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INVEST IN YOUTH ... A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

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Invest in Youth is a scholarship program at the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA that provides the necessary funding for people to fully participate in YMCA programs regardless of families' financial circumstances. During good and bad economic times, there are people, from time to time needing just a little financial help, to allow children, parents, and seniors to be a part of YMCA programs. Last year, because of people's generosity, the YMCA was able to help some 500 families with over \$120,000 in scholarship assistance. In addition to this, the YMCA assists families of military personnel as recognition for their service to our country. The YMCA helped 161 military families with these scholarships.

It is not for just lack of jobs or income that people seek YMCA financial assistance but other factors in their lives sometimes compel them to ask for help; like ...

... the daughter whose brother has a chronic illness that takes many of the family's resources just to keep him healthy. Through *Invest in Youth* she is now enrolled in the YMCA's gymnastics program.

... the man who visited his doctor who told him that he was going to die unless he could lose some weight and control his stress levels. He is going back to school for retraining after he lost his job and through a small YMCA scholarship he and his children are now YMCA members.

... the boy who describes his love of soccer as an "indicative passion" and has signed up for our Spring League. His father is out of work and mother is working at a low paying job trying to make ends meet as they both look for new work.

Parents tell the YMCA every day how thankful they are ...

... like the mother who would like to enrich her children's life as much as possible. "I don't want my children to grow up and feel they missed out on a lot of opportunities because their parents didn't have the money." One of her children is in the Y Lacrosse skills program and the other is learning how to swim because the YMCA is there.

... like the father who says he would love to see his two children use their energy and potential to the fullest. "We notice everyday how hungry they are for activity and

learning something new. YMCA soccer, tennis, and gymnastics would be great tools to break into more self-confidence and achievement in their lives.”

... like the teen parent, who is trying to finish her high school education. Because of *Invest in Youth* and other support is able to leave her baby at the new YMCA Child Care Center with full confidence of the quality of care for her little one as she takes another step toward her career goals.

Invest in Youth is supported solely through the annual fund raising efforts of many people who love and support the YMCA and the people they are trying to help. Others respond to mailings and go to the website at www.gtbayymca.org to download a donation form and make their contribution. Feel free to contact for more information from any YMCA board member, Y staff person, or Dave Eitland at 231-933-9622 or dave@gtbayymca.org to find out more how you can give to this effort.

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