

EMPOWERMENT TODAY

FOR A STRONGER TOMORROW

February 2026

ywca
Northeast Indiana

INSIGHTS & IMPACT

At YWCA, we believe that education is the ultimate catalyst for change. While we often associate education with textbooks and degrees, within our walls, it means something even more profound: empowerment.

Education weaves through everything we do. For the survivors we serve, education is about regaining control. We provide the support and knowledge necessary for them to make informed choices for their lives and connect with vital community resources. For the community, it is the key to prevention. We are actively working in schools and community centers to stop violence before it starts.

As we move into February, which is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month, this work is more critical than ever. Through our "Eyes Wide Open" presentation, we teach high school students how to identify dating "red flags" and recognize what a healthy relationship looks like.

The impact is real and immediate. Recently, a student shared this powerful feedback with us:

"After the presentation, I can say I know what to do if I am, or if someone I know is being abused."

That is the sound of a cycle being broken.



We also invest in long-term success through our Goldstein Family Scholarship Program for female domestic violence survivors. This program is designed to improve self-sufficiency and quality of life by helping women complete higher education.

I am incredibly proud to share a recent success story that illustrates the resilience of the people we serve. One of our scholarship recipients just graduated with her bachelor's degree. And she finished her final semester with a perfect 4.0 GPA—all while working, being a devoted mother, and staying involved in her children's school.



This month, we are shining a spotlight on our Education Program. I invite you to read more below about how these initiatives are transforming lives and how you can support this vital work.

Paula



Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

TDVAM is held throughout the month of February as a way to bring together teens and those who support them in a national effort to raise awareness of teen dating violence.

At YWCA, we are strong believers in the powerful role that awareness and education play in prevention. This is why we urge you to take a proactive stance during the month of February, and to engage your students and educate them about what teen dating violence looks like and the dangers associated with it. Check out our [website](#) and follow our social media for ways to get involved!



The St. Joseph Community Health Foundation Grant



YWCA would like to extend our gratitude to The St. Joseph Community Health Foundation for generously awarding us a \$40,000 grant.

Funding will focus specifically on supporting pregnant women and children under two in our Domestic Violence Shelter and Addiction Recovery Program.

"The St. Joseph Community Health Foundation continues to be a leader in our community for championing women's and children's health and wellness. Their ongoing support of YWCA Northeast Indiana brings confidence, innovation, and growth to our programs. With generous grant funding, St. Joseph Community Health Foundation empowers YWCA to reach women, pregnant women, and their children in a comforting, clinically

supportive setting. Our residential program offers a soft place to land and a strong foundation for change.” -Jennifer Kasmier (Chief Programming Officer, YWCA Northeast Indiana)

The Shame of Chicago, Shame of the Nation Screening

In honor of Black History Month, the City of Fort Wayne is hosting a free screening of *The Shame of Chicago, Shame of the Nation* as their February Fair Housing Series event.

You can view the compelling four-part documentary on Wednesday evenings in February at the Main Allen County Public Library.

Learn more about the episodes and find additional information about the event [here](#).



Education Services

YWCA Northeast Indiana offers free evidence-based education sessions for adults and youth—building awareness and practical skills to recognize risks and respond effectively.

The best intervention is prevention.

Adult Education Programs

- Addiction & Recovery 101
- Domestic Violence 101
- Domestic Violence 101 with Children
- Digital Boundaries for Parents and Youth Workers

Youth Education Programs

- CyberSense 101
- CyberSense 201
- Eyes Wide Open...relationship awareness©



In 2025, our education team presented to 606 adults and 3,076 youth.

To learn more or to schedule a presentation with our Community Educators, call 260.424.4908 ext. 222, email educationteam@ywcanein.org, or fill out [this form](#). Presentations can be tailored to meet the needs of specific groups.



UPCOMING EVENTS

YWCA Book Club

February 24th from 6-7pm via Zoom

Throughout 2026, we'll dive into powerful stories and connect through meaningful conversation. In honor of TDVAM, we are kicking off our book club with the book "Speak" by Laurie Halse Anderson. Spaces are limited! Learn more and [register here](#).

Coffee & Conversations

Our 2026 Coffee & Conversations theme is "Chapter by Chapter: Wellness & Wisdom for Life Stages." We will discuss important health issues for women, including the stages of menopause, pre- and postnatal issues, financial health, and mental health.

Our first event is March 12th from 8-9:30am at YWCA Northeast Indiana

The Menopause Chapter. This essential conversation is dedicated to understanding and embracing every stage of the menopause journey, from perimenopause through post menopause. Moving beyond outdated narratives, learn to navigate this significant life stage with wisdom and confidence, transforming it from a challenge into an opportunity for renewed wellness. This chapter is about gaining clarity and rewriting the script. Learn more and register [here](#).

Race for a Reason 5K

April 25th from 9-11:30am at PFW

The theme of our 5th annual 5K event is "Lacing Up for a Stronger Tomorrow." Every step you take supports a worthy cause, with proceeds benefiting YWCA's work in northeast Indiana. Building a community rooted in dignity and empowerment takes all of us, so YWCA wants to offer community members an opportunity to talk about "Y you race?" and "What's your reason?"

We are bringing back both the Pup Run and the 1 Mile Fun Run, so there is something for the whole family! The 5K race will begin promptly at 9:00am, with the 1 Mile race starting shortly after.

5K prices are \$40 (adult), \$25 (student), and \$5 (pup). 1 Mile prices are \$30 (adult), \$15 (student), and \$5 (pup). This early-bird pricing ends April 6th, so make sure to sign up and secure your spot today! [Register here](#).

2026 Events

- **Volunteer Appreciation Event** - April 21st from 8-9:30am at The Hefner Center
- **Music for a Mission** - September 18th from 6-11pm at Brotherhood Mutual
- **Circle** - October 29th from 11am-1pm at Parkview Mirro Center



Every great story has a Prologue— that single, defining moment of resilience, choice, or discovery that sets the stage for everything that follows. Community leaders will share their personal “prologue”—the powerful moment, realization, or challenge that led to where they are today. Visit our [website](#) to hear from:

Jennifer Kasmier

Chief Programming Officer, YWCA Northeast Indiana

Dave Shadburne

President & CEO, MidWest America Federal Credit Union

Aisha Diss

Founder & Executive Director, project.ME FW, Inc.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Throughout 2026, we are excited to highlight members of our incredible Board of Directors! Beginning in the March issue, you will be able to learn more about the people generously giving their time and talent to write the next chapter for YWCA Northeast Indiana. Their leadership was instrumental in the recent approval of our new strategic plan, which sets a bold, intentional course for community impact.

Our 2026 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Darius Darling – Chair

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company

Natalie Brown – Vice Chair

Lincoln Financial Group

David Shadburne – Treasurer

Midwest America Federal Credit Union

Denice Beights – Secretary

Transamerica



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Leyla Clark

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Paula Nickell

Midwest America Federal Credit Union



GET INVOLVED

Kroger Community Rewards Program

Kroger will donate a portion of your purchases to YWCA Northeast Indiana through their Community Rewards program. There is no cost to you and it doesn't affect your points or rewards! Learn how to enroll and select YWCA [here](#).

Save 25% at Papa John's

Support YWCA's services and enjoy delicious pizza! Use coupon code **YWCA25** to receive the discount.

Follow us on Social Media

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#), to stay in the know of everything that's going on at YWCA Northeast Indiana. We hope to connect with you soon!



WAYS TO GIVE BACK

Bath Towel Donations

We are currently in need of full-size bath towels for our clients. All donations must be new, with tags. Items can be dropped off at our main entrance Monday through Friday, between 9am and 4pm, or sent by mail, addressed to Donna Masterson at 1313 W Washington Center Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46825. Visit our [website](#) for a list of other in-kind donations we are accepting.

Bus Passes for Clients

We are accepting bus pass donations to help our clients get around town. A Citilink Regular Adult All Day Pass is just \$3.75, and would allow unlimited rides all day long. For an additional \$1.50, passes can be shipped directly to our location. Passes can be purchased [here](#) and either dropped off during business hours, put in our mailbox, or sent by mail, addressed to Donna Masterson at 1313 W Washington Center Rd, Fort Wayne, IN 46825.

Volunteer Opportunities

We have a variety of volunteer positions, as well as group service opportunities. Find info [here](#).

Donate

If you would like to make a difference at YWCA Northeast Indiana through a financial contribution, there are many ways to do so. Learn more [here](#) or go directly to our [online donation portal](#).





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