workers and spouses. I received new insights during our time together.

One of our activities was to visit the Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum. It was the sight of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. There is a YMCA directly across the street. A policy regarding number of counselors to take the children outside was being followed. God made one person run late to work that day and saved many Y-kids' lives. At one point during our tour I heard my name being called; at first, I thought nothing of it, as it turned out a friend from my childhood was there at the same time. The hate the bombers felt was both nauseating and beyond my comprehension. I made a decision that day. We returned from staff retreat and got back to the day to day of running the Y. At first it appeared, we were off to a new start; but hard work and discontent snuck in, as well as finances, and more change happened.

I will close with a story often attributed to the Cherokee Indians, George Bernard Shaw and sometimes to Billy Graham: THE TALE OF TWO WOLVES

A grandfather is talking with his grandson and he says there are two wolves inside of us which are always at war with each other.

One of them is a good wolf which represents things like kindness, bravery and love. The other is a bad wolf, which represents things like greed, hatred and fear.

The grandson stops and thinks about it for a second then he looks up at his grandfather and says, "Grandfather, which one wins?" The grandfather quietly replies, "The one you feed."



Chapter 10

October 5

Biggest User

Jodi Conrardy

Roman Holguin was the top user for September; I gave him his t-shirt and he was so excited about it! Keep up the hard work, Roman.

October 12

Corporate Cup Conversations

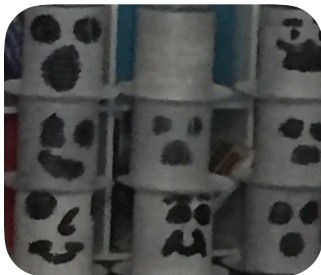
Jackie Regan

With a record high 10 teams competing and almost 30 participants per team, we had a lot of great feedback during Corporate Cup this year. Aaron let me know that he had a lot of encouraging conversations with participants. One of them was with Dr. Phillips, who told Aaron how much he has enjoyed Corporate Cup and has noticed all the great things the Y is doing in the community.

October 19

Haitian Kid Painting a Ghost

Cassie Roths



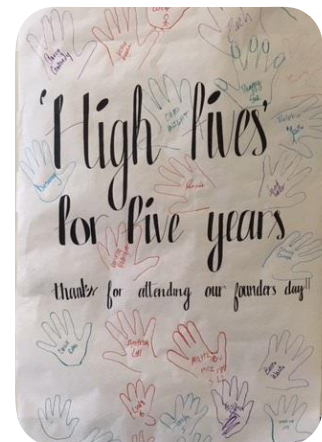
Katie Corwin is the site leader at Ross Elementary. Osney Barber is a new student and is from Haiti. The students had to make their own ghost. Osney was so happy about the project that he made his ghost with a smile face. Katie loved how unique his project looked. We are thankful to be a part of something great with all the children.

October 26

High Five for Founders Day

Jackie Regan

Today was the 5th Anniversary of our Founders Day, which was the day we “officially” got our charter from YUSA. Our theme was “High Five for Founder Day” and we had celebratory activities happening throughout the day. I thought it was AWESOME when Chad walked in and was high-fiving some of our “regulars” who couldn’t BELIEVE it had been five years since we became a YMCA! They just kept telling Chad, “Oh no, it can’t have been that long ago.” Watching Chad interact and show so much enthusiasm with our members is always GREAT, and getting feedback during our celebration was a great time!



Chapter 11

November 2

Guest Pass for Students

Cassie Roths

I went to Beeson to help with the After School Program one afternoon. I had a young lady ask me about the YMCA and if someone could try it out first. I told her that I could give them a 14 day pass to be able to try the facility for free. I had several of the students ask me if they could have one of my cards. So I got two cards out and told them that they could come to the YMCA for free and have some fun. They were very excited and couldn't wait to tell their parents about it. It felt so good to see the children's reactions and how happy they were about the passes. The children made my day!

November 9

Sorority Ladies

Karla Springer

The ladies that take the morning senior exercise class were talking about how much fun they had when they were younger. Nice to see how the Y brings together new and old friends!

November 16

Helper with Cornhole

Danny Finder

We were finishing up the last week of the Cornhole regular season and had a game and a half left to play before finishing for the night. At some point during the second to last game, Naziah Marta, intrigued by what we were doing, came over to help. As the players finished throwing their beanbags, Naziah would quickly pick up all of the bean bags and hand them to the players. Once everything had been picked up and the players each had their bags in hand, Naziah would then race to the other side so he was ready to pick up the bags on the other side. This went on for nearly an hour as we finished out our last two games. After the games I talked to Naziah, who was sweating profusely at this time from running back and forth in a hot gym for an hour. I asked him if that was hard work and he quickly shook his head with a smile on his face. As I asked him this, I got \$5 out of my pocket and gave it to Naziah for his efforts.

Membership Director Highlight: Jodi Conrardy

2017 was a year of change here in Dodge City, from a new Branch Executive Director to a new Marketing Director. It amazes me how resilient our staff continues to be with all the changes. With budget concerns and everything in between we keep going no matter what we face. Membership continues to be ever evolving with promotions, staff changes at our Welcome Center and keeping our members and guests happy. I have been really happy with my committee members this past year being more involved and attending meetings. I look forward to what we can accomplish this next year. We also were able to increase our Corporate Partnerships adding several this past year. With the Marketing Director's support this next year we will be able to bring new life to our membership promotions as well as think outside the box to come up with even more things we can implement to increase our membership and strengthen our Y! Together with the entire staff we will have a great 2018.

Chapter 12

December 7

Getting Back After Surgery

Stacie Droste

Monica came in to the pool one afternoon. She was the first one there and was very excited about it. She got in and did a few exercises and swam a little. When she got out of the pool, she informed that she had had back surgery four months ago and the doctor recommended getting in the pool to help with her recovery. She was grateful that we have a pool and that we were open during the day, so she could come in when there weren't very many people.

December 14

The Extra Mile

Jackie Regan

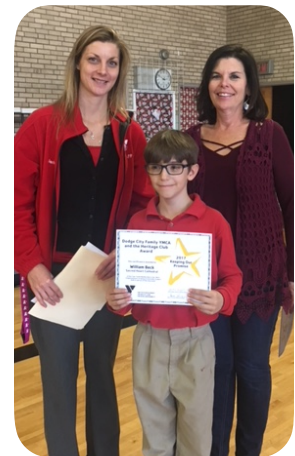
I had heard that some of our early morning swimmers were really disappointed when Azi left her position up there since she was always reliable and they enjoyed talking to her. The early morning position is a tough one to fill and of course a VERY important position since they open the building and keep things consistent for our diehard morning members. Not long after, I heard through other members that the new employee, Mary Elizabeth was getting rave reviews. I asked what had been said, and was told that she was great, and that she always had a towel labeled and ready to go for the regulars so if they came in while she was getting coffee going, they didn't have to wait. She is doing an amazing job at doing what we preach and doing a little extra for our members!

December 21

The Best Day- KOP

Jackie Regan

We attended an assembly at Sacred Heart Elementary School the other day, and a few of the staff, Nanette from our Board of Directors and I got to witness the cutest thing when we gave one of the winners his FREE Keeping Our Promise year scholarship. He told me as I handed him the certificate, "This is the best day of my life!" It warmed my heart to know we truly made a difference in that kiddos life!



Chapter 13

Honorable Mention Stories

An Employee's Passion Cassie Roths



Eunice is one of my child watch employees. She has been with the YMCA since it first opened. The passion she has for her job and people is absolutely amazing. I sent out thank you cards to my employees. Eunice messaged me and was very thankful of what I have done. She sees the passion I have for my job and people.

Excitement in the Recognition Stacie Droste

As I was walking through the lobby, I saw Jackie, Ilene and Emily sitting having their morning coffee. I informed Jackie that she was nominated for the Healthy Living Champion for 2016. She was so excited; she started bopping around and kept asking questions about the award. I explained to her how we came to pick her, and how I truly felt she was a role model for others. With pride in her eyes, she thanked me for picking her and the three of them continued to celebrate in Jackie's honor. It's also fun to see this beautiful group of ladies cheer each other on and share in their accomplishments.



Family Bond Stacie Droste

I was sitting in my office talking with Katelyn, when I looked out in to the Fitness Center and saw the sweetest thing. Jeff Lopp and his mother, Penny, had just got off the treadmills and were planning to go their separate ways for the day. Before heading in their own directions they shared and hug and kiss, said "I love you," and told each other to have a good day. I have seen them walk on the treadmills together, but this was the first time I had the chance to witness the love between the mother and her son. This is a wonderful example of the YMCA being all about family.

Member of the Month Jodi Conrardy

I was working at the Welcome Center when Marilyn Koehn came in. I told her that she was our Member of the Month. She was so excited, she also decided to join my membership committee. Thanks for being so committed, Marilyn!

Junior Excited Basketball Shot

Cassie Roths

I coached my son's kindergarten basketball team this year. We started the game and going into the second half Junior was running down the court and the other boy threw the ball to him. Junior ran up with the ball and made his first basket of the season. Once he made the basket he ran to his parents with joy asking if they saw him make the basket. He was so excited about making the basket!



Kordell Howard

Danny Finder

Kordell Howard and the Sooners had yet to score a basket through two full weeks of the basketball season. In their 3rd game, not only did they score, they nearly won the game. Kordell paced the team by scoring 11 of the team's 15 points. Unfortunately for the Sooners, they came up just short losing 16-15. The team however, celebrated the points as if they had just won the championship.

A Pleasant Surprise

Stacie Droste

As I was waiting to be seen at the chiropractic office, Shaunnon came out and started talking to me. He shared that he had a two week pass to the Y. He said that he was pleasantly surprised with what we had to offer and was planning to join. He went on to share that the place he had been working out at before, was not very clean and he had had a close call with a loose dumbbell head. He felt that the Y was clean and had some equipment that he liked to use that the other place didn't have. When I mentioned that I wished we could get new equipment he said "It doesn't matter if it's new, it matters that it is well taken care of." This made feel proud of what we have!

What a Good Sports Director

Stacie Droste

I was helping the Welcome Center when Loretta came to get the paper. I asked how she was doing and she said great. She then went on to say that she had being losing weight and was feeling really good about it. I told her she looked great and to keep up the good work. It feels good when our members share their victories with us, no matter how big or small!

What a Good Sports Director

Stacie Droste

Over the weekend, I was at a Super Bowl party and there were a couple of parents of kids that play youth basketball there, Jeremy Rabe was one of those parents. He shared with me that he was pleased with our new Sports Director, Danny. He went on to say that he really likes seeing Danny on the weekends and he thinks that he is going to be the best Sports Director that we have had. It always feels good to hear such great things about the Y and the people that work here.

LIVESTRONG Bonds

Stacie Droste

I had the pleasure of meeting for lunch with my first LIVESTRONG at the YMCA participants this week. We caught up with each other and shared what we had going on with our lives. We shared stories of Jerry, who passed away in August and we listened to Kate tell us her newest battle with cancer. As I sat there taking it all in, I couldn't help but think of what a great program that the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is and the lifelong bonds that it has not only on the participants, but myself as well. I truly feel blessed be part of something so great!



Hard Times, Happy Thoughts

Cassie Roths

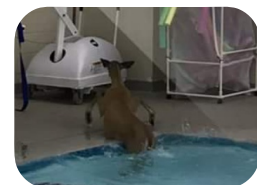


Sandy is one of my After School, Funday, and Camp Dodge employees, and she also helps with the Welcome Center. Sandy is very passionate about her job and loves to help others at any given time. She was having a bad day due to some situation. So my first instinct was to make her laugh and listen to what's was going on. After we had our conversation she told me how thankful she was for me to just listen and make her laugh during her hard times.

Oh, Deer!

Jodi Conrardy

I was at the Welcome Center talking to Azie, and one of our members, James Hall, came up and was telling us about the deer that came into our indoor pool through an open side door and then jumped in! Not something that happens every day at the Y!



New Member... So Much More!

Stacie Droste

I was walking with Juan G to my office to do his first 'Better You' appointment. As we were walking, I asked him what brought him to the YMCA. He said that the Y has so much more than the other place had been working out at. He went on to tell me that he likes that we have an indoor pool, because he wants to start swimming and he is excited about our functional fitness room. It's good to know that we can offer more for our members.

STEM Night with Summer Camp Kids

Molly Johnson

I went to STEM Night event at the High School with my kids, hoping that they would have fun and maybe I could find some cool things for our Summer Camp kids to do. I was talking to the person that was representing the Kansas Parks & Wildlife, asking if they did presentations for a group of kids or anything of that nature and explained to him why. I was explaining what we are doing this summer with Camp Doge kids I had a group of five kids from last year come up and say hi to me. I thought it was so awesome to see the group of kids continuing to hang out long after Summer Camp is over. That goes to show that we are building life-long friendships.

The Conversation

Chad Knight

I called and visited with Scott Bogner to see how things were going with Boys Basketball and the overall operation of the YMCA for the DC Branch. Scott has voiced his concerns to the Corporate Board about our situation with sports and just general operation of a few things at the YMCA. I told him we have made a change in leadership and wanted to visit about some things. He said DeWayne stepped in and did a great job running the coaches meeting. He said the games and practices are all running well with no problems. He said everything is much better.

Excited Wilroads Students

Cassie Roths



I went over to Wilroads to work for the After School Program, one afternoon and the students were so happy that I was able to sub for them. They enjoyed playing basketball and board games together. Most of the students wanted me to come back the next day so they could play again. The students are so loving and loved to play all together. The After School Program is a big part of my life and I enjoy getting to know students and parents.

Enjoying the Y Express

Stacie Droste

I was finishing putting up the signs in the Y Express room, when a member came in to use the equipment. As I was leaving the room, she took out her headphones and told me that she really liked the new room and just wanted to say thanks for adding it our Y. It feels good to know that we are adding things that are members can really enjoy.

Prayers for Member, Flowers for Cassie

Cassie Roths

I went into the weight room one morning to work out and I met a woman named Beulah. She was talking with another lady about her daughter who had just passed away. I overheard them talking and went up to the lady to ask her if I could pray for her. Beulah was very happy that I'd asked, and told me that she wished there was more people out there that would pray for others. I told her I was happy to pray for her anytime she needed it. A week later, she came by to give me some flowers here at the YMCA, to thank me for helping her through her hard times and said that I was a part of her family now. I'm so thankful to have the opportunity to help others around the YMCA and pray for whoever needs it. Beulah is a very wonderful lady and I'm glad to be a part of her life.



Cimarron Kids Sent Thank You

Cassie Roths

Cimarron Elementary students had a field trip day to come to the zoo in Dodge City. It was a rainy day, so the teacher contacted me to see if they were able to come to the YMCA to have lunch and be able to do some indoor activities due to the weather. I wanted the children to be able to still have a great field trip experience so I was able to have them come to the YMCA. The staff was very grateful that the YMCA was very open to having them come in last minute. I received thank you cards in the mail that next week from the students expressing how much fun they had. They were hoping to come back next year.

Y-Splash is Making a Splash!

Stacie Droste

I was lucky enough to help with Y-Splash this year. We broke into groups to work with the kids. At the end of the first day the kids were so excited and had so much fun, they kept asking me when they could come back and learn more, and parents were thanking me for offering such a great program. It feels good to know we can offer this free program, while teaching young kids basic lifesaving skills.

Foster Kids Helping with Fun Night

Molly Johnson

I was getting ready for our End of the School Year Family Fun Night while a Fun Day was going on in the Child Care Classroom. I was setting things up and a few of the children were helping me out and at the end of setting up the cake walk, one of the little girls started following me around everywhere I went wanting to help me with anything and everything she possibly could. I ended up giving a few of the kids a piece of candy since they helped me out quite a bit. Later, I learned that the little girl that I had made friends with is a foster kid. It really is a blessing to make connections with kids that have all different backgrounds and making a positive impact on their lives.

Camp Dodge Great Bend Trip

Molly Johnson



I was hanging out with the kids at Camp Dodge the day after the older kids went to the Kansas Wetlands Education Center in Great Bend. I had a child telling me all about the Kansas Wetlands and I asked him if he had been there before. He hadn't been there but his sister told him all about the trip so he was really excited to get to go the next day.

A Surprise Sponsorship

Danny Finder

I was up at the front desk discussing something with the Welcome Center staff when Erin Lybarger, Manager of Freddy's, walked in. She came in and out of the blue asked what kind of sponsorship deals we would do. I told her we were currently offering sponsorships for baseball/softball teams as well as a Super Saturday for soccer medals and trophies. She took the information with her and called me back later that same day saying that they would be willing to sponsor all three events.

Swim Team's Success

Stacie Droste



After the meet in Hays, Naomi called me to give me the update on how they did for the day. She informed that the team got fourth place, but the morning kids (10 & under) did not have any disqualifications. It is not rare for the older kids to not DQ but a pretty amazing accomplishment for the little ones. Coaches from other teams were coming up to congratulate her and the team. One of the coolest things is that a lot of our little ones are first year swimmers. That is AWESOME!!!

Minor League Underdog

Danny Finder

In our Minor League baseball tournament, we had two teams playing in the first round that had drastically different seasons. Our #1 seed, Phillips Chiropractic (5-0), was playing our #4 seed, Black Hills Energy (0-5) in the first round. Black Hills jumped out to an early 7-0 lead in the first inning but would not score another run until they were forced to answer to push the game to extra innings. Both teams went back and forth answering each other run for run until we were in the bottom of the 6th inning. Entering the bottom half of the 6th inning, Black Hills Energy held a 16-10 lead and looked destined to meet up with Freddy's Frozen Custard in the championship game. Phillips Chiropractic was not however done as they answered back with seven runs of their own to win the game by a final score of 17-16. Phillips Chiropractic would go on to beat Freddy's Frozen Custard in the championship bout following their marathon of a first round game

Finding Success in the First Year

Stacie Droste

We had the Champion combine meet here in Dodge City this past weekend, where the Water Demons competed against all the teams in Western Kansas Swim Club. Some of our kids were working towards the goal of qualifying for the divisions meet, and two of our swimmers did just that. Both Eli and Nate Conard cut their times down enough to make it do divisions. To make it an even better story they are both first year swimmer!! Their dedication and hard work paid off. And it was fun to see their family share in their victory. Way to go Conards. Keep up the great work!!!

Megan Thankful for her Job at the YMCA

Cassie Roths

Megan was a stay home for several years and would always come to work out at the YMCA. She would also bring her girls to child watch and Mom's Morning out on Fridays. Megan came up to me one day and asked if I was hiring in child watch, to be able to get her and her girls involved more. So, I saw a great opportunity for me to hire Megan and having experience in the field. Parents love to have a safe place to bring their children while working out and Megan sure was great with her own and others. Megan started working for us August of 2016. She left us shortly before a year of her working at the YMCA, to take a great opportunity full time at the Gray County Office in Cimarron. Megan was very thankful that I gave her the chance to work at the YMCA and be a part of something great. The YMCA family wishes you best of luck.



John Downing**Jodi Conrardy**

John Downing was happy about temporary pass , he was in Dodge City working and told me only in town for a week. I was happy to get him a pass !

Conard Kids Finish Strong**Stacie Droste**

I spoke with Gayly Conard after the divisions swim meet to find out how Nate and Eli did. Gayly informed me that both boys did great but Nate was just shy of qualifying to the next swim meet. Knowing that this was their first-year swimming competitively, this is an amazing accomplishment. She then told me that they are ready for next year and plan to go even further. I just love hearing the successes of our youth and I can't wait to see how much they grow in the next year!

Danny's Flag Football Team**Jackie Regan**

I received a text from a member who told me he saw Danny's flag football team play on Saturday and informed me, "His team is sooooo.... Competitive that they are doing cartwheels more than they are playing football." I had to tease him about it and when we nominated him he told us that she is the only girl that he has on his team this year and people have been noticing how much fun she is having on the field, you sure can't miss the cartwheels!

Tackle Football Party in the Back Field**Danny Finder**

With the last couple minutes of a game well in hand, the DC Lightning had the ball and were driving to score another touchdown that would put the game even further out of reach. The ball carrier however, fumbled on the two yard line and the opposing team recovered. The opposition celebrated and took over possession all while the Lightning, though winning handily, had a serious look of disappointment at their mistake. They took their positions somberly and waited quietly for the snap. Moments before the snap, Tochi Okoro, who was playing defensive end for the Lightning, yelled "Party in the backfield!" This instantly drew laughter and energized the rest of the team before the snap. They recorded a safety that very next play.

Guinea Pig**Jodi Conrardy**

I was talking to our new member Ofelia Paniagua, and she was telling me that she has a group of friends that were interested in joining the Y. She volunteered to be the first to come in and join. She was really excited to learn about the MGM prizes, too!

The Trophy

Jackie Regan

I was out at tackle football Super Saturday, helping Danny and a couple of the players who had just finished wandered over to the table to look at all the medals and trophies that were sitting out. They noticed the team championship trophy or the "Lombardi" Traveling Trophy and got so excited. They were asking me if they won their last game if they got the trophy. I explained that the sponsor of the bowl would get to display the trophy and their team name and year would be engraved on it. They thought that was pretty AWESOME! The two championship teams were so proud of their trophy and LOVED taking pics with it. Great job Danny on getting the team trophy done! It was a big hit!

Looking and Feeling Good

Stacie Droste

Tamara became a YMCA member in July. She had told me that she had already lost 80 lbs, but wanted to lose 50 more and wanted some help with that. We visited several times and I gave her things to do to help her workouts. She was here every day working hard for her goals that she wanted to accomplish. One day she when came in to do her weekly weigh in, she stopped in to talk to me. That is when she informed that she had met one of her goals, which was to be under 200 lbs!! I was so excited to share celebration. This woman has come so far and is looking great! She tried to credit the Y for her success, but she was the one that put in the work. You go girl!!!



Misty Looking Good

Stacie Droste

Misty with the judging of the food for Corporate Cup. After she was done judging, she went and mingle with members from all the teams. One of the girls, who she hadn't seen in while commented on how good she was looking. Then when she was helping clean everything up, she shared with me what the girl had said. That one small comment helped put a "strut" in her step and really meant something to her, because the two of had been talking about how they weren't seeing the changes they were wanting.

Multitasking

Jodi Conrardy

I was at the Welcome Center helping a lady with her After School balance, I was also helping another person and answering the phone in between. When I was done with my caller and another member, the lady who was paying her After School balance told me that I did a great job of multi-tasking. I appreciated the lady giving me a compliment! Thank You.

The Love of Volunteers

Stacie Droste



As I was wrapping up the final day of Corporate Cup, I wanted to recognize some of the volunteers that really stepped up throughout the whole event and helped make the best one yet. After I recognized the volunteers, I had several come up to me to thank me for the recognition, but they did need to be recognized because they love the event and want to help in any way they can. I don't know what I would have done, if I didn't have each one of them helping, especially with it being the biggest one yet!! YOU ALL ROCK!!

Better Than the Competition

Stacie Droste

I stopped in the fitness center was talking with Mike and Kyle about equipment, the fitness room and such. As we were talking Kyle had made the comment that he really likes the Y because we have some of the nicest members, where other facilities do not have as nice of members. I truly believe that we are blessed with such good members because you get what you give, and that is a lot of heart and passion.

Not Always Healthy

Jackie Regan

I had to laugh this morning when I walked in to see all our regular ladies and Tracy, our instructor, sitting around the table eating a dessert one of them had brought. I greeted them, and they were sure to let me know that they "Weren't being very healthy" this morning. I assured them that some days dessert is just necessary! I love their energy every morning at the Y!

Always Looking Out for Each Other

Stacie Droste

As I was walking through the lobby, I saw that some of the Senior Exercise ladies were still visiting as I asked how everyone was doing, Penny informed me that they were concerned with Gwen's ankles and that they thought that she needed to go back to the doctor to get them looked at. Gwen then showed me her ankles and they were swollen. Shirley then offered to go with her to the doctor. It's so sweet how these ladies are always looking out for each other. There are what the Y is all about.

Coach Jackie

Jackie Regan

This weekend I was helping Danny out at soccer and one of the coaches wasn't there. I tried to see if a parent could do it, but no one volunteered so I offered to coach for their game. Soccer is REALLY not my best sport, but the kids were enthusiastic, and we were able to at least compete. One kiddo stepped up and told me where to play everyone, and I had to laugh as I tried to guide the kids to what they needed to do. I had a good time with them, and I hope they at least burned a little energy and had fun competing, even if they probably did not learn a lot of skills from their coach!

Bonding Over Breakfast

Stacie Droste

I received an email with a picture from Azie one morning. The email read: "This was a great get together, with the Senior Exercise group. This is the epitome of what the YMCA stands for. Bringing the community together, regardless of age." Then when I saw Azie, I thanked her for sharing with me. She then went on to say that the group planned on making this a monthly thing and that she feels like Tracy is good at bringing people together and the Y is lucky to have him. I agree, we are very lucky to have him.



Own Private Pool

Jackie Regan

The other day I went down to the pool to ask Stacie a question while she was lifeguarding and sat down for a moment to talk to a couple of our members who were swimming. There were only two ladies in the pool, Kay and Shawn, and they were telling Stacie and I how nice it was, as it felt like they were in "their own private pool."

Picture Day Smooth

Jackie Regan

Josh Roesener, who has been doing our youth sports pictures since we started as a YMCA contacted me recently to tell me that things have been the smoothest he can remember with all our sports directors under Danny's leadership. He said things are more organized and scheduled more efficiently and he really appreciates the work Danny's puts in to make the programs better. Kudos Danny!

Thank You
to our members for a memorable 2017!



*We do not remember the days... We remember the
moments that make our days!*

