RECALCULATING THE Y FOR A 21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY

LET’S BE BOLD
LET’S BE COURAGEOUS
LET’S BE SMART
LET’S BE CREATIVE
LET’S BE HEALTHY
LET’S BE GAME CHANGERS
LET’S BE COMPASSIONATE
LET’S BE CONNECTED
LET’S BE INNOVATORS
LET’S BE CHAMPIONS
LET’S BE BOUNDLESS
LET’S BE GAME CHANGERS

Strategic Plan 2012 & Beyond
MCGAW YMCA
LET’S BE BOLD
LET’S BE COURAGEOUS
LET’S BE SMART
LET’S BE PASSIONATE
LET’S BE HEALTHY
LET’S BE SUPPORTIVE
LET’S BE GAME CHANGERS
LET’S BE FEARLESS
LET’S BE REAL
LET’S BE COMPASSIONATE
LET’S BE HONEST
LET’S BE CHAMPIONS
LET’S BE INNOVATORS
LET’S BE CREATIVE
LET’S BE BOUNDLESS
The last 125 years was just our warm-up act. McGaw YMCA Strategic Plan

Dear Community:

At the corner of leadership and vision, stands the McGaw YMCA of Evanston. For more than 125 years, the Y has been a proud part of our vibrant community. Through the years, we have added support for the community where we saw a need — a new childcare center, improved fitness facilities, youth mentoring initiatives. Certainly we are proud of these accomplishments.

But it got us thinking...
Is that it? Is that the measure of who we are? Is that all we can do? As an organization, we took a good long look at ourselves. A soul-searching look. The kind of deep dive that asked who we are and who we aspire to be. Our leadership spent nearly 18 months thinking about the question. And the answer is an exciting new Strategic Plan for the McGaw YMCA.

Our community needs a champion. The McGaw Y answers the call.
Our Strategic Plan calls for bold action with an urgent sense of purpose. As an organization we will not allow our community to erode, our youth to be disenfranchised, our health compromised. We will tackle some of the most pressing issues in Evanston, and our society, with leadership, advocacy, collaboration. And courage.

We’re giving our mission a brand new voice. And it’s going to roar.
Issues of social justice and responsibility, the state of young people, and the health of our community are front and center in this plan. Our Strategic Plan demands that we play a leadership role in the future of Evanston and the surrounding communities. That we become a catalyst for change. That we think outside the box. That we challenge the status quo. That we work outside our comfort zone. That we work in partnership with other organizations to become an even stronger community.

Real-time strategic planning for the real world.
Evanston, like life, is changing faster than any five-year plan could possibly anticipate. Using Real-Time Strategic Planning, we created a dynamic approach to planning that allows us to respond to issues and opportunities as they emerge and address them in a way that is collaborative and true to our mission.

This is why we’re here today.
This Strategic Plan is one of the most important initiatives ever undertaken by this organization. It’s going to take commitment. It’s going take energy. It’s going to take support.

It’s going to take you.
As a member of our community, we need your passion, your ideas, and your talent to help us implement our Strategic Plan.

LET’S GET STARTED.

Bill Geiger
President/CEO | McGaw YMCA
Here is the Y.

This Strategic Plan catapults us over our traditional role and places us in the heart of some very serious issues facing Evanston. In order to best address these issues, we are transforming our organization from the current perception of the Y that hovers somewhere between gym and swim to become an action-based, cause-driven entity ready to confront problems of social justice. We aspire to establish the McGaw YMCA as the “go-to” leader and convener on how to strengthen the foundations of our community.

Make no mistake. What we’re currently doing is elemental to who we are. In fact, we’ll be doubling down on that spirit and the community that prevails here. What’s changing is how what we do will align with who we aspire to be.

We have clearly positioned ourselves with the three critical issues that are at the forefront of our cause:
• Youth Development
• Healthy Living
• Social Responsibility

What’s different is the way we will approach these issues. For each area, we will challenge ourselves – and Evanston – to take a very hard look at what our community is doing, and then deploy a series of strategic action steps to address these issues. We need to add one more: facility reinvention. Our beloved 1000 Grove St. location is not exempt from the process. We need to be sure our facility addresses the 21st century demands of our community including access, location, and program delivery.

LET’S BE GAME CHANGERS
Here’s what nobody is talking about. Until now.
In Evanston, a growing number of children start their after-school activities by determining which shelter they will go to or whose couch they will sleep on that night. These are children living in our community.

The gap between families with greater resources and those with less is dramatically growing. Who will champion all the children of our community?

OUR CHALLENGE

The McGaw YMCA will lead the effort to ensure that:
• Every young child gets the best possible start to their education.
• All children have access to out-of-school experiences to realize their potential.
• Every teen develops positive attitudes, leadership skills and productive life-long habits.

OUR GOAL

Every young person in Evanston – especially those who need us most – has access to experiences that enable them to achieve their potential. **The result: The next generation of Evanston youth defines the social, health and educational skills required to be a citizen.**

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

**Lead the Way**
The McGaw Y will provide the leadership for youth-serving agencies as we address research planning, supporting and/or implementing youth development efforts. We’ll roll up our shirtsleeves as we identify key community stakeholders, bring them to the table as we move forward on initiatives, and ensure everyone is accountable.

**Discover the Needs**
What are the needs of Evanston youth? What are the gaps in meeting the needs? What are the community resources currently addressing the needs. What’s working? What’s not working? What key learning is going on nationwide that we can bring to our community? Through formal and informal research we will explore these questions and set priorities to meet the needs.

**Discover the Challenges**
We will look at all segments of Evanston to identify barriers/challenges to youth engagement. Economics, geography, culture and programs will all be part of the research.

**Then Do Something that Works**
We will leverage all existing services/programs and develop new ones so that we can ensure impactful outcomes. In all our work, we will engage young people in the planning and implementation. If young people can be part of the process, they’ll be part of the solution. Finally, we will look for ways to sustain the programs that work so our commitment to young people in Evanston is, without question, here for the long haul.
NAJEEMA MUHAMMED BEY

The McGaw Y has been part of 19-year-old Najeema’s life since she was 3-years-old. She and her brother first came to the McGaw Y as mentees in the SOAR program in 2003. They were just 5th graders at the time and stayed with SOAR until going to ETHS in 2007. Najeema had the traditional SOAR experience, including going to Camp Echo in 2005.

A recent alumna of Brillianteen, Najeema is recognized for her show-stopping performance in the 2011 production of “The Wiz” and for winning the Zenol Moore Award for Community Service and Leadership in 2008. “Our family is so grateful for having the YMCA in our lives and it will forever be in our hearts. We will never forget what the YMCA has done for us. We will never forget the faces of those who pushed us on – who saw our potential and growth.”
HEALTHY LIVING

Here’s what nobody is talking about. Until now.
In a city that boasts high-end food chains, many families lack access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Look at the corner of Dempster and Dodge with fast food on every corner. Drive down Howard Street. What do you see? How can the McGaw Y promote good nutrition if it’s not accessible nor affordable to those who need it?

OUR CHALLENGE
The McGaw YMCA will improve the health of this community:
• Educating parents about the negative effects of poor nutrition and inactivity.
• Connecting people to the resources they need to avoid chronic disease and live long and healthy lives.
• Connecting kids, teens, adults and families with opportunities that can influence their choices and positively impact their health and well-being.

OUR GOAL
The McGaw YMCA will help reinvent Evanston so access to healthy choices for nutrition and an active lifestyle are just around the corner for everyone. The result: Decreased incidence of chronic disease.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Lead the Way
The McGaw YMCA is taking a leadership role in advocating for and building a healthier community. Through the Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC) effort the Y is part of a community collaborative that is creating a shared vision of a healthier Evanston for all.

Discover Health Disparities
In partnership with other organizations, the Y will determine the top 3 health disparities that it can effectively address. We’ll make them a priority and put the resources behind them to take care of business.

Then Do Something that Works
With the help of other community organizations and the National YMCA, we will identify signature programs and health innovations that would most impact the health disparities in Evanston. We’ll focus on:
• Childhood obesity
• Inactivity
• Poor nutrition
• Chronic disease

We’ll identify our capacity and capabilities for delivering signature programs. We’ll implement policies that reflect best practices within our YMCA community. We’ll create a comprehensive Healthy Living Education initiative that will become integral to everything we do. And then we’ll make sure our infrastructure, from administration to facilities, underscores our commitment to Healthy Living.
LET’S BE SUPPORTIVE

RALPH MAROL

Ralph first came to the McGaw Y as a ’79 NU graduate. “I was drawn to the Y’s culture of community and mission. It’s like seeing family when I come into the Y. There is a sense of wholesomeness, not competitiveness… the Y is not a fitness organization, it’s much broader.”

He didn’t suspect what a family the Y would become until he had to face a personal battle with cancer. The treatments decreased his lung function and affected his balance and coordination.

“I started personal training because I needed motivation, someone to ‘kick my butt.’” He has now trained with Fernando for almost two years. Together, they worked to improve his lung capacity and rebuild his strength. That took extraordinary sacrifice and commitment on Ralph’s part, qualities Fernando, who is himself an Ironman athlete, understands, supports, and admires.

“Ralph is an inspiration,” Fernando says. In the spring of 2011, Ralph conquered his first 5K race – quite an accomplishment. After the race, Fernando told Ralph, “You are a runner now.” He is that and more – he’s family.
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Here’s what nobody is talking about. Until now.
The McGaw Y has prided itself on making it possible for everyone to participate. But we have a way to go – a long way to go – if we are going to be the force that brings diverse people and communities together in real engagement. We have to be ready to participate in authentic, productive conversations around Evanston’s realities of diversity and inclusion. Will this role change the face of the McGaw YMCA?

OUR CHALLENGE

The McGaw YMCA will use social responsibility as its institutional compass:

• To understand and evaluate all the Y’s programs and services.
• To ensure the Y offers the right combination of programs and services that reflect our core values, social justice and social responsibility.
• Tackle one or two areas of inequality to influence real change in our community.

OUR GOAL

The McGaw YMCA is a recognized community leader on issues of inequality, social justice and social responsibility. If we are to deliver on Youth Development and Healthy Living, Social Responsibility must be part of the equation.
The result: The McGaw Y is recognized as the leader in creating authentic conversations and results-driven programming to create a socially responsive community.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Lead the Way
The McGaw YMCA will provide the leadership as this community explores the complicated conversations of access and inequality. As the Y collaborates with other like-minded organizations on Youth Development and Healthy Living, we will view our work through the lens of social responsibility.

Discover the Impact
What are the Y’s most impactful programs? How are we measuring the impact? How do they address Youth Development and Healthy Living? We need to use the “cause-driven” continuum to determine where these programs are and where they could/should be on that continuum. We’ll set a list of priorities to help us deliver on our promise.

Discover the Bright Spots
We need to understand why some programs work better than others in addressing Youth Development and Healthy Living. What are the “bright spots” in our programming? What are the key factors contributing to the success? What’s replicable? Scaleable? We need to determine a method to inventory and implement formal reporting on program bright spot successes throughout the organization.

Then Do Something that Works
Access and community health are foundational building blocks for Youth Development priorities. We need to understand where the gaps in access occur and then take steps to eliminate these gaps. We will integrate access and community health as key components in all current and future Youth Development work. Moreover, we will ensure that access by the entire Evanston community is considered as part of all planning and outcome measurement strategies.
LET’S BE RESILIENT

MIKE COOKMAN

Mike first came to Evanston in 1999, working at a local bookstore where he became a customer favorite. After customers told him about the Y, he became a resident member in 2007.

But, Mike’s life was interrupted when he was diagnosed with acromegaly, a pituitary gland disorder, and had to undergo brain surgery. As if that wasn’t enough, with the closure of the bookstore he had to make further adjustments in his life.

He credits Y staff with saving his life. Noticing he appeared unwell, Y Residence staff urged him to go to the doctor where a large accumulation of fluid was discovered around his heart. Had he not gone to the hospital when he did, that might well have proved fatal.

The Y staff got him the disability income he needed, and he is now an active participant in an acromegaly support group, writes a blog, and appears in a book written about this disorder by Wayne Brown. “I was leery at first, but when I saw the book I was astounded and excited to see my name.” Mike continues to reside at the McGaw Y, and is a valued part of our community.

MEMBERSHIP FOR ALL

We cannot expect everyone in our community to succeed if there are barriers to the same opportunities to be healthy, confident, connected and secure. At the McGaw Y, no child, family or adult is turned away because they cannot afford a membership. Our Membership for All program is a sliding-scale fee system that addresses a broad range of household income levels and family sizes. This is one way we can help make the Y a foundation for everyone in the community.

The Y and Social Responsibility

Today, every program and service at the McGaw Y is developed through the lens of social responsibility. From our Children’s Center, to our mentoring program, to our Men’s Residence – we look for ways to be accessible, relevant, inclusive and community-building.

WE’RE JUST GETTING STARTED

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THE MCGAW Y’S SPACE IN EVANSTON

Here’s what nobody is talking about. Until now. Although the Y is located in central Evanston, many community members cannot access its services and programs because of transportation obstacles. In fact, for many located in southwest Evanston, the Y is “off the radar.” Do Y facilities need to be located in different parts of the community in order for us to achieve our strategic goals? Does the Y need to look at influencing transportation to improve access?

OUR CHALLENGE
The McGaw YMCA has made a strategic commitment to strengthen the community by focusing on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The Y facilities must:

• Provide access to programs and services to all people in the community.
• Be willing to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.
• Look to strategic partnerships when required to fulfill its commitment.

OUR GOAL
The McGaw YMCA facilities will recognize the changing nature of Evanston and evolve to provide responsive, accessible programs and services when and where they are needed in order to achieve maximum impact in strengthening the community. The result: The McGaw YMCA is accessible to all and is considered a home for those seeking answers to issues of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Lead the Way
The McGaw YMCA will work closely with the community as it explores how its current facilities deliver the depth and breadth of its programs and services, and identify the gaps in access. As part of the process, McGaw will engage other community leaders, youth-serving agencies, Northwestern University and Northshore University HealthSystem, to become part of the conversation and solution.

Discover the Opportunities
We need to go up to 30,000 feet and look at our community and the delivery of services that will help us achieve our goals. What will be required to meet the growing need for this and the next generation? What are the options for the Y? What are the options within the community? How do we weigh costs vs meeting our mission?

Then Do Something that Works
We want to tear down walls of old thinking and open doors of opportunity as we reinvent the McGaw Y for the future. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive report to the Y’s Board of Directors with findings and recommendations for strengthening the Y in Evanston. Considerations will include:

• Options for upgrading/renovating existing facilities (1000 Grove, Children’s Center, Foster Reading Center)
• Replacing current facilities on same sites
• Building a single new facility at a new location
• Developing multiple facilities in different locations
OUR MISSION

The McGaw YMCA is an open, charitable membership association that promotes growth in spirit, mind, and body through programs and services for all in our diverse community.

OUR VISION

WE WILL –
WELCOME ALL
INSPIRE YOUTH
ACTIVATE FAMILIES
IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY
ALL IN SPIRIT, MIND, AND BODY
OUR VALUES

CARING
HONESTY
RESPECT
RESPONSIBILITY

OUR VISION

WE WILL –
WELCOME ALL
INSPIRE YOUTH
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COMMUNITY
ALL IN SPIRIT,
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