

our voice

YWCA of Cortland

Winter/Spring 2017

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Our Mission

Eliminating racism,
empowering women

Our Vision

The YWCA of Cortland is a membership organization that supports the growth and leadership of women, girls, and families in our community through quality programs in childcare, mentoring, wellness, social activism, and crisis intervention.

Upcoming Events

MLK Day Luncheon

Join us Monday, January 16th for our annual homemade soup and bread lunch. Speaker TBA. Free and open to the public!

Girls Day Out

Saturday, January 28th at SUNY Cortland Park Center. A unique day of activities designed to engage and motivate girls in grades 4-7. Runs from 8:45am - 2:45pm. Registration info at www.cortlandywca.org.

Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the membership will be Monday, May 8th. Evening will include reception with refreshments and presentation by Tycely Williams of YWCA USA to follow. Free and open to all members!

15th Annual Pig-n-Par Golf Tournament

Save the date! Friday, August 4th at 9am at Willowbrook Golf Course. Tournament followed by BBQ.

Message from Board President, Nan Pasquarello



It is a privilege to serve as president of the Board of Directors for the YWCA Cortland with its dedicated, talented staff, committed and caring board members and trustees, and active, involved members! As you may know, our organization's national slogan is: "YWCA is on a mission!" To quote the YWCA USA web page: *We create real change. YWCA works every day to eliminate racism and empower women. Through advocacy and local programming, we create real change for women, families and communities.*

These aims are lofty, and they are being accomplished at our local Cortland branch each and every day. We have a fairly unique YW. Most YWCAs don't have the number and breadth of programs that we offer. I can't imagine the Cortland community without the programs offered by the YWCA Cortland.

When I was asked to write a few words for this newsletter, I thought about why I joined the YWCA just a few years ago. (What's a few? Okay, it was 20 years ago this past fall.) I joined a couple of years before I became a mom and before enjoying water babies classes with my son taught by Meryl Fish. As a young professional who had recently settled into this area, community members shared with pride information about the YWCA's programs like AVV and the organization's mission. I knew right away that it was an agency I wanted to support even though I wasn't directly participating in its programs. I was also in awe of the intelligent, socially aware, and talented women I met who worked at the YWCA and who served on its boards – and who encouraged me to get involved.

There are many members like me who support the YWCA because of its mission and because of the community that it provides to women (and families) of all ages and stages. The YWCA supports mission-based initiatives in the arenas of racial and social justice, economic empowerment of women and girls, and safety and health of women and girls. Others among our membership may be members because of child care programs, health and fitness programs, the warm therapeutic pool, the Bridges for Kids program or Model Moms program. For whatever reasons you are a member, I hope that like me, you will keep finding those reasons to stay and grow with the YWCA.

Please get involved! There are many ways to be involved at the YWCA whether it is on a committee, as a Bridges for Kids mentor, a baker for the annual holiday Child Care programs fundraiser, and/or as a member of the YWCA Giving Circle.

The YWCA is effective delivering a wide variety of programs and services in large part because of our members! If you have friends or family members whose memberships have lapsed, please encourage them to renew their membership! Membership dues help us to run the organization and all its facets.

Thank you for your continued participation in the YWCA Cortland! *YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.* We are definitely on a mission!

Nan Pasquarello

President, Board of Directors, YWCA Cortland
nanpasq@hotmail.com

Our Wish List**Bridges for Kids**

Board/card games
 Craft kits
 Gift cards for groceries
 School supplies
 Snack items

Model Moms

Gift cards for groceries
 Paper products: cups, plates,
 bowls, napkins
 Plastic utensils

Drop-In Childcare Center

Batteries of all sizes
 Coloring books
 Diapers and wipes
 Infant swing & saucer
 Sippy cups
 Washable markers

Nursery School

Craft supplies
 Gift certificates for craft or
 office supply stores
 Glue sticks and glue
 Scissors (rounded tip)

Pre-school Programs

Gift certificates: grocery, office
 supply, crafts, WalMart
 Finger-paints
 Snacks
 Storage bins

AVV

Feminine hygiene products
 Laundry detergent
 Linens
 Pots/pans, kitchen utensils
 Small appliances
 Towels/washcloths

Creative Ways to Give

At the YWCA of Cortland, we know that the little things make all the difference. Every hour volunteered, every committee member, every donation big or small, make a huge impact in our organization. Whether you choose to give to our Annual Campaign, our 100 Women Giving Circle, Gift of Giving Scholarship Fund, a Planned Gift, or by purchasing an item from our wish list, please know how much your support means to us and to all we serve!

Annual Campaign:

Our annual fund is integral to all the work we do each and every day. Gifts to the Annual Campaign are split amongst all of our 5 core programs - 3 of which are free community programs.

100 Women Giving Circle:

Founded in 2013 during our centennial year, the 100 Women Giving Circle is a group of intrepid women (and a growing number of men) who are devoted to empowering each other and those around them by securing a firm foundation for the vital programs at the YWCA by donating at the \$1,000 level or higher.

Gift of Giving:

Give the gift of giving through our scholarship fund! Your donation will allow a child, often in at-risk home environments, to take swim lessons, dance classes, or other enrichment activities at the YW. This makes a great gift for the person who has everything - it truly is the gift that keeps on giving!

Planned Giving:

Has the YWCA of Cortland touched you and your family's life in a way that you want to make sure your legacy and support lives on? You can make a lasting gift to the YWCA of Cortland by including the organization in your estate plan. This is your opportunity to be a part of our future and impact the lives of women, children and their families for years to come. The YW's Development Office is trained to advise and work with and walk you through this process.

For additional information on any of these creative ways you can give, please contact our Development Director, Kelsey Ryan at 607-753-9651.

We Are Going Green!

In an effort to decrease our environmental impact and to assure funds go directly to where they are needed most, our newsletter will be going digital. Our next newsletter will be available by email, on our website, and through our Facebook page. If you do not have access to email or our website, you can request a paper copy of the newsletter by calling the Development office at 607-753-9651.

To sign up for our email list, visit the "Contact Us - Keep Informed" section on our website www.cortlandywca.org. For the latest on all of our upcoming events, publications, and announcements, make sure to follow us on Facebook!

New Program Spotlight: Strive

Make 2017 the year to get healthy! If you have tried losing weight in the past without success, or lost weight and gained it back, Strive may be for you. This 12 week program and support group guides you through a healthy approach to losing weight. A free informational meeting will be held on January 4 at 6 pm. Registration for winter session begins December 19, session runs from January 9th through March 29th. Returning group meets 6-7pm and new group from 6:30-7:30pm. Cost is \$96 for members, \$106 for non-members. Contact Valerie Terry at the YW for more information!

New Program Spotlight: GEMS

from Sara Earl, Program Director



The YWCA GEMS girls' group launched last spring as a pilot and has become the newest program here at the YW.

GEMS is a group of 10 girls, ranging in age from 12 to 14 - a crucial age for young girls. They all have challenging home lives: absent parents or parents who are in jail, insecure housing, drug abuse in the household, single parents, living in poverty. The girls readily admit they have anger issues, most having been involved in fights or suspended from school. They are honest, they laugh and cry, they listen to each other, and they have become a family.

GEMS meet once a week. We tell them "every Thursday for the rest of your lives" when they ask if we are meeting next week and this makes them smile with relief. We provide transportation for all 10 of them to and from the YW. Olivia Harrington and Mollie Burhans are the high school facilitators for the group.

Programming ranges from Mary Dykeman engaging them in interactive sessions about conflict resolution skills to in-depth discussion of physical changes in a girl's body. The girls participated in swimming lessons provided by Noon Rotary, art activities by Liz Sharp, cooking, and enrichment projects by Colleen North. They have gone on field trips to the MOST, Filmore Glen, Build a Bear (donated by Olivia's mom), SUNY Cortland, the Corn Maze (donated by Scott and Lisa Snyder), and a hot tub/ badminton/campfire evening at Sara's house. One day they organized a lemonade stand as a fundraiser. I thought they

would raise money for a trip, but instead the girls decided to raise money for our YW Aid to Victims of Violence program and their smiles brought \$84 to the AVV program!

We hope to find funding to expand the program to multiple groups so that we can increase the community impact and reach more girls. As girls "age out" of the Bridges for Kids mentoring program, they need a group where they can learn new skills, practice leadership, be creative, be safe, and achieve confidence. The YW has given these girls a sense of belonging- just as Y Teens did so many years ago to hundreds of young girls. These girls are truly learning to live up to their (self-defined) name - GEMS is Girls: Empowered, Motivated and Successful.

Program Update: AVV

October was Domestic Violence Awareness month, and our Aid to Victims of Violence (AVV) program was busy raising awareness at our YWCA, as well as TC3 and SUNY Cortland. Jennifer Henriquez, the Enough is Enough Prevention Educator for the YWCA Aid to Victims of Violence serves as a liaison between the campus and the AVV program. She holds office hours on campus every weekday and attends college events to let students know that AVV is here for them too.

AVV would like to thank all those who entered the Purple Purse raffle! Proceeds from the purse, designed by "Scandal" TV show actress Kerry Washington, went directly to the AVV program. Sheila Cohen was the winner! Thank you to Shirley Eizember at the Pinckney Allstate Insurance Agency for donating the purse!

AVV would also like to give a huge thank you to those who donated feminine and personal hygiene products to the Safe Dwelling. A special thanks to the Homer Retail Association for the hand made bags filled with makeup and essentials.



Program Update: Child Care**Board of Directors**

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Integration helps build character and lifelong skills!

This fall, Franziska Racker Centers and the YWCA's Nursery School program began a partnership to offer an integrated preschool classroom experience for children, ages three to five year olds. Along with providing the best child care experience for families, we hope to bring awareness to the larger community of what integration for all children with varying abilities looks like in a NYS Special Education/Office of Children and Family Services licensed childcare program.

What does integrate/integration mean? The formal definition is to form, coordinate, or blend into a functioning whole: unite; or to incorporate into a larger unit; or to end the segregation of and bring into equal membership in society. This resonates so in our society today with people living together with varying abilities, racial backgrounds, family compositions, and economic status. Therefore it made sense for the YWCA and the Franziska Racker Center, who share similar missions, to collaborate on this community classroom. Both organizations share the goal of empowering children and families to live happy and fulfilling lives. Both organizations realize the importance of valuing differences and through this collaboration hope to bring a lasting benefit to the children attending this preschool program.

This integrated classroom offers a multi-disciplinary approach, providing a quality early childhood educational program. YWCA and Racker key team players include a universal pre-k teacher, special education teacher, classroom assistants and aides, physical therapists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and a social worker, all working together to meet NYS Learning Standards for 18 children and supporting Individual Educational Plans for some. With this enriched staffing and curriculum, children's needs are being met and developmental growth is assessed. NYS Learning Standards for preschool children are focused on through coordination of the Common Core Curriculum and the Incredible Years' Social Emotional Curriculum.

The benefits of this partnership allow children and families to come together in a supportive learning environment that helps create relationships, builds character and increases life skills while celebrating each individual's uniqueness. Everyday, many aspects of this experiential learning are evident. This worthwhile effort encourages lifelong character traits that we believe will help lead to a fulfilling life!

Jami Bistocchi, YWCA Child Care Director

Tammy Goddard, Cortland Franziska Racker Preschool Director

**This newsletter is
 produced by:**

