ywca southeastern massachusetts is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.
It is with great pleasure that I present to you the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts Annual Report for July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012. This year has been one of great progress as the YWCA completed Phase II of the restoration of the Levi Standish House. Throughout the summer and fall, with generous funding from the City of New Bedford Office of Housing and Community Development, Massachusetts Historic Commission, 1772 Foundation and individual donors, we were able to restore the exterior balustrade and portico. This year we also received several large gifts and a $1 million dollar grant from the state of Massachusetts for our project. Now we need the community’s help in raising the final $1.1 million of our $4.6 million capital campaign in order to break ground on our 12,000 square foot building addition that will bring our services “Under One Roof.” This is a very exciting time for all of us as we work with Litman Architecture to prepare the final construction documents so that we may break ground next summer.

Other highlights this year include:
• Hosted Anniversary Gala to celebrate 100 years of service to the community.
• Published book celebrating 100 YWCA Women.
• Awarded the Dr. Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award for our Racial Justice work in the community by UMASS Dartmouth.
• Piloted Tween 2 Teen Program at Doran Elementary School in Fall River.
• Implemented Financial Literacy Workshops for Women age 65 and over.
• Hosted successful YWCA New England Vitality Site Visit.
• Participated in YWCA USA Capitol Hill Advocacy Day and Annual Meeting that focused on new changes to our national organizational structure.

We ended the year by engaging the services of Development Consulting Solutions to facilitate the new YWCA Strategic Plan that will cover the time period January 2013 - December 2015. This was an extremely ambitious project and a process that we had never engaged in before. We interviewed our members, staff, board, program participants, community partners, funders, volunteers and past board members. This process was very enlightening and the information gathered will lay the framework for our plan of work for the next three years. I am very excited about the new plan approved by the Board and I look forward to working with our Board and Staff to implement our new goals and objectives.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Board President, Jan Baptist. Jan is a true visionary leader and I am so grateful to her for her ongoing support, mentorship and friendship. We are true partners in our YWCA work and I am honored to have worked so closely with her for the last six years to forward the YWCA Mission in our community. Jan, I wish you well in your future endeavors. I love you and will miss you tremendously, but I will not let you get far away as you will always have a home here at the YWCA.

As always, thank you to our committed Board, staff, members, volunteers, donors and stakeholders for your dedication to the YWCA.

Gail M. Fortes
Executive Director
friends,

Executive Director Gail Fortes, the tireless work of a dedicated and talented staff and the contributions of focused and hard working volunteers and board.

In this hectic environment, the Board and staff undertook an extensive strategic planning process, facilitated by Development Consulting Solutions. After countless online surveys, months of discussion with internal and external stakeholders, individually and in focus groups, followed by numerous drafts and the acceptance of the Board, we proudly unveil the 2013-2015 Strategic Plan that lays out the path for growth and excellence. We fully appreciate the involvement of all who helped make this a truly community integrated endeavor.

I want to report that on the fundraising front, much was going on behind the scenes. A big thank you to fundraising consultants, Vantage in Philanthropy, Inc., for their tireless work to finally secure our $1,000,000.00 bond for the Under One Roof, YWCA Capital Campaign. Because of this and consistent and effective grant writing and foundation support, we are closer than ever to our goal and the promise of the new addition and our services under one roof. Your consistent and generous support as donors will continue to carry us steadily into the future toward that joyous ground breaking day.

Upon reflecting, I looked over past reports to make comparisons, and was reminded of 2007, when I first presided over the Annual meeting and introduced myself as the new president of the Board of Directors. I remember feeling somewhat wobbly in those new shoes, yet I was determined to move ahead with the new and energized board. It has been quite an adventure. Today I recognize that as women, we are strong, we are fearless, and yet in our independence, we love our husbands and brothers and fathers and sons. We are more than half the population, yet even with the progress of the last 100 years, we continue to struggle for opportunity, voice and power. YWCA's nationwide serve more than 2 million people each year. We are fighting back and I am confident that we will cash in on what we learned about the power of women from this election. I am so grateful for the opportunity to serve as I have the past six years and it is with bittersweet determination that I move on to my next endeavor. Thank you for everything.

Jan Baptist
President
## Income/Expenses

YWCA Southeastern MA FY 2012  
audited figures completed 11/5/12 by Hodgson, Pratt and Associates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY2012</th>
<th>FY2011</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>REVENUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions, Gifts, Gifts, Legacies, Bequests &amp; Special Events</td>
<td>662,836</td>
<td>212,122</td>
<td>450,714</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>761,887</td>
<td>668,565</td>
<td>93,322</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Service Fees</td>
<td>87,201</td>
<td>153,049</td>
<td>(65,848)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Revenue</td>
<td>(2,539)</td>
<td>38,597</td>
<td>(41,136)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Revenue</td>
<td>8,475</td>
<td>13,846</td>
<td>(5,371)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td>1,517,860</td>
<td>1,086,179</td>
<td>431,681</td>
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<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (Management &amp; General)</td>
<td>180,810</td>
<td>131,304</td>
<td>49,506</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>137,170</td>
<td>129,741</td>
<td>7,429</td>
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<td>Total Program Services</td>
<td>608,357</td>
<td>652,930</td>
<td>(44,573)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>926,337</td>
<td>913,975</td>
<td>12,362</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EXCESS (Deficit)</strong></td>
<td>591,523</td>
<td>172,204</td>
<td>419,319</td>
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</table>
YWCA Southeastern MA FY 2012
audit completed 11/5/12 by Hodgson, Pratt and Associates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BALANCE SHEET</th>
<th>FY2012</th>
<th>FY2011</th>
<th>$ Change</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Current Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Checking/Savings</td>
<td>39,228</td>
<td>19,096</td>
<td>20,132</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
<td>223,128</td>
<td>89,280</td>
<td>133,848</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Current Assets</td>
<td>262,356</td>
<td>108,376</td>
<td>153,980</td>
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<td>Pledges Receivables</td>
<td>82,457</td>
<td>32,550</td>
<td>49,907</td>
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<td>Endowment</td>
<td>336,164</td>
<td>204,656</td>
<td>131,508</td>
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<td>Other Assets</td>
<td>433,489</td>
<td>236,998</td>
<td>196,491</td>
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<td>Prepaid Assets</td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>4,051</td>
<td>(2,894)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fixed Assets, net of accumulated depreciation</td>
<td>1,315,448</td>
<td>1,116,832</td>
<td>198,616</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>2,431,071</td>
<td>1,703,463</td>
<td>727,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Payable</td>
<td>35,844</td>
<td>39,061</td>
<td>(3,217)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accrued Expenses</td>
<td>18,670</td>
<td>21,812</td>
<td>(3,142)</td>
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<td>Line of credit</td>
<td>72,980</td>
<td>80,851</td>
<td>(7,871)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other current liabilities</td>
<td>1,943</td>
<td>1,793</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Current Liabilities</td>
<td>129,437</td>
<td>143,517</td>
<td>(14,080)</td>
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<td>Long Term Liabilities</td>
<td>396,000</td>
<td>396,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Liabilities</td>
<td>525,437</td>
<td>539,517</td>
<td>(14,080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>1,905,634</td>
<td>1,163,946</td>
<td>741,688</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</strong></td>
<td>2,431,071</td>
<td>1,703,463</td>
<td>727,608</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant progress was made this year on the YWCA’s $4.6 million Under One Roof campaign for a LEED-certified, 12,800 square foot building addition to the Levi Standish House. After matching a $25,000 challenge from Charlesbank Homes in late 2011, four $100,000 grants from BayCoast Bank, the Leonard & Hilda Kaplan Foundation, the Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund and the Island Foundation were major philanthropic investments into this much-anticipated project in 2012.

Thanks to the tireless advocacy of state Senator Mark Montigny, state Representative Antonio Cabral, and Lt. Governor Tim Murray who visited the YWCA several times, Governor Deval Patrick approved the disbursement of a $1 million state grant to the project in October. All involved were thrilled with this exciting news.

The final construction drawings from Litman Architecture have been progressing throughout 2012 and will be ready for contractor bidding and a 2013 groundbreaking while the final $1 million is raised in public and private funding. This carefully designed, three level building addition will include the BayCoast Bank Teen Center, the Highland Street Women’s Resource Center, the Kaplan YWkids Childcare Center, a multipurpose room, and women’s congregate housing units.

There are several prominent naming opportunities still available such as:

- Building Addition $1,000,000
- Another Women’s Place (3rd Floor) $250,000
- Multipurpose Community Room (2nd Floor) $100,000
- Levi Standish Connecting Bridge $100,000
- YWkids Project Area $50,000
- Elevator $50,000
- Another Women’s Place Bedrooms $25,000 each
- Another Women’s Place Kitchen $25,000
- YWkids Control Desk $10,000
- YWkids Café $10,000

Please contact Gail Fortes for a full list of Naming Opportunities and help us conclude our Under One Roof campaign by June 2013.

Thank you!
The YWCA provides crucial services to area women in need,” Senator Montigny said. “The $1 million grant will not only preserve the historic nature of the YWCA’s Levi Standish House but allow it to be adapted for the many modern uses needed by the YWCA to further its mission to aid women and children.”

“I’m pleased that the Patrick-Murray administration has joined the City of New Bedford in supporting “Under One Roof,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell. “This level of investment on the part of the Commonwealth is a clear validation of the quality of this project. I congratulate the YWCA for their tireless efforts on behalf of New Bedford families, and thank the Patrick-Murray administration for their continued support of projects that improve the quality of life for New Bedford residents.”

“These funds will allow the YWCA to expand the critical services it provides to women and children in the SouthCoast,” declared Representative Antonio Cabral.

“Governor Patrick and I were pleased to work with the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts and support funding that will allow the YWCA to continue to do great work more efficiently in the region, while also preserving its historic building,” said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray.
Capital Campaign

pledge donors
Nicole Almeida
Dr. Patricia Andrade
Bank Five
Jan Baptist
Tammy Beckman
Catherine Bourassa
Lisa Calvano
Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts - Acushnet Foundation Fund
Anne T. Converse
Anne Converse Photography
Jack Davis
Yolanda Dennis
Kate Fentress
First Citizens Federal Credit Union
The Maurice & Anne Makepeace Family Foundation
Janice McDonough
Victoria Moniz
Athena M. G. Mota
Maria Pinarreta
Lena Pires

gifts
Carol Almeida-Fortes
Amelia Peabody Fund
Anne Whiting Real Estate
Anonymous Donor
Talbot Baker
Honorable Bettina Borders & Dr. Victor Mailey
Claire Carney
Nancy Crosby
Peter DeWalt/Reynolds DeWalt
Yvonne Drayton
Pat Ford
Gail Fortes
Councillor Jane Gonsalves
Mary Harrington
Hodgson, Pratt and Associates
Leonard & Hilda Kaplan Charitable Foundation
Litman Architecture
Monaghan Printing, Inc.
Moore & Isherwood Communications, Inc.
Joan Pollock
Denise Porchê
Rotch Jones Duff House
Rosemary & Victoria Saber
Joan Underwood
Vantage in Philanthropy
Marge Waite
Waterfront Grille
Neal Weiss
WHALE
Margaret D. “MarDee” Xifaras, Esq.

grantors/foundations
Acushnet Foundation
Amelia Peabody Fund Charitable Fund
CharlesBank Homes Foundation
City of New Bedford
Demoulas Foundation
Highland Street Foundation
Massachusetts Historical Commission
Patrick Carney Foundation
Rockland Trust
Webster Bank
Women's Fund of Southeastern Massachusetts - Women's Philanthropy Fund

50 businesses
Amaral Bus Company
Fiber Optic Center, Inc.
Jacqueline’s Advanced Skin Care Therapy
Sylvia Group of Insurance Agencies

advocacy
Economic Advancement
volunteers
Pam Pollock

grantors/foundations
Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts - Hawthorn Medical Associates Charitable Fund

Racial Justice
volunteers
Pam Pollock

grantors/foundations
Island Foundation

Leadership Development of Young Women
interns
Jennifer Burgo
Kaitlyn Correia
Marion Greene
Anna-Rae LeClaire
Kari Rowland
Annette Sandoval
Katrina Semich
Brigid Swift

leading ladies volunteers
Meaghan Andre
Ashley Bendiksien
Kristy Fernandes
Athena M. G. Mota
Elizette Pires
Katrina Semich
Whitney Silva

Mayor's Youth Council
volunteers
Pam Pollock

grantors/foundations
Invest In Kids

adult services
Medical Transportation Program
donors
Elizabeth Vieira

grantors/foundations
Bristol County Savings Bank Charitable Fund
CVS Foundation

Widowed Persons Program

volunteers
David Enos
Jean Julien
W. Kenneth Langill
Irene LeFavor
Joyce Lopes
Dorothy Martin
Thomas McGarr
Marion Oliver
Joan Pollock
Jacqueline Ponte
Pauline Prudhomme
Gertrude Reed
Hanifa Rose
Dorothy Saladino
Victor Samolis
Angela Sampaio
Evelyn Sebastiao
Ethel Souza
Judith Viera

donors
Joanne M. Almeida
John Alves Jr.
Carolyn C. Anuszczyk
Sandra N. Bedard
Raymond Benoit
Teresa E. Berard
Irene R. Bergeron
Oldemiro Canto
Joseph U. Cardoza Sr.
John Chamberlain
Cecile Cloutier
Pauline J. Cormier
Joseph G. Costa
Russell W. Costa
Theima S. D’Agostino
Mary Lou Davis
Joan C. Dion
Jeanne Duggan
Beverly Dupont
Susanne L. Dupont
Roselle E. Fecteau
Lawrence Ferreira
Edward Figueira
Arthur R. Freitas
Donald and Claire Freitas
Phyllis B. Gardner-Dixon
Mary M. Gaughan
Matthew C. Goulet
Joanne E. Greaves
Cecile S. Hebert
Gordon C. Hixon
Charles J. Holland Jr.
Wanda Jaworski
Special thanks to the individuals, businesses and foundations which enable the YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts to advance its mission through their generous financial support. This list reflects donations received between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. We apologize for misspelling or omitting the name of anyone who made a gift during the fiscal year.

**residential services**

A Woman’s Place & Another Woman’s Place

**volunteers**

Carol Mitchell  
Joanne Polk

**donors**

Annette Gilkey  
Lorraine Lubertowicz  
Ana Silva  
Eusie Zane

**grantors/foundations**

Hunger Commission of Southeastern MA  
Kenneth T. and Mildred S. Gammons Charitable Foundation  
New Bedford Housing Authority  
Sovereign Bank

**youth services**

YWkids School Age Program

**donors**

Boston Bruins  
Patricia Burns  
Melissa Costa  
Melissa Cunha  
Daniel Guilbeault  
Nancy Martinez  
New Bedford Fire Department Union  
New Bedford Rotary  
Sarah Perry  
Prince Henry Society  
Donna Silva  
Lance Soares

**grantors/foundations**

Department of Education  
Hunger Commission of Southeastern MA  
Gail Fortes  
Leonard and Hilda Kaplan Charitable Foundation  
Minnie Saleh  
New Bedford Cultural Council  
New Bedford Day Nursery Fund  
Office of Early Education and Care  
Office of Women’s Health  
PACE  
Pauline Garcelon  
Roy Foundation  
United Way of Greater New Bedford

**Girls Exclusive**

**grantors/foundations**

Darden Restaurant  
Women’s Fund of Southeastern Massachusetts - Women’s Action Fund

**Tween 2 Teen**

**volunteers**

Kaitlyn Correia

**grantors/foundations**

Invest In Kids  
New Bedford Cultural Council  
Tremblay’s  
Women’s Fund of Southeastern Massachusetts - Women’s Philanthropy Fund

**Girls Giving & Growing**

**donors**

Patricia Burns

**grantors/foundations**

New Bedford Cultural Council  
New Bedford Day Nursery Fund  
Office of Women’s Health  
United Way Summer Fund

**Week Without Violence**

**volunteers**

Alpha Sigma Tau Sorority  
Chi Phi Fraternity  
Nancy Hawes  
Mentors in Violence Prevention  
Our Sisters’ School  
Pam Pollock  
Kerri Quinlan-Zhou  
UMASS Dartmouth Center for Women, Gender and Sexuality

**Red Dress Fashion Show**

**volunteers - committee**

Kristine Arsenault  
Ashley Bendiksen  
Christine Coelho  
Gail Fortes  
Fern Gonsalves  
Councillor Jane L. Gonsalves  
Mali Lim  
Valentina Martinez  
Victoria Moniz  
Ana Silva  
Gale Williams

**sponsors**

BankFive  
BayCoast Bank  
BMC HealthNet Plan  
Litman Architecture  
SouthCoast Hospitals Group  
STAT Ambulance Service of New England  
Sylvia Group of Insurance Agencies  
Vantage in Philanthropy

**donors**

Anne Converse  
Aubertine Lopes Funeral Home  
BankFive  
BayCoast Bank  
BMC HealthNet Plan  
Boston Celtics  
Boston Red Sox
 donate

Carolina Africano, Esq.
Nicole Almeida
Jan Baptist
Thelma Baxter
Tammy Beckman
Ashley Bendiksen
Hodgson, Pratt & Associates
Honorable Bettina Borders
Catherine Bourassa
Yolanda Dennis
Gail Fortes
Hodgson, Pratt and Associates
Hunger Commission of Southeastern Massachusetts
Judith Leon
Mali Lim
Dr. Victor Mailey
Victoria Moniz
Athena M. G. Mota
Ine Ogagan
Maria Pinarreta
Lena Pires
Rita Ribeiro
Marie-Frances Rivera
Neal Weiss
Marcia Williams
The Polished Look
Walmart - Dartmouth Store
Whaling City Sound
grantors
Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts-Rainy Day Fund
Olive Higgins Prouty Foundation

Sister to Sister Conference

Carole Farrell
Carol Almeida-Fortes
Catherine Bourassa
Chancellor Jean MacCormack
Claire Carney
Claudette Blake
Janet Freedman & Andy Peppard
Councillor Jane Gonsalves
Janice Fauteux
Joan Yotides
Marcia Picard
Marilyn Gonsalves
Margo Baptista
Marlene Tavares
Mary Burns

volunteers

Patricia Nadeu
Rosemary Saber
Susan Costa
Susan Perry

volunteers - board of directors

Carolina Africano, Esq.
Nicole Almeida
Jan Baptist
Ashley Bendiksen
Yolanda Dennis
Mali Lim
Victoria Moniz
Ine Ogagan
Maria Pinarreta
Lena Pires
Rita Ribeiro
Marcia Williams

volunteers - steering committee

Jan Baptist
Ashley Bendiksen
Gail Fortes
Mary Harrington
Jim Lopes
Valentina Martinez
Athena M. G. Mota
Maria Pinarreta
Valerie Tecci
Corinn Williams
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YWCA SEMA Programs and Services</th>
<th>Number Served July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011</th>
<th>Number Served July 1, 2011-June 30, 2012</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Widowed Persons Program</td>
<td>173 Men and Women from Greater New Bedford, Greater Fall River, RI communities of Warwick and Middleboro; does not include newsletter distribution</td>
<td>137 Elderly Men and Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Distance Medical Transportation</td>
<td>85 Men and Women from Greater New Bedford</td>
<td>45 Elderly Men and Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>YWCA Health and Wellness (formerly ENCORE+)</td>
<td>3,252 Women from RI state line, north to Brockton, east to Cape Cod and the Islands (includes outreach and referrals)</td>
<td>3,080 Underserved Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mayor’s Youth Council</td>
<td>26 Teen Girls and Boys from New Bedford</td>
<td>25 Disadvantaged Teen Boys and Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA Health and Wellness Waterpals</td>
<td>61 Breast Cancer Survivors from Greater New Bedford and Falmouth</td>
<td>49 Women Breast Cancer Survivors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Woman’s Place</td>
<td>12 Women from Greater New Bedford to Greater Boston</td>
<td>19 At-Risk Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another Woman’s Place</td>
<td>16 Women from Greater New Bedford to Greater Boston</td>
<td>16 At-Risk Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWkids School Age Program</td>
<td>75 Girls and Boys from New Bedford</td>
<td>74 Disadvantaged Boys and Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls Giving and Growing</td>
<td>15 Middle School Girls from New Bedford</td>
<td>13 Disadvantaged Middle School Girls</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls Exclusive</td>
<td>12 Teen Girls from New Bedford</td>
<td>41 Disadvantaged Teen Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tween 2 Teen</td>
<td>25 Tween Girls from New Bedford</td>
<td>36 Disadvantaged Teen Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial Justice</td>
<td>161 Women and Men from Greater New Bedford</td>
<td>850 Underserved Women and Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Advancement</td>
<td>91 Women from Greater New Bedford</td>
<td>92 At-risk and Disadvantaged Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Development for Women Under 30</td>
<td>34 young women age 18-30 from Greater New Bedford and Plymouth</td>
<td>27 young women age 18-30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Served</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,034</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,504</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td># of Volunteers</td>
<td>83</td>
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<td># of Volunteer Hours</td>
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<td># of Materials Distributed</td>
<td>14,630</td>
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<tr>
<td># of People that Attended Special Events (not counted above)</td>
<td>1,928</td>
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</tbody>
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This year’s Tween 2 Teen was located at Keith Middle School. The group was mixed with 5th graders from Parker school, and girls from Keith, as well. All of the girls definitely showed improvement over the course of the program, but one girl in particular that made significant progress was a 10 year old from Parker School named Genesis. Genesis struggled with her self-esteem. She struggled with her weight, and was uncomfortable with herself and the way she looked. This was evident from the first day when we had the girls take part in ice-breaker games to get to know each other and Genesis stayed in her seat and secluded herself from the rest of the group. I remember asking Genesis why she didn’t want to play any of the games, and she replied “there’s nothing cool about me.” I knew from then on that we needed to help her. Weeks passed and I noticed that Genesis started to open up more to the group. She started to involve herself in more of the games and even took part in discussions. We noticed a lot of the girls along with Genesis had self-image issues. This is very common with middle school age girls. My colleague and I decided that we would have a self-esteem workshop. We had the girls name things they disliked about themselves, as well as things they liked. Unfortunately for Genesis, this was a very difficult subject for her. To my surprise, she opened up and shared how she disliked her body and her height, but she did like her personality. It was something that none of the girls could say about themselves. We gave them tips about things they could change, but explained they shouldn’t pick on their outer-appearance. Genesis raised her hand, and asked if she could say something. She explained she did want to change how she looked on the outside because she knew it wasn’t healthy to be overweight. She told all of us how it was hard for her to eat healthy because her family constantly ate fast-food and other unhealthy foods, but she said she was going to try. When Genesis had said that, I was touched. I couldn’t believe this 10 year old was going to take a stand and make a change not just for herself, but for her family. From that day on, every Tuesday and Thursday that I would see Genesis, she would tell me how she walked around the park, ate a healthy dinner, or even lost a pound. Every time she told me of her success I was filled with joy knowing she stuck to her word. By the end of Tween 2 Teen, I did notice a change in Genesis, not just physically, but mentally. The shy, self-conscious Genesis was transformed into a confident and outgoing little girl. She became a leader, and a lot of the other girls who used to tease Genesis now looked up to her. I think if it wasn’t for Tween 2 Teen, Genesis would have never been given that extra push to grow and change. Tween 2 Teen was able to give girls like Genesis the confidence to accept who they are, and the power to make a difference in not only other people’s lives, but most importantly their own lives. --Kaitlyn Correia, Teen Services Instructor
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