

# y's words

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**

St. Paul

For friends, members and the Greater St. Paul community

Spring 2008

## for yourself, for a child

### A Mile Makes All the Difference



Whether providing after-school and summer programming or working to help homeless families to stabilize their lives – we care for kids! In fact, in 2007, 77% of those served in our social service programs were under the age of 18.

This spring our We Care for Kids (WCFK) Campaign will challenge Health and Fitness members to walk a mile for a child. During the week of April 18-25, members will have the opportunity to pledge \$5 and walk a mile on a treadmill. With each mile and pledge, members will qualify for prizes and fun!

But the fun isn't just for Health and Fitness Center members! Friends, neighbors and community partners are invited to pledge \$5 and join us for the We Care for Kids Kick Off on April 18 at 11:30 am. Together, we'll walk for kids and then enjoy a lunch generously provided by area businesses.

*To learn more about WCFK or to RSVP for the Kick Off, please contact Elisa Pluhar at 651-222-3741 or email [epluhar@ywcaofstpaul.org](mailto:epluhar@ywcaofstpaul.org).*

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neighbor to neighbor

YWCA St. Paul  
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St. Paul, Minnesota 55102-1822

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# more than a decade of devotion

## Volunteer Named Finalist for Community Award

For the past 13 years, Tim Quello has known what he'd be doing on Thursday night. While many of us sit hunkered down on the couch waiting for the latest episode of the Office or Grey's Anatomy to begin, Tim can be found volunteering in our Child Enrichment Center (CEC).

Thursday is a busy evening at the CEC. It's the evening when the families from our Transitional Housing Program gather to attend programming to build life skills. The evenings are important in helping families continue in their journey out of homelessness toward a stable, self-sufficient future. While the adults attend workshops, children enjoy activities like dramatic play, games, arts and crafts and, of course, snack!

Currently, the CEC serves children and youth from infants to teens. This means that on a typical Thursday night, you might find Quello playing dolls and dress-up with toddlers, putting together puzzles with school-aged children or feeding and rocking infants.

Currently, Quello is the only male volunteer at the CEC. The children trust and respect him and his presence each week provides a positive male influence and wonderful role model. "What's so amazing about Tim is that although he's a very busy man, he chooses to make volunteering a priority," says Julie Hickok, Children's Program Case Manager. "There have been several occasions when Tim has had multiple commitments for the evening, but he always finds a way to make it work and fit in his volunteer time at the CEC," she says.

Knowing that Quello is vital to the YWCA St. Paul and the families we serve, Hickok was thrilled to nominate him for the Minnesota Vikings Community Quarterback Award. For his outstanding service to women, children and families, Tim was selected as a finalist!

In recognition of his dedication and service, the Vikings also made a \$1,000 donation to the YWCA St. Paul on Tim's behalf. Hickok couldn't be more proud, "It's really thrilling



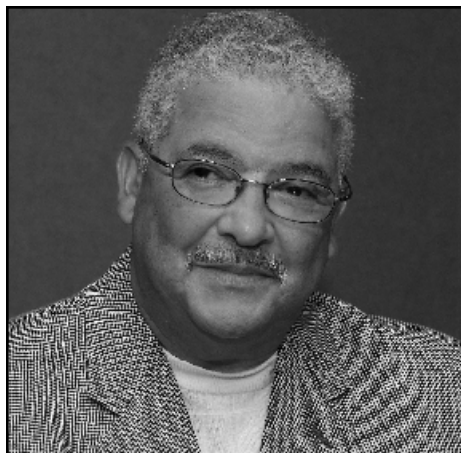
*Quello attending to children and supervising outdoor play during a Thursday evening at the CEC*

to see Tim recognized for all his hard work. I just can't imagine Thursday evenings without him," she said.

**For more information on volunteer opportunities at the YWCA, please contact Amy Lobitz at (651) 222-3741.**

## community matters

### Celebrating Community; Celebrating Success



Like many of you, I begin each year reflecting on the last. This spring as my eyes are trained on year-end reports, what I'm most

proud of is the fact that our success story is a community success story.

In 2007, over 4,100 people chose the YWCA for their fitness and recreation needs. In doing so, they made their workouts work for their community — fitness center revenue helps fund social service programs for women, children and families in need. Last year, close to 1,000 individuals were served by YWCA social service programs.

However, it's not just our members who make a difference. It's also the individuals and organizations who give generously to support the work we do each day, the local business owners who embrace our mission and all those who donate their time. Last year, 288

volunteers contributed 7,308 hours — an increase of 2,000 hours over 2006!

Working together with our members, partners, donors, neighbors and volunteers, we provide a continuum of support for individuals and families that is second to none. Within our walls, homeless families find a place to call home, children and youth develop their passions and talents and people of all ages build the skills that lead to brighter futures.

Our story is a community story — our successes are your successes. Thank you for your continued commitment and congratulations on another successful year!

*William J. Gillin Jr.*

# serving up opportunity

Nina's Serves up More Than a Cup of Joe



Nina's owner, June Berkowitz and YWCA IMPACT participant, Iesha Bledsoe

On an average morning at Nina's, the shop is bustling with activity. As customers wait for their drink orders, they chat with each other and Nina's owner, June Berkowitz. After visiting Nina's for his daily caffeine fix, YWCA staffer Chris Callen spotted something not on the menu board – opportunity.

Eager to help the youth enrolled in IMPACT learn more about what it takes to run a business, Callen asked Berkowitz to be a guest speaker. She accepted, but quickly insisted that the group meet at Nina's where they could not only see the business first-hand, but also enjoy complimentary food and beverages.

June was a hit with the participants and soon a new opportunity would emerge – a job opportunity! In October 2007, IMPACT participant Iesha Bledsoe began her new position at Nina's. Four months later, she's getting rave reviews. Her enthusiasm, work ethic and smile make her a standout. Nina's owner Berkowitz notes, "Her hands are never idle – there are not many people, no matter what age, that you can say that about."

Iesha's success comes as no surprise to YWCA staffers. Since enrolling in IMPACT in 2006, she has consistently applied herself and taken

her training seriously. For more than a year, Iesha has staffed the front desk in the Youth Achievers Program where her hard work and knack for multi-tasking has earned accolades from her supervisor, more hours and responsibility. "I've gained a lot of experience working with children and they really look up to me," she said.

Callen couldn't be happier with how the partnership with Nina's is progressing. "Nina's is a friendly, healthy environment and is a great place for a young person to build relationships with the community" he said. Iesha seconds that, saying "working at Nina's couldn't be any better. It's really taught me to be more open and social with people."

Iesha continues to divide her time between the YWCA and Nina's. She's focused on saving for her first apartment and plans to attend community college in St. Paul.

**IMPACT is the YWCA's employment and training program for young adults ages 15-22. The program focuses on helping youth to build success stories in the classroom and workplace. Other community work sites include Target, MN Timberwolves, McDonalds, Fed Ex and Sears.**

## remembering ruth tanbara

This January, the YWCA St. Paul was saddened by the news that longtime YWCA staffer, volunteer and Centennial Honoree, Ruth Tanbara had passed away. Although saddened by Ruth's passing, we are grateful to have had the opportunity to honor Ruth and celebrate her life's work as part of our Centennial Celebration last September.

During her 30 years at the YWCA, Ruth taught classes in everything from accounting to tailoring, but one of her favorite passions was flower arranging. Her approach beautifully married traditional Japanese and Western techniques.

To honor Ruth, the YWCA St. Paul will host a one-time flower arranging class. Taught by one of Ruth's former students, the class will be a wonderful way to honor Ruth's commitment to educating women.

Please Join Us  
Saturday, April 26  
10am-12pm

There is no fee for the class, but space is limited. Please register by April 18, by contacting Elisa Pluhar at 651-222-3741 or [epluhar@ywcaofstpaul.org](mailto:epluhar@ywcaofstpaul.org).



Tanbara during a YWCA floral arranging class during the 1960s

# neighbor to neighbor

## Making Holiday Wishes Come True



Members of Fabulous Fern's Horseshoe Club gather around donated gifts.

This holiday season, families enrolled in our Housing and Supportive Services programs received a wonderful gift – the knowledge that their community cares! All around the neighborhood, groups and individuals worked together to make sure families in need could celebrate the season.

For the second year, a group of regular customers at Fabulous Fern's worked with their fellow patrons to adopt families and make holiday wishes come true. Horseshoe Club members Victoria Main and Jean Christoffel coordinated the effort and were assisted by Fern's owner, Charles Senkler and his staff.

After working with YWCA Case Managers to identify holiday wishes, Senkler posted the wish lists and created a large collection box. The Horseshoe Club ensured that each of the 33 people they adopted received more than one gift from their wish list. The mountain of gifts were wrapped and organized at a wrapping party hosted by Main and Christoffel.

A little further down Selby Avenue, Great Harvest owner, Bonnie Alton, urged customers to re-gift for a cause. She offered a free loaf of bread to anyone who donated a gift they had received during the holidays and passed

the gifts on to area nonprofits including the YWCA St. Paul.

At the YWCA, a giving tree located in the Health and Fitness Center was decorated with tags featuring wish lists and gift ideas for families in YWCA housing and supportive services programs. Members selected a tag, shopped for a gift and then dropped it off at the Member Service Desk. Gifts were distributed to families by YWCA Case Managers. "It's a lot of fun to see the excitement and gratitude when we deliver gifts," said YWCA staffer, Kristine Zimba. "It means so much to our families to know that people in the community take an interest in them and want them to have happy holidays," she said.

***The YWCA St. Paul extends a heartfelt thank you to all the individuals, families and businesses that gave so generously during the holidays. Fabulous Fern's Bar and Grill, the Horseshoe Club and Charles Senkler; Gamma Sigma Sigma; Health and Fitness Center Members; House of Hope Presbyterian Church; Macalester College Staff and Faculty; Ramsey County Sheriff's Office Employees; St. Andrew's Lutheran Church; and University of St. Thomas School of Law. Together, you made the holidays brighter for 61 families!***

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This newsletter is a publication of the YWCA St. Paul. For more information on YWCA programs and services, please call 651-222-3741 or check out our web site at [ywcaofstpaul.org](http://ywcaofstpaul.org).

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The Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America is a women's membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.

The Young Women's Christian Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists.