

Statement updated September 22, 2016

The Milwaukee Y ... FOR A BETTER US

Dear Friend of the Milwaukee Y,

These last several months have challenged our country as we were affected by tragic events which left many of us in a state of disbelief. We mourn and continue to mourn with those in Orlando, Dallas, Baton Rouge, the Twin Cities, Tulsa and Charlotte, and are grateful to our YMCA colleagues across the country who played pivotal leadership roles in these respective communities – and supported community members shaken by these events.

As we grapple with these recent events, I am reminded of the YMCA's international cause to strengthen the foundations of community through youth development, social responsibility, and healthy living. The Milwaukee Y's urban mission is to enrich children, youth, and families throughout the neighborhoods of Milwaukee, and it is firmly at the forefront of our daily work – seven days a week.

The city we call home is 170 years old - and the Milwaukee Y has been an anchor here for 158 of those years – firmly rooted in our core values of honesty, caring, respect, and responsibility. We do this through our organizational commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity which we believe ultimately leads to children and youth feeling safe, welcome, and engaged in meaningful and healthy activities that increase the likelihood of reaching their full potential. We intentionally carry on with this work as we recognize that our youth programming and mentoring are more critical now than ever before.

Despite what is happening around us, the Milwaukee Y, along with so many other organizations are providing safe and healthy opportunities for community members including infants, children, adults and seniors. By year's end:

- More than 9,000 children and teens will have had safe, healthy places to grow, play, and learn seven days a week
- More than 105,000 free, nutritious meals will have been served to community children and youth
- More than 3,500 kids and families will have learned basic swim skills and lessons in life-saving drowning prevention programming through "Milwaukee Swims"
- More than 1,200 day campers will have practiced reading, math, and science everyday through the Y's summer learning loss remediation program "Camp FLY"
- More than 1,400 kids will be academically stronger through the Y's five-star early childhood education and before and after school programs
- More than 6,000 older adults and seniors will have participated in fitness and chronic disease prevention programming through "Silver Sneakers"

We are encouraged to know that our stakeholders join with us in the future days and months as we remain steadfast in living our mission to strengthen the foundations of the Milwaukee community and the diverse neighborhoods we humbly serve.

In this climate of unrest in America's cities, we will continue to create safe and nurturing spaces, life-changing programming, and community partnerships. It is the reason we exist. It is the reason we have always existed.

Healing comes from working together and to being authentically dedicated to creating a better us. Our young people can and must be the embodiment of hope, peace and wisdom and as we move forward together, we hope to achieve just that.

Sincerely,

Jack Takerian
Interim CEO
Milwaukee YMCA