

YWCA IS ON A MISSION

Inside the walls of the YWCA, women and children find safety, compassion, understanding, and hope for the future. Women like Kayla.

"Hello everyone, I want to introduce myself and my 16 month old son Charlie. We've lived at the YWCA shelter for most of Charlie's young life—he was three months old when I arrived feeling broken and incredibly terrified of everyone and everything. I spent too many years with a man who made me feel humiliated, violated, and afraid. I became so fearful of everything—as a 28-year-old woman, I became terrified of the dark and had to sleep with a light on. The only time I wasn't afraid was when I numbed my pain with alcohol and drugs. I know now it wasn't the right solution, but it felt like the only one I had. 13 months ago, I overdosed after a long week of constant abuse. When I woke up in the hospital, my first thought was that if I didn't get away from him, he would kill me, or I would kill myself. I went straight from the hospital to the YWCA. That was the beginning of an entirely new life.

I never imagined how a place could change your life so much. I never imagined that there are people in the world who don't want to use and abuse you. They want to help. I never realized that it is never too late to begin again. I learned all that at the YWCA and so much more. I learned that I wasn't stupid, lazy, or crazy like my abuser said. I learned "gaslighting" is a favorite weapon used by abusers to keep their victims down and question their sanity. I learned to finally cut the ties and put that toxic, abusive relationship behind me forever. I no longer feel the need to numb myself. It is in the past. I am now about the future.

Every day at the YW has made me feel safer, stronger, and empowered. The kindness and knowledge of the staff made the overwhelming fear I dealt with every day go away. The support groups made me understand I am not alone. The continuous support and encouragement from everyone at the YW have convinced me I can do anything. Finally, I am free from the painful prison of abuse and building a new life for my kids and me.

For the first time in my adult life, I am not afraid of the future. First, with the YW's help, I got a car, which makes me feel so free and independent. I got a job. I call it a job, but I think it's become a career I can be proud of. I've received two promotions in the past few months and am now a commercial sales manager in charge of a half-million-dollar department. And here's the best news. A few weeks ago, I signed a lease on a new home. Finally, with the YWCA's help, I can provide my boys with a safe, happy home. Just over a year ago, I could have never imagined this happening.

I want all of you to know that you are investing in saving lives by supporting the YWCA. That's what they do. They save lives, not only the woman's life but the lives of her children. Charlie is thriving because the YWCA helped me find my way to be the mom he needs. I am so very, very grateful to all of the staff and to everyone who makes the YWCA possible."

Kayla and Charlie are living safer, happier lives today because you made it happen! But there are still many more women and mothers struggling.

Because of you, so many find hope for a bright future, the strength to overcome challenges, and the opportunity to find happiness in life. I hope you fill out the enclosed card or visit www.ywcancin.org and click the donate now button to make a life-transforming gift.

With warm regards,

Susan Tybon
Susan Tybon

YWCA President and CEO

Debbie Smogor
Debbie Smogor

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