



# BUILDING A BETTER US

A Newsletter for Donors, Members, Volunteers and Friends of the Y • September 2023

## Y Kids Have A Summer To Remember!

Your Y's financial assistance program ensures that all families have access to safe and reliable child care during the summer. With the support of generous donors, your Y offered \$63,167.30 in financial assistance to 81 campers in 2023.



Thank you for empowering youth in our community to participate in life-enriching activities and services at your Y, like summer camp!

During Y camp, youth minds flourished as they learned alongside their peers. Hundreds of campers explored the great outdoors by hiking Spencer's Butte and taking day trips to the coast. They unleashed their creativity by painting murals on our building and tie dye-ing everything from shirts to socks. Every day at camp is an opportunity to gain new skills and make memories.



It's our donors' support that guarantees all youth can experience the joy of summer camp, despite financial barriers. Thank you for your commitment to building a brighter future for our youth!

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## Defying the Odds: Joe finds strength, support at the Y

Joe Puchoski, 63, likes to keep track of numbers. **18,250**, for example. That's how many push-ups he logged last year.

Seven years ago, he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. He was given 90 days to live. He underwent three operations in three days.



Or **250**. That's how many pounds he can leg press.

Even **120**: How many miles he walks in a month.

Those numbers are important to him because they are on the other side of some scary numbers.

And then he spent 1.5 years on chemotherapy. With the help of medical marijuana, he could stomach 1/2 banana and 8 ounces of pudding each day.

"My cancer was so bad I couldn't do anything," he says. "I thought I would never get back into a weight room."

Continued to **Y FAMILY** on page 7

# Welcoming Festival Celebrates Community Diversity

On September 9, hundreds of people gathered at the Y's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Welcoming Festival in a spirit of unity and inclusivity.

The festival's colorful displays of dance, music and cuisine served as a powerful testament to the rich tapestry of our community, fostering a sense of belonging among long-time residents and newcomers alike. Through shared laughter, delicious food, and the exchange of stories, the event not only celebrated our differences but also underscored the common threads that bind us as a community.

Each year, the festival reminds us that by embracing diversity, we strengthen our collective identity and create a more inclusive and harmonious place to call home. Thank you to everyone who joined us!



# From Foster Care to Fostering Water Safety

Associate Aquatics Director Victor Tilghman makes kids laugh daily. When he walks into the Y preschool classrooms, the students squeal!

“I’ve been working with kids since I was 15 years old,” he says. “Kids need happiness. I love to be funny and goofy to make them laugh.”

Victor feels so strongly about his role in children’s lives because he remembers how much he relied on the adults around him to boost his mood, make him feel safe and support him.

Along with five siblings, Victor entered the foster care system in Philadelphia at age 5 and lived with three different foster care families until age 18.

Through a state agency, foster care families received YMCA memberships. Victor started swim lessons, played games in the gym with friends and attended annual events, such as a Christmas Party.

He says that it was critical at that time for him to have positive role models and a network of adults who cared. He remembers the kind staff who often asked how he was feeling and if they could help in any way.



**“There is nothing more important than my work with kids. I feel so lucky to have found a place where my role makes a difference for families.”**



“One lifeguard noticed that I never brought a swimsuit with me to the pool,” Victor says. “He told me that he would put aside a swimsuit in the office for me. It meant a lot that he could provide the support I needed as a child.”

Since that time, Victor has wanted to help children—through his role at the Y but also through his volunteer work with other nonprofits, such as the American Red Cross.

“There is nothing more important than my work with kids,” he says. “I feel so lucky to have found a place where my role makes a difference for families.”

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### About the Welcoming Festival photos on left.

- A. Eugene Bhangra dancer spins.
- B. The Spiritual Brothers, alongside kids from the audience, perform traditional Ghanaian music.
- C. Youth play giant Jenga® at the festival.
- D. Ballet Folklorico Colibri performer demonstrates traditional Mexican dance.
- E. Youth play pickleball in the Tennis Center.
- F. Ballet Folklorico Colibri performer smiles before her performance.
- G. Everyone loves face paint!
- H. A group of Eugene Bhangra performers dance.
- I. Trio Ritmo y Romance plays Latin rhythms.

# Unveiling: Local Artist Liza Burns Designs Tribute to Donors

## Meet the Artist

Known for her whimsical designs, Eugene-native Liza Burns is an illustrator and muralist with a background in graphic design. You might recognize her vibrant illustrations on the new Oregon Cultural Trust license plate. Her design for the new Y's donor wall draws inspiration from beautiful Lane County, stretching from the cascades to the coast. Part homage to our home and part scavenger hunt, Liza's map highlights the specialness of our community.



**GIVING GET INVOLVED**  
When you give to the Y, you're doing your part to strengthen our community—and a strong community is good for everyone. Whether you're helping a child in need attend summer camp, giving someone the assistance they need to make a healthy change in their life, or contributing to the construction of a new Y facility, your gift will let us continue to affect positive change in our region.

### THANK YOU DONORS TO THE CAMPAIGN

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne A. Fennell	Johanna S. Higgins of Columbia	Dakota Morgan Jones	Mr. and Mrs. Cheryl Murray	Mr. and Mrs. Roger H. Leavitt, Jr.	Mr. and Mrs. Cheryl Murray
Mr. and Mrs. Bart R. Harris	ECBS Transition	Mr. and Mrs. Heather M. Moore	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. William M. Lee	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray
David Harris	Marcus May, David L. Rector, Jr.	Mr. and Mrs. Michael R. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. William M. Lee	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray
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The Mitchell Home所有者	Michael S. Kennedy	Mr. and Mrs. George D. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. William M. Lee	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray
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Senior Living Services of Lane County	David G. L. Foran	Mr. and Mrs. George D. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray	Mr. and Mrs. William M. Lee	Mr. and Mrs. David H. Murray
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Located in the new Y lobby, Liza's artistic representation of our community celebrates YOU, our incredible donors who saw the vision for a new Y and responded so generously. Gifts of \$5,000 or more to the campaign will be recognized on the etched glass mounted on the mural and gifts up to \$4,999 will be recognized on a rotating digital screen (within the wood frame on the rendering).

Your Y continues to raise the final dollars for the new Y, scheduled to open December 2023. Less than \$1 million is left to raise to complete the project debt-free. Opening debt-free means that your Y can immediately reinvest in programs and services that improve our community's health and well-being. If you are interested in contributing to the campaign, please contact Chief Development Officer, Danielle Uhlhorn at 541.686.9622 ext. 247.

# The New Y: In the Homestretch!

This fall marks the long-awaited transition toward the finish details on the Y's new flagship facility on the corner of 24th Avenue & Hilyard Street in Eugene. **We remain on schedule and on budget to open the new Y in December 2023!** Key milestones include:

## SEPTEMBER

- Final pour for the deck of the pools
- Landscaping work begins
- Installing the flooring in the Group Ex studios
- Installing the elevator (the new Y is fully ADA accessible)
- Painting the railing around the indoor track
- Installing the railing for lobby stairs

## OCTOBER

- Installing the wood gym floor
- Installing the surface of the indoor track
- Installing the interior reclaimed wood
- Installing the sauna
- Installing the flooring and lockers in the men's and women's locker rooms and private changing rooms
- Installing flooring in the PeaceHealth Wellness Center, community room, teaching kitchen, Naismith Conference Room, admin offices & preschools
- Polishing the concrete floors
- Installing the equipment in the preschool kitchen and teaching kitchen
- Finishing the parking lot paving and striping
- Installing the welcome center desk
- Installing the playground fencing
- Installing the switch gear so we will be able to turn lights on!

## NOVEMBER

- Tiling and plastering the pool
- Filling the lap pool and small pool
- Installing the flooring in copy room, youth offices, drop-in child care and youth program spaces
- Installing the flooring in the PeaceHealth Wellness Center's stretching area
- Installing the playground equipment



Looking southwest at the new Y construction site



MORE UPDATES



U.S. Senator Ron Wyden, community leaders, Chambers Construction workers, Y volunteers and staff at the new Y

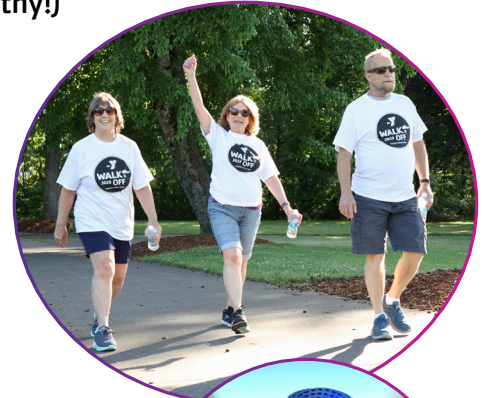
**While construction progress continues, your Y's staff are hard at work creating innovative and accessible programming for all ages. Stay tuned for details about offerings in the new Y!**

# Walk It Off with the Y Offers Healthy Summer Activity

For many folks in our community, Wednesday evenings from June to August are blocked off in their calendars for Walk It Off with the Y in Alton Baker Park—an integral (and healthy!) part of summer plans.

“Since it’s on my calendar, I’m prepared to go every week,” says Kate, who regularly joins Walk It Off. “If I just tell myself I’m going to walk in the evening it’s easy to push it off and not do any physical activity.”

This annual event not only encourages people to get outdoors and move during the summer months but also builds community through guided walks, group activities and an end-of-season party.



“I like Walk It Off because I’m very community-minded and I also try to be as healthy as possible,” says Brian. “Plus, it’s a good thing for my wife and I to do together because we both have busy lives and it’s nice to have a place to go walk together after work.”

Weekly themes and dress up days add a playful twist to the weekly walks. From superheroes to disco divas, the Alton Baker walking paths come alive with creative costumes.



“Walk It Off is such a motivation for us to come out and get fresh air,” says Cindee. “It really positively affects our physical and mental health.”

Thank you to our Title Sponsor PeaceHealth and sponsors The Beat of Eugene, KMTR 16 News, Slocum Center, Eugene Magazine, Radar Promotions, City of Eugene Parks & Open Space and Bigfoot Beverages for making free community events like this possible.

Continued from **Y FAMILY** on front page

His nurses and doctors gave him hope that he would get back to working out again. Since then, he’s defied the odds—not only living far beyond 90 days, but also returning to his beloved weight routine, getting stronger with each passing day.

“My workouts are geared toward someone in their late 20s or early 30s,” Joe says.



He’s currently working through an intense Arnold Schwarzenegger training program.

Just over a year ago, Joe moved from

Philomath to Eugene and joined the Y, where he had been a member back in 1993.

“The Y is a unique place. You can be whatever you want at the Y,” he says. “You can start from scratch and work your way to whatever you want.”

Joe loves the Y morning staff that greet him warmly and the other members that share the best of their own workout routines.

“God put angels all over for me—including Y staff Jenny and Curt,” he says.

Joe says he learned a great back strength exercise from another member and he has incorporated it into his sets every week.

“I feel like the Y is family to me,” he says. “Kindness and friendliness are everywhere.”

# A Gift of the Present or Future

In the midst of the busy fall season and the excitement for a new Y, there are still opportunities to provide small miracles all around us as we help one another.

While we are gearing up to open the new Y this December, we continue to provide positive role modeling for children, connections for seniors and tools for friends wanting to improve their health each day in our current facility. We couldn't do this without the help of our donors, ensuring that nobody is turned away from the Y due to a financial barrier.

As you make your end-of-year charitable giving plans, we encourage you to consider a **Gift of the Present** or a **Gift of the Future** to the Y.

Give a **Gift of the Present** through the Y's Annual Giving Campaign and provide immediate opportunities to individuals and families in financial need by giving them access to YMCA programs and services. These gifts provide hope to parents who know their kids are building confidence and making friends in the Y's afterschool programs.

Or you might consider a **Gift of the Future** by supporting the Y's Capital Campaign. Your gift ensures youth will have access to the latest STEAM equipment and programming and supports local artists inspiring arts and culture in the new Y. Your generosity today will impact generations to come in a facility that will carry on the Eugene Family Y's legacy of healthy living and opportunities for all.

## MAKE A LASTING IMPACT WHEN YOU GIVE TODAY

### \$50 DONATION

Build water safety skills or provide healthy snacks for youth

### \$100 DONATION

Build confidence through youth sports clinics and leagues

### \$250 DONATION

Provide enrichment activities for youth afterschool

### \$500 DONATION

Support individuals in cancer survivor and disease-prevention programs



SUPPORT THE NEW Y



SUPPORT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

2023 Program Participants



Your support helps fund disease-prevention programs like the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program, a 12-month group program for those at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. In 2023, eight participants lost 97 pounds collectively—the equivalent of a baby hippo!

"During the Diabetes Prevention Program, I was especially motivated by the information I received, and the people, support, accountability and overall learning," said one participant.

Your generosity and compassion are the driving force behind our ability to make a difference in our community. Thank you!



SPONSORING THE EUGENE FAMILY YMCA