



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# CHANGINGLIVES

YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

## *Storyteller Handbook*

Achieve Families  
Transform  
Impact LIVESTRONG Help  
Give Learn Volunteer  
Grow Neighbors Do Good  
Teens People Thrive  
THANKS Seniors KIDS  
Hope Lead Mentor GIVE  
Future STORIES Inspire  
Brighter Support Kids



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*What an opportunity the YMCA has given my family. Thank you.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 WELCOME
- 3 CALENDAR
- 4 ROLES
- 5 SUCCESS TIPS
- 6 THE ASK
- 7 GIVING LEVELS
- 8 SPONSORSHIP LEVELS
- 9 QUICK FACTS
- 10 FAQ
- 11 OBJECTIONS
- 12 RECOGNITION
- 14-15 STORIES
- 16 PHONE SCRIPTS
- 17 THANK YOU
- 18 NOTES

## WELCOME!

Thank you for joining our YMCA Storytelling Team of over 30 volunteers ready to work towards our campaign goal of **\$250,000**.

The YMCA is so much more than buildings and programs, the YMCA is about people, serving over 20,000 local kids and adults.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Chippewa Valley and the YMCA significantly. But we've made great strides at recovering and our commitment to our community has never waivered.

Help us change more lives this year as you help share the LIFE-CHANGING stories from YMCA participants. It is time to remind the Chippewa Valley that we are a mission-driven organization for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility.

Please take a few minutes to review the information provided to you in your storyteller handbook. Not only will you find sample stories to share, but you will also find a schedule of events and helpful information on the YMCA.

We wish you much success,

The Y Leadership Team



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-----  
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*Our income has been severely reduced, but with a scholarship my two kids can learn to swim at the Y.*

**Stories  
are the  
single most  
powerful  
weapon  
in a  
leader's  
arsenal.**

Howard Gardner,  
Harvard University

## CALENDAR

### March

- 9      Deadline for recruiting a campaign chair  
18     Deadline for recruiting team captains

### April

- 1      Campaigner Draft at 12 PM at the Eau Claire YMCA  
1-15    Campaigner recruitment

#### Eau Claire Campaigner Trainings (pick one)

- 25     12 Noon—at the Eau Claire YMCA (lunch provided)  
26     12 Noon—at the Eau Claire YMCA (lunch provided)  
26     4:30 PM—at the Eau Claire YMCA  
27     7:30 AM—Online  
28     1 PM (following the board meeting) - Hybrid  
29     4 PM—Online

### May

- 3      Campaign Kickoff, Noon-1 PM  
Via Zoom or in person at the Chippewa Falls YMCA  
or Eau Claire YMCA  
3-31    Campaign Solicitation

### June

- 1-13    Campaign Clean-Up  
14     YMCA Annual Meeting & Campaign Celebration:  
5:30 PM at the Florian Gardens  
Cost: \$25 per person



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-----  
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*Thanks, YMCA, for helping me get healthy for my daughter.*

**Storytelling  
is the most  
powerful  
way to put  
ideas into  
the world  
today.**

Robert McKee

## ROLES

**Campaign Chair** – This volunteer is the chief storyteller and leads the campaign. The chairperson is responsible for the recruitment of several team leaders and assisting in the training of volunteer storytellers. She/He is also responsible for attending leadership meetings and achieving the goals set for both funds raised and volunteer recruitment.

**Board of Directors** – The success of the YMCA Annual Campaign is dependent on 100% participation from YMCA board volunteers – both financially and as team leaders and storytellers. It is critical that they support both the mission of the YMCA and serve as leaders in the campaign by telling the story and soliciting donations.

**Team Captain** – These volunteers are responsible for recruiting several storytellers to solicit major gifts. The team leader checks on their storytelling team throughout the campaign and is responsible for reaching the team goal.

**Campaigner Storyteller** – The most important job for a storyteller is to tell the YMCA story to their friends, co-workers, and the community. Storytellers are classified as a volunteer who gives a gift, shares the YMCA story and solicits a minimum of three additional gifts.



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YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

*My teenager is safe while having fun after school, and I can afford the small charge.*

## SUCCESS TIPS

**The destiny of  
the world is  
determined  
less by the  
battles that  
are lost and  
won than by  
the stories it  
loves and  
believes in.**

Harold Goddard

### Know What You Are Doing and Why

A positive, enthusiastic, and confident attitude is important. By exercising your feeling of commitment, you will come across as a sincere, caring person who is talking from the heart—and people are likely to listen to you. Think of the reasons why you decided to volunteer for the YMCA.

### Make Your Own Gift First

This is the single most important thing you can do to be successful. It is very hard to ask someone to make a commitment to the YMCA until you have made your own. Refer to your gift and ask him or her to match it. Speak from experience.

### Share the YMCA Story

Giving is largely a matter of education. Your job is to share the value of the YMCA programs. Use stories of individuals or past experiences to demonstrate the needs. Then relate your prospect's contribution to creating specific opportunities.

### Go After Your Best Prospects First

This gets you off to a good start, builds confidence, and gives you an even stronger position in subsequent solicitations.

### Study Your Prospect's Past Giving History

If the prospect you are calling donated last year, thank him or her for their generous gift and ask if they will consider increasing their pledge this year. Be specific and aim high when asking for a gift.

### People Give to People...Not Causes

Develop a rapport with your prospect. Speaking with sincerity and conviction makes it easier to share the story and have success in getting a commitment.

### Sustained Giving...the Preferred Method

Most people can give more over a period of time than they can give at one time.



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*I like playing sports at the Y because everyone gets to play.*

## THE ASK

**There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.**

Ursula K. LeGuin

### Prospects—VERY IMPORTANT!!!!

Before you contact any individuals or companies for which you do not have a pledge card, YOU MUST complete a prospect form and receive approval to ensure they are not already being solicited by another storyteller in the association.

### Share the YMCA Story Face-to-Face!

Statistics and personal experiences conclude that a personal visit produces better results than phone calls or letters. A face-to-face meeting over lunch or at your prospect's office is the most successful setting for securing the maximum gift.

### Prepare for your Face-to-Face Solicitation

- Know your prospect's interests and giving capabilities. What do you have in common?
- Find out if your prospect has been involved in the YMCA before. For example, if they participated in camp as a child or have their own child attending a Camp Manitou or Day Camp, share more information on that program.
- Finding a common ground will ease you into sharing stories, guide your discussion of the YMCA and lead to better success.

### Ask for a Specific Amount

Aim high and emphasize what that amount will accomplish! For example, "It's going to take people like you and me to keep changing lives through these programs. Would you consider a gift of \$500 this year?" If they gave a donation last year, ask them to raise their pledge this year (to a specific amount).

### Be Prepare for Objections or Questions

Answer questions honestly and find out why objecting prospects feel the way they do. Try to turn negatives into positives. Remember, even if you are unable to secure a donation, hopefully you have made a friend for the YMCA by sharing the YMCA story. Answers to the most frequently asked questions and responses to objections are located on pages 9 –11.



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YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

*Our family can't afford a lot of activities. Thankfully, the Y has lots for us to do together.*

## GIVING LEVELS

**We can tell people abstract rules of thumb which we have derived from prior experiences, but it is very difficult for other people to learn from these. We have difficulty remembering such abstractions, but we can more easily remember a good story. Stories give life to past experience. Stories make the events in memory memorable to others and to ourselves. This is one of the reasons why people like to tell stories.**

Roger C. Shank  
from *Tell Me A Story*

### SPIRIT, MIND & BODY DONOR

\$1,000 +

A gift of \$84 per month gives two families the opportunity to work toward better health in spirit, mind, and body through YMCA memberships and programs for one year.

### CARING SUPPORTER

\$500-999

A gift of \$50 per month builds self-confidence by providing free swim lessons and safety programs for two children each month.

### RESPECT DONOR

\$250-499

A gift of \$25 per month lets two youth learn skills, sportsmanship, and teamwork through a summer of junior tennis camp.

### HONESTY SUPPORTER

\$100-249

A gift of \$15 per month gives an adult with special needs or a senior on fixed income a place to come to get healthy and make new friends.

### RESPONSIBILITY DONOR

\$1-99

A gift of any size can help youth grow in caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.



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*My son learned about growing veggies in Y Day Camp. Now we have our own garden on our apartment patio.*

**To be a  
person  
is to  
have a  
story  
to tell.**

**Isak Dinesen**

## RECOGNITION

### Thank You Note

Once a donor has committed to giving a pledge or a donation, as the storyteller, you can write a personal note thanking them for their support and their donation. They will also receive a thank you letter from the YMCA letting them know how their dollars have helped.

### Public Recognition

All donors who pledge over \$100 will have their names displayed on a donor listing located prominently within the Chippewa Falls or Eau Claire YMCAs.

### Banner Donors will receive:

- Their name displayed on a board prominently located in the YMCA .
- An Annual Campaign banner noting their name or company name or logo to be placed in a YMCA branch of their choosing,



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*I love how the YMCA gives us something the whole family can enjoy together, since family time is rare.*

**The  
universe is  
made of  
stories, not  
atoms.**

Muriel Rukeyser

## Who is the YMCA?

- The YMCA of the Chippewa Valley serves over 20,000 kids and adults in the Chippewa Valley at five locations in Chippewa Falls, Eau Claire and rural New Auburn (Camp Manitou).
- Approximately 20% of our members receive scholarships for membership and programs with an average household income of \$19,904 for families and \$11,509 for individuals.
- The YMCA gave out more than \$277,000 in membership and program scholarships in 2019.
- Our Summer Camp Academy offers a summer learning loss prevention program for children to help them not lose ground over the summer—extra important after the challenges of learning during a pandemic.
- The Y has been serving Eau Claire County since it was chartered by a group of local volunteers in 1881—141 years ago.
- The YMCA's resources belong to our local community, not a private business or national agency.



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YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

*My baby learns a lot at the Child Care Center. I trust the staff and know he is safe there.*

## FAQ

**Stories are the creative conversion of life itself into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience. They are the currency of human contact.**

Robert  
McKee

### Can you tell me about the YMCA?

The YMCA of the Chippewa Valley is a nonprofit organization that has been serving area families since 1881. Founded by volunteers, the Y is still governed by a volunteer board of directors. The Y is a provider of child care, youth sports, swim lessons, arts and enrichment programs, and healthy lifestyle programs. It meets the needs of the community through programs at our 5 locations (the Eau Claire YMCA, the Chippewa Falls YMCA, the John & Fay Menard YMCA Tennis Center, the L.E. Phillips YMCA Sports Center, and Camp Manitou) and at various community sites, including Y child care programs offered at several area elementary schools.

The YMCA is unique, serving the needs of our community and conducting an annual fundraising campaign to support scholarships and outreach efforts.

### Who does the YMCA serve?

We serve over 20,000 kids and adults in the Chippewa Valley. Programs and services are available for all ages from infants to seniors. The Y does not turn anyone away due to an inability to pay.

### What is the difference between the Y and a health club?

Accessibility and character development set the YMCA apart from organizations that exist for only recreation, sports, etc. The Y believes that every child and adult deserves the opportunity to live up to their fullest potential regardless of their age, race, gender, faith, or income. Because of this, Y programs not only emphasize spirit, mind, and body while teaching core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility, but the YMCA also ensures that no one is turned away due to an inability to pay.

### What about the United Way?

The YMCA receives \$43,000 per year from United Way. These funds provide partial support for specific Healthy Living programs that help children struggling with obesity and adults dealing with cancer and mild to moderate dementia.

### Is my contribution tax-deductible?

Yes. Your contribution is voluntary and brings no special privileges other than the satisfaction of helping, therefore is deductible to the fullest extent of the law. You will receive a thank you letter for your gift amount that will also serve for IRS purposes.



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YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

*The kids weren't going to get to go to camp this year, but then we received financial assistance.*

## OBJECTIONS

**People are hungry for stories. It's part of our very being. Storytelling is a form of history, of immortality too. It goes from one generation to another.**

Studs Terkel

**I'm a YMCA member, why should I give more money to the YMCA? What do my monthly dues pay for?**

We appreciate that you are a current YMCA member. Your monthly dues cover the costs of operating the YMCA facilities, programs and staff. Annual Campaign donations support the community-based programs and help cover the subsidy of the financial assistance program.

**What is the YMCA Annual Campaign? How is it different from the Strong Kids Campaign?**

As a non-profit organization, we rely on donations from individuals, businesses and organizations to carry out our mission. We simply can't exist—and certainly won't thrive—without community support! The Annual Campaign (formerly called the Strong Kids Campaign) runs for 4 weeks each spring and raises funds for programs like Membership for All and LIVESTRONG at the YMCA.

**I'm not a member of the YMCA, why should I give?**

Your support is still needed! You benefit by having a strong Y in your community that provides meaningful opportunities to help young people learn, grow and thrive. The Y makes your community a better place to live and work, making people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities more healthy, connected, confident, and secure. Plus you never know when you might need one of our programs.

**How much of what is contributed stays in this community?**

All of it! Of your donation, 100% stays at the YMCA in your community. As a contributor, you will receive updates throughout the year, sharing information on the Y and Annual Campaign-supported programs.

**Business is not good—we'll have to wait.**

If you are unable to make a payment now, please consider a pledge of your interest and support and we can bill you later in the year. Donations can also be spread out over a period of time and be paid weekly, every other week, twice a month, monthly, or quarterly.

**Somebody already contacted me.**

We apologize for the inconvenience. With over 30 volunteers raising funds, we occasionally have situations in which a contribution is requested from someone who has already been contacted. We thank you for your time and consideration.

Stories have power. They delight,  
enchant, touch, teach, recall,  
inspire, motivate, challenge.

They help us understand.

They imprint a picture on our minds.  
Consequently, stories often pack more  
punch than sermons. Want to make a  
point or raise an issue?

Tell a story. Jesus did it.

He called his stories "parables."

Janet Litherland



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*Summer camp is so important to my son. He wants to be a counselor one day, so he can give back.*

## STORY #1

### My Personal YMCA Story

I've been involved with the Y since: \_\_\_\_\_

My first experience with the Y was as a/an: \_\_\_\_\_ when I: \_\_\_\_\_

Currently, at the Y, I am a/an: \_\_\_\_\_

and serve our members and community by: \_\_\_\_\_

The person I am most thankful for meeting at the Y is: \_\_\_\_\_

He/she comes to the Y to/for: \_\_\_\_\_

What inspires me about him/her is: \_\_\_\_\_

The Y has helped him/her by: \_\_\_\_\_

If I had just 30 seconds to share with someone how the Y is so much more, I would share \_\_\_\_\_'s story and say: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



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*The amazement on my daughter's face when she swam across the pool for the first time...priceless!*

## Y STORIES

### Membership and Program Scholarship Recipients

### Stories of Changed Lives

The E. family just moved from another state and as a single mother of 2 making \$27,000 a year, it will take awhile to get on her feet. Her scholarship "allows my kids to learn to be good citizens, good leaders and have fun. I treasure my time with my kids and like the positive role models they spend time with at the Y."

D. is a single mother with two children who makes less than \$24,000 a year. She had unexpected costs when the roof of her house needed to be shingled and her living room ceiling repaired. The scholarship allows her family to remain a member and she is thankful for her wonderful year at the YMCA. "I appreciate the funding and am sorry I had to ask for it."

The G family, husband and wife, are both 75. They live on a small pension and have high medical costs. To maintain their health, their doctor encourages them to walk. They both enjoy the YMCA and walk the track daily. "It keeps us moving together." Their average annual income is \$34,313.

M. is a disabled adult who works part-time and receives social security, earning less than \$15,500 a year. His scholarship allows him to "walk indoors or play basketball when it is cold and gives me a chance to use the exercise equipment and visit with other people when I work out and be more physically fit."

B. is a senior citizen and is retired on social security, which is her only income and just \$6,168 a year. She has diabetes and her membership helps her keep it under control. She enjoys meeting new people at the YMCA, especially in the water aerobics classes.



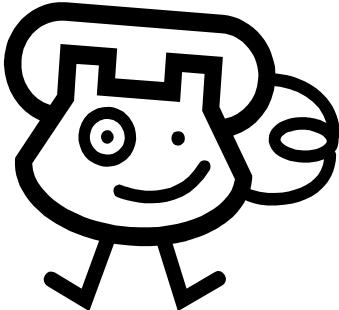
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*I'm on a fixed income. A YMCA scholarship helps me move more, make friends and get out and about.—Senior*

## PHONE SCRIPT

### FIRST TIME DONOR



#### Opening

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm a YMCA volunteer. I'm calling to thank you for supporting the Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls YMCA and to share with you how you can help area kids. Are you aware of how the YMCA helps kids and adults?

(Yes) Great! Then you already know the benefits of the YMCA's financial assistance program that helps children and their parents have memberships and offers them fun sports, swimming and other healthy bonding activities. They are able to participate even if they live on limited means thanks to assistance from the YMCA's Annual Campaign. Are you familiar with this campaign?

(No) Well, the YMCA's mission is to help their community members build a healthy spirit, mind and body regardless of their ability to pay for membership. Approximately 20% of the Eau Claire/Chippewa Falls YMCA's memberships are financially-assisted. Through those memberships we teach life skills like swimming, team work, respect, honesty, responsibility, and caring while the kids are having fun and getting fit! Are you familiar with our YMCA Annual Campaign?

#### Annual Campaign Discussion

(Familiar—Wonderful, then you've already heard that...)

(Not Familiar—If I may take just a moment of your time, allow me to share with you how...)

The YMCA financial assistance program provides opportunities for more than 2,000 youth, families, seniors and adults in our local community who need a helping hand. These programs include LIVESTRONG at the Y—a free program for cancer survivors, as well as need-based financial assistance for YMCA memberships and programs. These opportunities would not be available without the funds that are raised from people like you. Our goal is to raise \$250,000 to help meet the needs of families in our area. We are counting on the support of our members and the community to help us continue offering these vital programs.

#### Closing/Objections

Will you consider a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_?

(That's too high). How about a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month which will guarantee help for one child?

(Still too high) How much do you feel you would be able to give? Please keep in mind we can bill you at anytime throughout the year or you can pay it through a monthly bank draft.

#### End

[THEIR NAME], the YMCA truly appreciates your support and donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to be paid quarterly, monthly or in one installment, billed in (month). May I confirm your address and the spelling of your name?

#### Thanks

Thank you again for your support. You will receive a confirmation letter in the mail from our business office. Have a great day! Goodbye.





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YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

*My client has special needs. The YMCA gives her a chance to exercise and make new friends. Thanks for all you do.*

## THANK YOU

ALWAYS TAKE  
THE TIME  
TO SAY  
THANK YOU!

Sample follow-up letter to a personal visit with a confirmed pledge

(Date)  
(Name and Address)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for allowing me to take a few minutes of your time to share the YMCA story.

We sincerely appreciate your generous gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. As per our discussion, you wish to pay through (monthly bank draft, billing to begin in the month of \_\_\_, quarterly, or other). We are confident that your contribution will impact the thousands of youth and adults that will benefit from the programs that this money supports. With a need that is greater than ever before, we could not do it without you.

On behalf of the children, teens, and families that will benefit from your gift, please accept our sincere gratitude and thanks. Our YMCA needs and appreciates your friendship, and generosity. Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,  
(Name of volunteer)  
YMCA Annual Campaign Volunteer

Sample follow-up letter to a telephone call when personal contact is not possible

(Date)  
(Name and Address)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for allowing me to take a few minutes of your time to share the YMCA story and the impact the Y Annual Campaign is having on our community.

We sincerely appreciate your generous gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. As per our discussion, you wish to pay through (monthly bank draft, billing to begin in the month of \_\_\_, quarterly, or other). We are confident that your contribution will impact the thousands of youth and adults that will benefit from the programs that this money supports. With a need that is greater than ever before, we could not do it without you.

If you would like to be invoiced for your gift or if the above does not accurately describe your pledge, please call Suzie Slota at the YMCA at 839-4631.

On behalf of the children, teens, and families who will benefit from your gift, please accept our sincere gratitude and thanks. Our YMCA needs and appreciates your friendship and generosity. Again, thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



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YMCA of the Chippewa Valley

*Everything suddenly changed in our lives. The only constant was the YMCA. Thank you for that.*

## HELPFUL NOTES

HELPFUL  
NOTES OR  
QUESTIONS  
FOR NEXT  
YEAR'S  
ANNUAL  
SUPPORT  
CAMPAIGN.