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Greetings!

Youth Trust experienced an amazing outcome from this year's program. Also, good health means garden fresh veggies at the YMCA. Happy Spring!

Janet Dunn, CEO



April 2016



YOUTH Teaching Youth to TRUST

Sydney Tindall is a high school student who participated in the YMCA Youth Trust program as an eighth grader and then she came back every year since, as a teen volunteer. This year something pretty special happened.

"After Youth Trust's weekend retreat last Fall, some of the kids went back to their school and started a club to share with others what they learned," Sydney says. "I was so excited to hear this!"

Apparently they told their principal they wanted to start a club for sixth and seventh graders who don't feel like they belong. The first meeting they had more than 30 kids show up who have been bullied and who were bullies because they felt they were on the outside all the time. They started meeting once a month.

"I have chills. It took my breath away," Sydney says. "They've taken what they learned in one weekend of Youth Trust and now they are applying it to their entire school!"

Sydney describes Youth Trust: *"It's a leadership program at the YMCA for eighth graders from all area schools, public, private, North Georgia, Chattanooga, Sale Creek...I can't remember all of them."*

"Four kids are nominated (usually by their guidance counselors) to join Youth Trust for one school year. We start with a weekend retreat at Camp Ocoee, staying in cabins, having a lot of fun, but mostly we make it a Safe Place where you can say what you are feeling and there's no fear of judgment," says Sydney.

"At the retreat, we divide up into 'families' with about 10 to 12 eighth graders and a high school boy and girl as the group leaders. We talk about social issues and leadership, our community and things that will bring about change. Topics like bullying, stereotypes, and prejudice.

"This is really about them. We bond within our Family and have fun together

doing things like rock climbing, canoeing and riding the zip line. We have large group activities and special speakers...like a girl who talked about losing a sister to cancer.

"These kids were wise beyond their years," Sydney says. "It was amazing to teach them some leadership qualities. We learned as much from them as they did from us."

Why (Y) Organic?

Van Bunch and his wife, Corinne Giagnorio can give you 3 reasons why it's a win-win for the YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga to partner with Thomas O'Neal of Signal Mountain Farm to distribute a CSA* program at the Downtown, North River and Hamilton Family YMCAs:

1. Local farmer support, which is good for the economy and environment,
2. Promotes healthy eating (a perfect fit for people who exercise), and
3. Reaches more people, especially those living downtown where there are fewer grocery stores.

* Community Supported Agriculture

"This is a good partnership for the Y with their focus on healthy living and social responsibility," says Corinne. "We've been buying fresh-picked - as in THAT DAY-- homegrown produce from Signal Mountain Farm for more than 15 years. Organic fruits and vegetables taste better!"

Why organic? The documented health risks with chemical pesticides on non-organically grown fruits and vegetables.... and the long pipeline from garden to table ...affect the healthy qualities, the good taste and use more energy in transportation. The YMCA works with community partners to make the healthy choice the easy choice.



"For the most noticeable taste difference foods grown organically are at the top of your list," says Van. "Organic soil is a rich structure to give the best nutrients and better taste to the veggies. Chemical free, all natural farming means you aren't growing vegetables in dead soil."

"We have changed our lives with a greater variety of vegetables in our diet," Corinne explains. "Because they are perishable, the vegetables you get in your regular distribution from the farm become the thing you plan your meals around. Every week it's a fresh assortment. With recipes provided on their website we are eating new and different foods like kohlrabi, which looks like an alien being, and bok choy, along with family favorites like blueberries, lettuce, sweet peppers and heirloom tomatoes."

The Y is more than just a swim and gym, we're strengthening the community.

www.ymcachattanooga.org

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