



May 20, 2025

Warmest greetings, Friend and Partner of the Eastside Y,

Speaking of warm, it's hard to believe we're quickly approaching the start of summer! Doesn't it feel like just yesterday that we were pulling our heavy coats, mittens, and hats from storage?

Well, just as quickly as the seasons seem to turn here in Minnesota, our work here at the St. Paul Eastside YMCA is also continually evolving to meet the needs of our community. And now that the winter gear is again out of sight and we eagerly greet summer, I am taking time to reflect on the progress we've made so far in 2025 and want to share a bit about what you can look forward to in the second half of the year.

Let's dive into some updates, shall we?

- **Empowering Future Leaders:** Our Achievers program continues to serve up to 30 middle and high school students Monday through Friday each week, providing mentorship, academic support, and tech-based learning. Our Career Pathways program also continues to thrive and in 2024, we provided paid internships for eight at-risk youth. Both programs help participants build a strong foundation for future career success while also supporting personal growth and confidence-building within a safe, nurturing environment.
- **Cultivating Lifelong Water Safety Skills:** This past summer, we provided 36 young people with progressive water safety training through the Safety Around Water initiative. By offering swimming lessons and lifeguard training, this program helps underserved youth gain confidence in the water and reduces the risk of drowning in local communities.
- **Building Community Through Intergenerational Learning:** We are thrilled to be expanding our community garden this summer, bringing together seniors and young children from our Early Childhood Learning Center in a shared learning environment. This initiative will foster mentorship and teamwork while promoting healthy lifestyles, environmental stewardship, and a deeper connection between generations.
- **Supporting Academic Success Through Partnership:** For the third year in a row, we are partnering with Trio Upward Bound to provide academic and college prep support for students ages 16-19 from underrepresented communities. This program offers mentorship, SAT prep, tutoring, and workshops that help build confidence, leadership, and responsibility – ultimately creating pathways for higher education and future success.
- **Preparing Students for a Bright School Year:** In mid-August, we will donate 500 backpacks filled with essential school supplies to local students at our annual Youth Opportunity Fair. This initiative eases the financial burden on families while ensuring kids start the school year with the tools they need to thrive.

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Ongoing support from partners like you is the driving force behind these achievements, our plans for the future, and so much more. Your inspiring commitment helps us grow and adapt our programs so that no community member has to question whether the Eastside Y is a place for them.

We are beyond grateful to have you by our side in this important work, positively impacting many lives in many ways.

As we plan for the future, I am excited to keep you updated on our journey as we create new ways to foster wellbeing and strengthen our community.

Once again, thank you for being a vital part of why and how we carry out our mission each day. I wish you a fantastic summer ahead and can't wait to see all the good we'll accomplish together in the months and years to come!

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dru Dalton', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dru Dalton
Associate Executive Director

