

# YWCA IS ON A MISSION

FALL 2019



*Donna Wright, YWCA Sojourner's Housing Coordinator, helping clients like Amy and Ken find a new home and hope for their future!*

eliminating racism  
empowering women

**ywca**

Charleston, WV

## A YWCA SOJOURNER'S SUCCESS STORY

**Amy and Ken\*** came into the shelter with their two sons after a series of financial setbacks resulted in them losing their vehicle and then their apartment. Ken is a highly decorated Veteran that served two deployments in Afghanistan. He is also suffering from PTSD and has had difficulty maintaining a job for the last several years. Unable to work and provide for his family, he slipped further into despair. During this time, Amy's salary could not cover all of the family's needs. Their vehicle needed major repairs that they could not afford and without transportation, Amy lost her job, which led to the family becoming homeless. They bounced around staying with family for a while, but eventually ended up at Sojourner's.

When they first came to Sojourner's, they were very quiet and, with the exception of working with their Case Manager, the Housing Coordinator, or other staff, rarely spoke to other residents. While the Housing Coordinator started looking for housing, their Case Manager suggested that they start working with the Readiness Center, since their loss of employment played a big part in losing their housing. The kids also needed attention and were immediately connected with the school system with one going to grade school and the other entering the head start program.

Once they felt safe, and things became clearer, they followed their Case Manager's advice and started attending Sojourner's Education/Job Readiness Center. Both Amy and Ken tested very well from the start. They were both intelligent and had so much potential but their circumstances left them feeling trapped and alone. They came to the center every day and, after some

time working with them, they began gaining confidence and participating in group discussions. They both created resumes and an online job profile. Amy started getting interviews, so she was given a clothing voucher to pick out interviewing and work attire. It was clear that their circumstances were starting to change, and their attitudes and confidence level were changing as well. Ken was soon involved in his learning and chatting over coffee and smiling with staff and other participants at the Readiness Center. They started to regularly join in group discussions with good observations, conclusions, and comments.

In a matter of months, Amy got a job. While she was happy to have work, she felt like, given her long work history in customer support, that she could still do better so she continued to apply for other jobs while she worked. Before long, Amy found a job with better pay, benefits, and better hours for the boys. Shortly after, they were approved for housing, with the help of the Housing Coordinator, and with staff support, Ken finished two of the final steps in the disability application process. In less than a month, the Housing Coordinator was able to find them a house they could afford in a great neighborhood and the family moved in.

The family is still happily housed and the boys were able to start the new school year with the other kids in their neighborhood. They enjoy working in their yard and making improvements to their home, where they will hopefully stay for a long time.

*\*names have been changed*

In the last year alone, YWCA Sojourner's provided shelter and services for more than 801 homeless children and adults. By supporting YWCA Sojourner's through fully tax deductible donations, donating items to the shelter, or participating in Guys Night Out or Foodie Feast, you are providing a hand up, not a hand out! Visit [ywcacharleston.org](http://ywcacharleston.org) for how to get involved.





# Volunteer Spotlight

For five years, **Saint Matthews Episcopal Church** has contributed to the success and welfare of the YWCA Shanklin Center for Senior Enrichment. Generous volunteers from the church can frequently be found lending a helping hand to residents of the Shanklin Center in a multitude of ways.

Every four months, volunteers from Saint Matthews Episcopal Church deliver toiletries and household items to residents. The charitable volunteers also stock a food pantry with fruit, canned food, dry goods, and much more on a quarterly basis. Additionally, the church has received a grant from the Episcopal Diocese, which has provided Shanklin residents with a way to reduce spending costs on personal products.

The residents, who are disabled, abused senior women, have developed trusting relationships with the volunteers. ***"The volunteers go door-to-door and spend time with each of the women. They trust each other and have a bond,"*** states Kyla Nichols, Shanklin Program Director.



**Over the  
EDGE**



On June 21 & 22, 80 rappellers went Over The Edge and raised more than \$150,000 for **"Many Stories, One Future - YWCA Campaign to End Racism!"** Thank you to our sponsors, rappellers and their supporters for making YWCA Charleston's inaugural Over The Edge event a success!



*Girls Night Out*  
**TROPIC LIKE IT'S HOT**

**THANK YOU TO ALL THE SPONSORS, DONORS,  
ATTENDEES AND VOLUNTEERS OF GNO 2019!**

Together we raised enough funds to ensure the YWCA Resolve Program is prepared to meet the needs of more than 2,000 survivors of domestic violence from our communities in the coming year. **YOU** have given the gift of hope!





# Leading Change: suddenlink<sup>®</sup> by altice

**Suddenlink by Altice** is known by many in the community as a digital service provider for cable, phone, internet and security systems. They also are known for their community service. Suddenlink's community focus has four pillars: STEM, Digital Inclusion, Education and Community Engagement.

Many different organizations in the community build upon those focus areas, thus Suddenlink supports The Clay Center for the Arts & Sciences, United Way Day of Caring, RCBI Makes Festival and several robotics teams and recently became a **YWCA Leader for Change**.

**Bob Lillie**, Regional Vice President, Market Engagement for Altice USA personally takes part in many events, including a volunteer waiter at the 2018 Girls Night Out. In March, he joined other members of his team at Mel Wolf Child Development Center for a Women's History Month celebration. The team provided goody bags to the pre-K and after-school students as part of a panel discussion with Mayor Amy Shuler Goodwin, Rep. Amanda Estep-Burton, City Council member Jennifer Pharr, YWCA CEO Debby Weinstein and HR Director Eva Jones.

Following the discussion and some interesting student presentations about women in history, the Suddenlink team presented a check to the Mel Wolf Child Development Center. The program purchased materials for the library and classrooms to continue the engagement of students around women in history.

"When we find needs and can help bridge a gap with volunteers and other resources, that is the most rewarding part-seeing what we do to make a difference in our communities," said Lillie.



**"Suddenlink is a Leader for Change because it is the right thing to do. We support YWCA Charleston's mission and the programs, so it makes sense to commit to this level of involvement. Our employees are part of this community. We have 400 people living and working in the state and this keeps us involved all year round," said Lillie.**



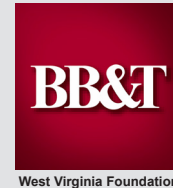
Many Suddenlink employees participated in the Race to End Racism and recently enjoyed Girls Night Out. On behalf of the YWCA board of directors, staff, clients and the families we serve, thank you to Suddenlink Altice!

*If your company is interested in deepening your commitment to the community through a once-annual, multi-event sponsorship pledge, contact Sarah King (sking@ywcacharleston.org) for more information today - the deadline for the 2020 Leaders for Change commitment is December 1.*

## 2019 Leaders FOR CHANGE

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**

### peace



### justice



### freedom



### dignity

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**Their corporate sponsorship sustains YWCA Charleston so that we can continue to serve the most vulnerable in our communities. Together, we work to promote peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all.**

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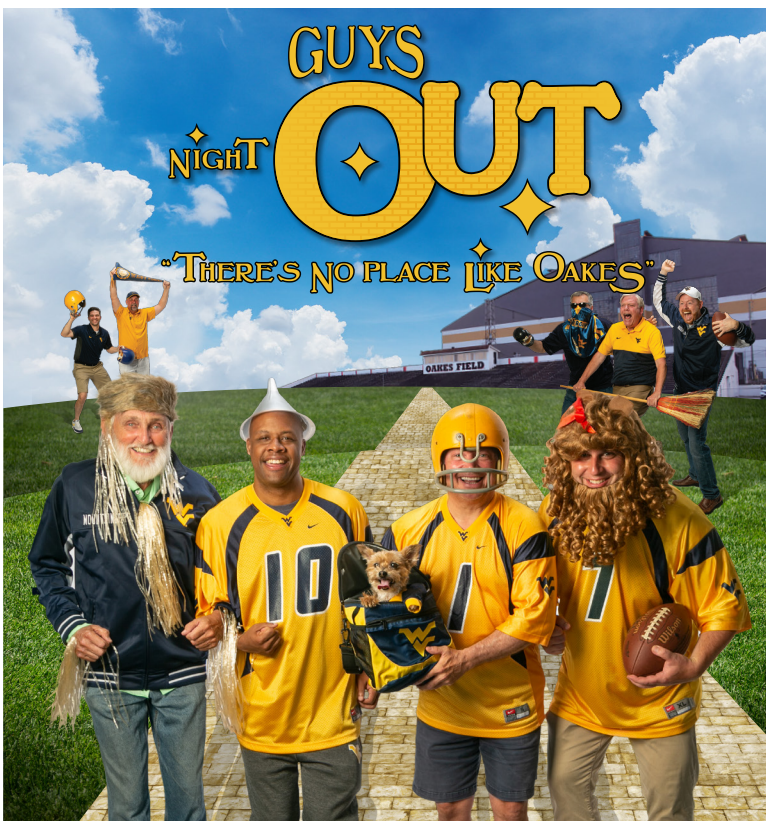


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of Central West Virginia

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# GUYS NIGHT OUT

"THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE OAKES"



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**17<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER**  
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**SUNDAY BRUNCH**  
10:30 AM - 2 PM



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