

# **2019 SOUTH SOUND YMCA CASE FOR SUPPORT**

## **A BOLD VISION FOR A STRONG COMMUNITY**

We have a BOLD vision for our community – that children and adults can live their dreams and achieve their potential, and we are working every day to bring that vision to life, one day and one person at a time.

We know we are successful when all individuals in our community have the opportunities and support needed to meet their potential and participate in the overall success of our community.

## **WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF THIS VISION?**

Unfortunately, many in our community are not given equal opportunities and support, and much of this gap is related to poverty.

Statistics show that a large number of children from low-income environments reach kindergarten unprepared, and they continue to fall behind without proper interventions. This gap in educational attainment between children from high-income families, and those from low-income families is known as the “Achievement Gap”. This gap culminates in low high school graduation and college attainment rates, limited job prospects, and a negative economic impact for millions of youth as they enter adulthood.

While the statistics above are bad, it gets worse. While 11% of Thurston County households are officially in poverty, over 25% make wages that don’t cover basic necessities like rent, food and childcare. For a family of four in our county, this basic cost of living is approximately \$68,600, which is just over the median household income. Furthermore, single-parent families are over 60% more likely to fall into the categories above, and children are one of the highest risk groups to be in poverty.

This means that every day children come to school hungry. Every day a parent makes a choice between food and rent. Every day seats at universities and technical colleges sit empty because parents can’t afford reliable childcare. And, every day these choices impact economic and social wellbeing of our community as a whole.

## **THE Y – A LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL**

In the Y, we have HOPE! We have hope because every day we see children succeed because they can think about learning instead of a hungry belly. Every day we see the relief on the faces of parents who know, regardless of what else is happening in their lives, they can count on a safe place for their children while they are at school or work. Every day we see hope come alive in the faces of parents and children as they achieve their goals and gain a sense of belonging and self-worth.

These are the outcomes of Y programs and the foundation of why we do what we do in our branches, in schools, and throughout the community each day. We do this through intentional programming that not only assists families with the *symptoms* of poverty, but helps lift entire families out of generational poverty and supports them in finding a new path for their future.

We do this through specific programs and thoughtful program models that break down barriers, foster achievement and belonging, and support people where they are in their journey.

## **THE Y IS UNIQUE IN OUR ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THIS VISION**

The Y is community! We are a network of volunteers, members, employees, donors and program participants who represent our community as a whole. We are a powerful group with all the tools we need to ensure our vision becomes reality.

Nationwide, the Y serves 2,700 communities and over 9 million youth each day! As a national organization with a local focus, and over 120 years of history serving the South Sound, we hold a unique position in the hearts and minds of our community.

## **IF WE FAIL...**

The challenges we face as a community are big. Issues like poverty and the economy can be overwhelming, and we must come together as a community to tackle these issues head-on.

Every minute that we wait, another parent chooses not to work because they don't have access to reliable childcare; a child believes that in *their* family, they can't go to college; poverty is passed to another generation in our community.

**It is our responsibility as citizens to ensure our community is a place where all people can live to their fullest potential. Do your part today to bridge the gap and help all in our community succeed.**