

July 28, 2020

Dear Friends,

I hope that you and your loved ones are faring well during these times of uncertainty and dramatic cultural and societal change. Today, I write to share the news that after more than a decade of service, in December 2020, I will be stepping down as Executive Director of YWCA Cambridge. I am eternally grateful for the years that I have been privileged to lead this historic association, and for the personal and professional relationships I have enjoyed while working with and for women, girls and families in the Cambridge area and throughout Massachusetts. My heart is filled with anticipation and excitement as I contemplate the next chapter of YWCA Cambridge's growth and development.

Throughout my 30+ years in YWCA leadership positions, I have been dedicated to developing and implementing programs and services that "eliminate racism, empower women and promote peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all", the YWCA mission. Since 2007, as the Executive Director of YWCA Cambridge, I have had the opportunity to help create and provide leadership programs for girls, self-development and learning opportunities for women, advocacy on racial and social justice issues, and supportive housing for homeless families and single women who have experienced trauma in their lives. This work has been an expression of my personal values and my way of assisting those who might not otherwise have a sense of positive self-esteem to develop those traits.

Together, under my leadership and amidst other work, YWCA Cambridge staff and volunteers have spearheaded a \$13 million renovation of the Tanner Residence and the Main Building. We have restructured the utilization of the Main Building to create a steady income stream. Partnering with the Cambridge Housing Authority, we demolished the Pool Building which led to the construction of 40 units of Section 8 housing on the same site. Additionally, in conjunction with the City of Cambridge we relocated and renamed the Family Homeless Shelter to Renae's Place, a fully renovated building. Furthermore, partnering with Councilor E. Denise Simmons we proudly created the Girlx Only Leadership Development Program (GOLD) for 7th and 8th grade girlx.

As we have thought about issues of long term sustainability, we further anchored our development initiatives by hiring a full-time Development staff member. Additionally, among many other prudent decisions, we sold our Marshfield property. It is an understatement to say that this has been an incredible journey of accomplishments, growth and change management.

My YWCA tenure began as the Executive Director of the YWCA in Kansas City, Missouri. From there I was fortunate to lead a regional YWCA in Ontario, Canada for 15 years. During those times, my work always focused on supporting and advocating for women and families in areas such as housing, shelter for survivors of domestic violence, childcare and early learning, as well as health and wellness programming.

Furthermore, as a graduate of the University of Kansas, I worked on both the congressional and campaign staffs of a former member of the U.S. House of Representatives, and as Director of the Housing Assistance Staff at the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C. All of these experiences, along with a strong and supportive extended network of family, friends and co-workers, have helped prepare and sustain me throughout my YWCA career.

I am proud that over the years my work has been acknowledged through the receipt of numerous citations and awards, most recently the 2019 Inspire Award granted by the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, “celebrating the achievements of women leaders”. In 2018, I received the Bayard Rustin Service Award given by the Cambridge LGBTQ+ Commission to an ally for advancing civil rights, and in 2012, the Peace and Justice Award from the Cambridge Peace Commission for “A Lifetime of Peacemaking”.

As a strong believer in community, I have been a founding member of the Cambridge Non-Profit Coalition. Currently, I am a member of the Cambridge City Manager’s Advisory Committee, the Cambridge Citizens Committee on Civic Unity, and the Central Square Business Improvement District Board of Directors.

While my YWCA journey has been full of challenges, surprises and achievements, as well as highs and lows, it has never been dull, and it has always been fulfilling. Our local association is stronger today than ever before, which is why I feel confident that I can entrust the organization to a new leader and watch the YWCA Cambridge flourish in its next phase. I now join the Board of Directors as we forge ahead with the search for the new Executive Director.

Thank you for your support, fellowship and engagement. I look forward to the next chapter and will always remain a fervent supporter, advocate, and cheerleader for the YWCA Cambridge.

With much gratitude,



Eva Martin Blythe
Executive Director
YWCA Cambridge