

14-Aug-09



It's deeper here.™

A Healthy Y for A Healthier Central Maryland: Spirit, Mind and Body

A Vision for 2015

Working Draft (Summary Version) – Not for Publication

A Healthy Y for A Healthier Central Maryland: Spirit, Mind and Body

A Vision for 2015

Table of Contents

- Section I. The Challenge and the Opportunity Page 3
- Section II. A Vision For 2015 Page 8
- Section III. Board Strategic Planning Committee Page 10
- Section IV: Developmental Assets Page 12

Section I. The Challenge and the Opportunity

We live in times of exhilarating opportunity and abundance in the United States and Central Maryland, but these are also times that are fraught with looming and now present dangers to our families and communities. The inevitability of globalization, the deterioration of our natural resources, a growing income gap, the continuing segmentation of our society, increasingly unhealthy and inactive behaviors leading to an alarming national public health crisis, academic performance and drop-out rates that threaten our children's and country's future, and many other societal challenges. These issues, which are complex and well-documented, underscore the need for both a stronger ethic of personal responsibility as well as the availability of much stronger community assets for individuals and families to improve their prospects for a better life and their ability to contribute to a healthier, more enriching and well-rounded community.

An Unhealthy Landscape for Children in Maryland

As our society and family life have become more and more sedentary, as public and school recreation options continue to decrease, and healthy and nutritious food has become less prevalent in people's lives (either by choice or by lack of access), obesity and alarming health problems are becoming epidemic. This issue is touching people across the socio-economic spectrum, and Central Maryland is no exception. While approximately 15% of the population remains strongly focused on their health and fitness, the majority of people and families struggle to achieve a healthy lifestyle despite an underlying desire to do something positive about the problem. Those "Health Seekers" are looking for affordable, accessible, welcoming environments and opportunities for them and their families to change the rhythm and reality of their lifestyle.

The statistics are troubling:

- Childhood and adolescent overweight prevalence has more than tripled in the past 4 decades
- Over 27% of children, ages 5–10, have one or more adverse heart disease or diabetes risk factors
- Over 60% of overweight children, ages 5–10, have one or more adverse heart disease or diabetes risk factor
- By age 10, 30–60% of youth will exhibit at least one risk factor for heart disease
- Less than 50% of children ages 5–8 have adequate cardiovascular endurance
- More than 35% of all youth do not participate in vigorous physical activity

- Approximately 29% of public high school students are overweight or at-risk (37% in Baltimore City)
- 28% of children aged 2-4 in Maryland's WIC program are overweight or at-risk.

According to Jeffrey Kaplan of the CDC, "overweight and physical inactivity account for more than 300,000 premature deaths each year in the U.S., second only to tobacco-related deaths. Obesity is an epidemic and should be taken as seriously as any infectious disease epidemic. Obesity and overweight are linked to the nation's number one killer--heart disease-- as well as diabetes and other chronic conditions."

Keeping Our Aging Population Active and Engaged

Today, seniors (defined as those aged 65 and above) comprise 12 percent of the total population. By 2050, the senior population will increase by 147 percent. Keeping seniors active and engaged in their communities is both a health care and social imperative. Shopping malls, casinos and even senior centers do not necessarily have the kind of stimulating and health environments that seniors want to require. Seniors need to socialize and stay active to maintain a healthy life. A country that shutters its older citizens off to environments in which they see and interact almost entirely with those their own age is a country that wastes one of its most valuable assets – the wisdom and vitality of its older generations. Keeping generations connected and active is both a moral and social imperative.

Senior citizens living alone should interact often with others if they want to maintain their ability to communicate, a new University of Michigan study showed. Furthermore, the study showed that lifestyle with organized activities seems to provide the best social opportunities for the elderly, according to University of Michigan's Deborah Keller-Cohen. Approximately 40% of people aged 70 and older report not performing any type of exercise at all. Benefits to exercise are not only limited to improved balance, and therefore the prevention of falls, but also to good cardiovascular health, an improved sense of well-being and control over life's many obstacles.

The Strain on Central Maryland's Families

Overwhelmingly, research and common sense tells us that the presence of strong and loving families is a critical, but fragile factor, in the health of individuals and communities. However, many societal factors contribute to the growing strain on families in Central Maryland, including, but not limited to: the growing prevalence of (and financial necessity for) both parents working, the

continuing increase in the divorce rate, the increasingly “over-scheduled” nature of family life, and decreasing amount of time that families spend together in productive, healthy activity.

Over two-thirds (68%) of women cite financial strain as a major threat to the American family, followed by divorce (48 percent), loss of faith/spirituality (47 percent), and the impact of dual wage earner household (28 percent). Six in ten women are concerned about being able to pay their bills each month - especially high among single mothers with children under 18 (80 percent). Most research also indicates that for all families, but especially when both parents work full-time jobs, the need for a work/life balance is essential for an enriching home environment.

Increasing Amounts of Unsupervised Out of School Time for Youth

Sadly, a significant and growing percentage of Maryland children of working families lack the kind of supervised, active and enriching forms of out of school time (after school and summer) that are critical to supplementing their in-school activities. According to the Afterschool Alliance, of Maryland children of working families:

- More than 25% are unsupervised in the afternoons
- Only 11% are in afterschool programs
- An alarming 28% are “latchkey children” with no adult supervision in the afternoon

Not surprisingly, children who do not participate in afterschool activities are:

- At greater risk of being victims of crime
- More likely to participate in anti-social behaviors.
- 49 percent more likely to use drugs
- 37 percent more likely to become teen parents than those participating in after-school activities

A recent survey of high school students, for example, revealed that students in after-school programs had greater expectations for the future and were more interested in school than their peers. Juveniles are at the highest risk of being a victim of violence between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. The peak hour for juvenile crime is from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., the first hour that most students are dismissed from school.

Significant Levels of School Drop-out

About 27,000 Maryland students in 2007 failed to graduate from high school. The state's overall graduation rate is about 76% percent, but urban graduation rates are well below 50 %. The divide between urban and suburban graduation rates in Maryland is the highest in the nation. In 2007, Baltimore city school's graduation rate was only 35%, compared to 81.5% in Baltimore's suburbs. Among the nation's 100 largest school districts, Baltimore has the 98th lowest graduation rate.

However, research tells us that the critical time for youth is during the middle school years, when the behaviors and academic habits are formed that ultimately determine whether one stays in school and gets to high school and eventually graduates.

In a recent Baltimore Sun article, Maryland's State schools Superintendent Nancy S. Grasmick, stated that "dropping out is a process that does not begin in high school, it begins very early on." Teachers as early as elementary school could predict that a student will struggle later, she said. "We have a responsibility to intervene early and provide services at the very beginning of a student's academic career." The transition from ninth to 10th grade marks "the greatest falloff for students," Grasmick said. According to the Baltimore Sun, "Grasmick pointed to the primary indicators of problems by the end of sixth grade: poor attendance and behavior, and failing math and English. Students showing those signs have a 10 percent chance of graduating on time and a 20 percent chance of graduating a year later, she said - and those who repeat middle school are 11 times more likely to drop out."

The Y: A Primary Catalyst for a Healthy and Connected Community

The Y of Central Maryland has been serving this region for almost 160 years, and has played an important role in the lives of people from all walks of life. The Y has evolved and its programs have looked very different over that period of time, as the social and economic fabric of the community has changed in an almost breath-taking manner. At its core, the Y exists to contribute to the healthy and holistic development of individuals, families and communities – in spirit, mind and body. At our best, the Y continuously innovates to remain leaders in that development process, meeting people, families and communities where they are and providing enriching experiences that serve as catalysts for individual and collective improvement.

The Y's mission compels us to serve the broadest and most diverse range of the community possible, regardless of income or circumstance. Our unique scope and scale not only allows us to accomplish things that others cannot, it also means that we have the responsibility to do so. To continue to be a strong asset to the community, the Y must work to provide programs and build facilities that can bring together the entirety of the community. As our increasingly heterogeneous society has continued to stratify and isolate itself into relatively homogenous sub-communities, the Y seeks to break down those walls and artificial divisions, creating healthy and engaging opportunities for people and families to come back together and to experience what community truly means.

In order to achieve this bold mandate, to build a healthier and more connected community, the Y of Central Maryland must itself be bold and willing to change, becoming healthier and more connected, and willing to further innovate and invest in those assets which will yield the highest return to the community while ensuring the long-term viability of the organization. We must examine everything we are doing and not be afraid to change, to confidently engage the community and make the case that a healthy, vibrant Y will strengthen a community in a profound manner. We must change our fundamental financial resource model. We must aggressively seek out like-minded community partners in all we do. We clearly must grow substantially to have a significant impact, and we must embrace and build around the core idea that Y membership for all is our ultimate goal.

With a population of roughly 2.4 million people, the Y's current membership of 47,500 and our total of 75,000 participants are heartening but incredibly insufficient to achieve our mission, given that our current participation level represents only 3.3% of the total population. We've been far too modest in our ambition, too limited in our thinking and too myopic in our vision. However, that is changing and significantly so.

Led by a committee of volunteer leaders across Central Maryland, the Y of Central Maryland has developed a bold vision, and has committed to achieving that vision by 2015, only six short years from now.

Section II. A Vision For 2015

Vision Statement

Reaching over 240,000 people, the Y will be a primary catalyst for Central Maryland's families and individuals to achieve their full potential in spirit, mind and body. It is only once we begin to actually influence lifestyle choices and build sufficient developmental assets in our community on a significant enough scale that we will have lasting, residual influence on the health and well-being of children, youth, adults and families. We will provide experiences and programs that are memorable, unique and enriching, which foster family and community bonds, build character and promote success for all. By doing so, we will fundamentally enhance the quality of life in the communities in which we operate.

To achieve our vision, we will focus on **five mission strategies**:

1. We will make Y membership for all our core objective, as broad-based membership in the Y will lead to a healthier and more connected community.
2. We will make a measureable impact on the success of Central Maryland's children and youth through purposeful asset development programs.
3. We will energize the community to be highly engaged and invested in the Y's mission and success.
4. We will become an employer of choice with an exceptional culture.
5. We will ensure that the Y is financially viable and sustainable.

We will accomplish our vision and mission strategies by:

- Inspiring healthier lifestyles
- Deepening member and community involvement
- Providing inspiring programming and opportunities for families, youth and seniors
- Increasing access for all
- Remaining focused on and becoming exceptional at what we do
- Measuring our progress
- Ensuring the sustainability of our community, environment and organization

We will actively promote our mission, commitment and values as a means to communicate our work.

Our Mission: The Y of Central Maryland is a charitable organization dedicated to developing the full potential of every individual through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

Our Commitment: At the Y, we are committed to providing family-oriented, affordable, high quality programs that lead to:

- An enhanced quality of life in the communities in which we operate
- Every family building stronger bonds, achieving greater work/life balance and becoming more engaged with their communities
- Every child and youth deepening positive values, their commitment to service and their motivation to learn

The Y is a place for everyone. People of all races, ages, faiths, gender, abilities, backgrounds and incomes are welcome and financial assistance on a sliding scale is available to those who would otherwise be unable to participate.

Our Values: All of our programs and services are infused with four positive character values: **Caring, Honesty, Respect** and **Responsibility**. We are committed to challenging our members, staff and volunteers to accept and demonstrate these values.

Our Key Principles: In all we do, we will use a key set of operating principals to guide our work and the fulfillment of our mission:

- All programs are infused with our four positive character values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility
- Our programs will always be of high quality, and priced so that affordability and accessibility are paramount
- As a community-based organization, we will seek to partner with others who share our values and mission. We fundamentally believe that strong partnerships are an invaluable means to broaden and deepen our impact
- We will measure the impact of our work; it is our belief that what gets measured gets done
- We will operate in a manner that is environmentally and financially sustainable

Section III. Board Strategic Planning Committee

The Y of Central Maryland's strategic planning process has been a product of the work of a highly engaged volunteer committee made up of association and community advisory board members. The process was launched on November 18, 2008 at a half-day off-site open to all association and community advisory board members (and attended by over 40 volunteers), in which a wide range of external and internal data was presented and discussed. Additionally, the CEO of the YMCA of Greater Kansas City, Gene Dooley, presented to the group the story of the turnaround of the Y in that community.

Thereafter, the strategic planning co-chairs, Gary Foss and Bonnie Phipps, led the committee through seven sessions of three to four hours in length in which every aspect of the Y of Central Maryland's mission, programs, organization, governance, finances, and impact were examined. The fourteen member committee (listed below), was highly engaged and constructive in their review. Data, perspectives and recommendations were presented by the Y's senior leadership team (listed below), and the strategy emerged in an organic and clear manner.

Volunteer Leadership

Co-Chairs:

Gary Foss (President, GFoss Consulting), Vice Chair, Association Board, Chair of Governance & Nominating Committee, Member of Talent & Leadership Development Committee

Bonnie Phipps (President & CEO, St. Agnes Health System), Association Board, Member of Finance Committee

Committee Members:

Tom Crawford (SVP, Provident Bank), Association Board, Member of Finance and Strategic Development Committees

Greg Cross (Partner, Venable LLP), Association Board, Member of Philanthropy Committee

Bill Graeff (Retired, former Verizon executive), Member of Howard County Community Advisory Board, Chair of Howard CAB Community Engagement Committee

Ruth Heltne (Director, Station Marketing & Development, WJZ-TV), Association Board, Member of Marketing Committee

John Holman (Agent, State Farm Insurance), Member of Northern Baltimore County Community Advisory Board, Chair of Northern Baltimore County CAB Community Advisory Committee

Mo Jishi (Group VP, M&T Bank), Association Board, Member of Governance & Nominating Committee

Janese Murray (Executive Director, Corporate Diversity, Constellation Energy), Association Board, Chair of Talent & Leadership Development Committee

John Pearson (Chairman & CEO, The Baltimore Life Companies), Chair of Association Board, Chair of Executive and Executive Compensation Committees

Art Palaia (Retired, former finance executive at Random House), Member of Carroll County Community Advisory Board, Member of Strategic Development Committee

Jeff Richardson (Executive Director, Mosaic Community Services), Chair of Southern Baltimore County Community Advisory Board, Member of Strategic Development Committee

Sharon Webb (SVP, Director, Health & Welfare Division, RCM&D), Association Board, Member of Strategic Development Committee, Chair of Baltimore City Community Advisory Board

Donna Wilson (SVP, Communications & Strategic Planning, Injured Workers' Insurance Fund), Association Board Member, Chair of Marketing Committee

Staff Participants

Chris Ader-Soto (VP, Family & Childhood Development)

Michelle Becote-Jackson (VP, Operations – Childcare & Camp)

Bob Brosmer (Chief Operating Officer)

John Hoey (President & CEO)

Sara Milstein (Chief Marketing Officer)

Gene Oaksmith (VP, Strategic Development)

Marianne Reynolds (Director, Operations - Youth Asset Development)

Margie Ripalda (VP, Human Resources)

Sherrie Rovnan (Chief Financial Officer)

Jeff Sprinkle (Chief Philanthropy Officer)

Mario Trescone (Director, Marketing & Business Strategy)

Troy Weaver (VP, Operations – Health & Wellness)

Section IV. The Search Institute's Developmental Assets

The full strategic plan references The Search Institute's work on Developmental Assets. The Search Institute has worked for over 50 years on promoting positive change for children and youth. Their research has been extensive, but their most well-known and actionable work is in the area of Developmental Assets. This work, which has become a national model for Ys across the country, has been invaluable in shaping how the Y of Central Maryland approaches all of its programming for children and youth.

The information provided below is from the Search Institute's website (<http://www.search-institute.org/>) and is provided as a resource and reference to readers of this strategic plan.

What Are Developmental Assets?

Building Blocks for Raising Healthy Children and Youth

Since its creation in 1990, Search Institute's framework of Developmental Assets has become the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States.

Background—Grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention, the Developmental Assets represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive.

The Power of Assets—Studies of more than 2.2 million young people in the United States consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors (see table below) and the more likely they are to thrive. Assets have power for all young people, regardless of their gender, economic status, family, or race/ethnicity. Furthermore, levels of assets are better predictors of high-risk involvement and thriving than poverty or being from a single-parent family.

The Gap—The average young person experiences fewer than half of the 40 assets. Boys experience three fewer assets than girls (17.2 assets for boys vs. 19.9 for girls).

Percentage of 6th- to 12th-Grade Youth Reporting Selected High-Risk Behavior Patterns, by Level of Developmental Assets*

High-Risk Behavior Pattern	0-10Assets	11-20Assets	21-30Assets	31-40Assets
Problem alcohol use— Has used alcohol three or more times in the past month or got drunk once in the past two weeks.	45	26	11	3
Violence— Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the past year.	62	38	18	6
School Problems— Has skipped school two or more days in the past month and/or has below a C average.	44	23	10	4

* Data based on aggregate Search Institute sample of 148,189 students across the United States surveyed in 2003.

The Search Institute has a unique list of developmental assets by age group. For illustrative purposes, their list for the children ages 8 to 12 is provided below. As one would expect, there are many assets that appear on multiple lists.

40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood (ages 8–12)

EXTERNAL ASSETS

SUPPORT

Family Support | Family life provides high levels of love and support.

Positive Family Communication | Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).

Other Adult Relationships | Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).

Caring Neighborhood | Child person experiences caring neighbors.

Caring School Climate | Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.

Parent Involvement in Schooling | Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

Community Values Youth | Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.

Children as Resources | Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.

Service to Others | Child has opportunities to help others in the community.

Safety | Child feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Family Boundaries | Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.

School Boundaries | School provides clear rules and consequences.

Neighborhood Boundaries | Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.

Adult Role Models | Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.

Positive Peer Influence | Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.

High Expectations | Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

Creative Activities | Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.

Child Programs | Child participates two or more times per week in co-curricular school activities or structured community programs for children.

Achievement Motivation | Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.

Learning Engagement | Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.

Homework | Child usually hands in homework on time.

Bonding to School | Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.

Reading for Pleasure | Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week

POSITIVE VALUES

Caring | Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.

Equality and Social Justice | Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.

Integrity | Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.

Honesty | Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.

Responsibility | Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.

Healthy Lifestyle | Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

Planning and Decision Making | Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.

Interpersonal Competence | Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.

Cultural Competence | Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.

Resistance Skills | Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.

Peaceful Conflict Resolution | Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

Personal Power | Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.

Self-Esteem | Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.

Sense of Purpose | Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.

Positive View of Personal Future | Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

This list is an educational tool. It is not intended to be nor is it appropriate as a scientific measure of the developmental assets of individuals.

Copyright © 1997, 2007 by Search Institute. All rights reserved. This chart may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial use only (with this copyright line). No other use is permitted without prior permission from Search Institute, 615 First Avenue N.E., Suite 125, Minneapolis, MN 55413; 800-888-7828. See Search Institute's Permissions Guidelines and Request Form. The following are registered trademarks of Search Institute: Search Institute®, Developmental Assets® and Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth®.