

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

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December 2020

Dear YWCA Southeast Wisconsin Supporters,

Have you ever doubted the resiliency and resolve of this community to **build a more just and inclusive region**? With all that 2020 has unleashed, doubt is a frequent companion for many of us.

Despite the year 2020, or perhaps because of it, we invite you to **doubt no more. Instead, join us in building that vision.** Yes, joining us **includes financial support.** Please, learn why.

- We've been tested and are trusted, doing our work in partnerships.
- We are pivotal to a support network essential to recovery and rebuilding.
- Our long-standing mission – to eliminate racism and empower women – is more obviously than ever at the forefront of navigating **the immediate needs of 2021 and building the future.**

This year we faced COVID-19, extraordinary economic upheaval and a burgeoning racial justice reckoning. **At YWCA Southeast Wisconsin that meant quickly providing all programs virtually and introducing new services to address immediate needs.** Since March, we never lost a day of adult education instruction, dramatically grew access to GEDs and HSEDs, exponentially expanded our racial justice programming, and quickly created a *Support Line* to provide “wellness checks” and efficiently connect callers to resources. Our partnerships placed laptops in the hands of our adult learners and children in foster care at risk of not graduating, while also continuing our workforce readiness services, helping women get back to work even in this difficult year and building a pipeline to employers committed to equity and inclusion.

Building this vision is not just about financial support. It is about timing, too.

In May 2019, Milwaukee County declared racism a public health crisis. Among other things, the declaration noted that generations of systemic racism had undermined two key social determinants of health – **inequitable economic opportunity rooted in barriers to education and productive employment.** Then in March 2020, with the onset of COVID-19, southeast Wisconsin began to painfully understand **racism's sabotage of public health and the regional economy – dual burdens that have most significantly affected women, especially women of color.**

We believe our region's potential for a vibrant future will only be possible when **key social determinants of women's health are prized.** So, **now is the time** to increase our focus on the well-being of women and their families. **Now is the time to build a shared vision** of a thriving, inclusive and just region **defined by racial and gender equity as a foundation for our healthy communities.**

I truly hope you'll join us – now. Please donate (renew or increase your gift?) and sign up to be on our [email list](#). Let's put 2020 to bed and look forward to 2021. **Really,** look forward to it.

Onward!



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**eliminating racism
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