We are thrilled to announce that our Early Learning Program expansion is complete! Thanks to funding from Buncombe County, YWCA Asheville's Early Learning Program renovated and expanded four classrooms this summer, giving us the capacity to serve an additional 42 children. Furthermore, thanks to funding from the Community Foundation of WNC, we have also completed a much-needed kitchen renovation, allowing us to better serve healthy meals to our children, staff, and foster grandparents. The next phase of the expansion is now underway: renovating the playground to incorporate more natural elements, and commissioning a mural honoring Thelma Caldwell, Executive Director of YWCA of Asheville from 1965-1975.

You are invited to an open house on December 1, 2018, from 1-3pm in our new childcare classroom. We hope you will join us as we enjoy speakers, music, refreshments, children's activities, and a kids' bikes and backpacks raffle. Meet some of our amazing ELP teachers and learn more about the NC Pre-K program.

As the number of licensed child care centers in Buncombe County continues to dwindle, many parents are left struggling to find qualified caregivers for their pre-school-age children so that they can go to work. This gap puts a particular strain on women, says YWCA of Asheville’s Chief Program Officer, Sala Menaya-Merritt. “Women, particularly women of color, tend to be the primary caregivers, and often bread-winners, for families with children. When women have access to high quality child care, our economic opportunities expand. We understand that providing high quality, accessible child care is a part of how we fulfill our mission to eliminate racism and empower women.”

As YWCA ELP parent Cari Barcas says, “I deeply value the work the YWCA is doing to advance equity through its childcare programs accepting both private pay and voucher families, and I am so grateful that my daughter is being raised in a setting that celebrates diversity. This is such a huge need in our community, and I’m delighted to be supporting such a conscientious organization through my child’s tuition.”

“We’re proud and excited to be able to offer this additional capacity for working families in Asheville,” says Denise Purcell, Early Learning Program Director, “and we want to make sure that the community knows that we have these openings in our Early Learning Program.” If you or someone you know is in need of high-quality child care for their 3-5 year old, please refer them to us! If they register their child, you AND they will receive a $50 gift card!

For more information or to register your child for Early Learning or NC Pre-K, call Denise Purcell, Director of Early Learning Program at 828-254-7206 x 106.
Angel is a participant in YWCA of Asheville’s Diabetes Wellness and Prevention Program, and through this program, has been training in our Fitness Center with Certified Personal Trainer and YWCA Fitness Coordinator Marty Edes. Angel recognized that, as an African-American person of size, she was at a higher risk for diabetes. She saw a flyer for the Diabetes Wellness and Prevention program here at the YWCA, which includes access to our Fitness Center and Personal Trainers, and she decided to sign up. Since beginning the program last year, Angel has been able to prevent a diabetes diagnosis by reversing her pre-diabetes symptoms, she has experienced significant weight loss, and has had more opportunities to participate in the joys of life—like singing:

“I can sing now!” Angel says. “And hold a note, which is good, because I wasn’t able to do that before because it was too strenuous on my body. I work with kids now, and I have the energy to chase after them every day. I’m in a good place. I’m pretty happy with how I’ve been.”

“I think people should give both personal training and Diabetes Wellness and Prevention a try, even if you’re not necessarily diabetic. I think the DWP program has a lot of really good information that can be utilized by anyone. Personal training is awesome because like I said, they give you some encouragement to let you know that you can do things, they push you to go beyond what you would normally do. And that’s the really pivotal thing, because if you don’t think you can do anything then you won’t do anything. But if you have someone saying, ‘OK if you just push a little harder’ it’s not pushing yourself so hard that you’re hurting yourself, it’s just that stretching your boundaries a little bit. Training with Marty was really good, because she encouraged me to stretch myself more.”

We’re so grateful to Angel for sharing her story of how the programs at YWCA of Asheville have improved her life. Interested in getting involved? Right now, you can receive two free personal training sessions when you become a member of our Fitness and Aquatics center, and our next Diabetes Wellness and Prevention cohort launches in January. Visit our website to learn more!

Thanks to United Way, Mission Health Systems, SunLife Financials, SNAP-Ed and Astrozeneca for supporting the Diabetes Wellness and Prevention program at YWCA Asheville.
During this very crucial mid-term election season, YWCA of Asheville has been busy working to get out the vote. We registered voters door-to-door and in our lobby as a part of National Voter Registration Day, which registered a record-breaking 800,000+ voters nationwide. We co-hosted a successful and well-attended Sheriff Candidates’ Forum with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and we partnered with Helpmate to educate the community about ending gender-based violence as a part of YWCA USA’s Week Without Violence. We have participated in the national #YWomenvote campaign, an awareness campaign encouraging women to vote and amplifying issues of critical importance to women, including women of color, and trans women. We have been true to our non-partisan issues-based advocacy by campaigning against the Brett Kavanaugh appointment and against all six proposed amendments to the North Carolina constitution, and we continue to collaborate with community partners on the local and state level to address racial profiling in traffic stops on a policy level.

One of the things that has set YWCA apart as an organization and as a movement is our unique balance of direct service with advocacy and activism. We are proud of this legacy and we feel that it has never been more critical for our voices to be heard.

If you are interested in being a part of the advocacy work of YWCA of Asheville, consider joining our Advocacy Committee! For more information, contact Gerry Leonard, Racial Justice & Outreach Specialist at gleonard@ywcaofasheville.org.

YWCA Asheville Online

The feedback we hear most often from our Empower Hour guests is “Wow! I had no idea that all of these awesome things were happening inside this one building!” We have often been referred to as “the best kept secret in Asheville,” but we don’t want it to be a secret any longer. We need you to help us spread the word about the wonderful work of the YWCA, and now, with some upgrades to our website and social media, it has never been easier to do so. We’re very pleased to announce that we launched our bold, beautiful, brand new website in mid-October. Featuring new design, bigger graphics, updated fitness and aquatics schedules, and an upgraded blog format, we couldn’t be more excited about our new home on the web.

Please visit us at www.ywcaofasheville.org, and while you are there, visit and like our two new Facebook pages: one for Fitness and Aquatics and one for our Early Learning Program. You can also find us on Instagram and Twitter. Please remember to show your support by writing a 5-star review about us on Yelp, Google, or Facebook! Reviews are often the first interface that our potential clients, members, and families have with our organization. Please help us to spread the word about the incredible work that has gone on inside this building and in the community, for 111 years strong!
A CONVERSATION WITH BETH MACZKA, CEO AND
Mary Beth Herman, Chief Operating Officer

BM: I know you’ve been here for a long time. Can you tell me about your background and history here at the YWCA?
MBH: I’ve been here seventeen years. I started out part time at the front desk working as a Guest Services Associate when my children were small and they were doing Tae Kwon Do here. After working part time for a year, I got hired full time as an office manager. Then they started sending me to training for Human Resources. In 2004, I took over managing the building. In March of next year it will be 18 years.

BM: Can you share a highlight of your professional achievement during this time?
MBH: One of the things I am most proud of is achieving my national certifications in human resources, I am SHRM-SCP and SPHR certified. I’m proud also from a facilities standpoint of how well we’ve maintained the building over the years. It was renovated in 2000 and 2001, so it’s not actually a new building anymore, but we’ve done an excellent job with the building maintenance and so it still looks fabulous.

BM: What are some of your favorite changes that have happened over the past few years?
MBH: I’m a huge fan of policies. I know that’s kind of nerdy, but I like how we’ve transitioned in our policies and keeping them relevant to the times. I especially love that we created the YW Way last year with input for all staff. Then having the YW Way Made My Day employee recognition program grow from that is awesome. I love the childcare expansion that is happening and the service it provides the community. Our advocacy agenda is stronger than ever. It’s a very different place than when I started almost 18 years ago, and I really like where we’re going.

BM: Anything else you would like to share?
MBH: I wish over the years that I had kept a journal because the stories I could tell. They would make a fabulous Saturday Night Live special. But, luckily for everybody, I don’t keep a journal, so everybody is safe. There’s never a dull moment. New things are happening all the time, and it’s a very exciting place.