



YMCA
of
Greater St. Petersburg
www.stpeteymca.org

Harbordale Statement of Need

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In 2000 the YMCA opened its Harbordale facility located in south St. Petersburg, FL. This facility is not the traditional YMCA fitness facility but is instead a community center. Harbordale has been a troubled area for some time. Gang activity and crime rates are among the highest in the county yet it also features a high percentage of school-age youth. For this reason, several entities have identified the need for more resources for this community. The Harbordale YMCA facility is one answer to this need. Key socio-economic trends include:

- 26% of the population lives in poverty.
- 39% of kids under the age of 6 are living in poverty.
- 70% percent of the youth referred to the Department of Juvenile Justice reside in this neighborhood, which is the third highest in Pinellas County in total number.
- Female householders with no spouse and children accounts for 60% of the total households with children.
- 80% of the residents are African American (compared to 22% in St. Petersburg and 8% in Pinellas County).
- The Juvenile Welfare Board reports that this community is among the highest in the county for teen pregnancy and juvenile arrests.

History

The Harbordale YMCA facility was developed to meet the needs of the community through programs and services for the entire family. In the early 1990s Harbordale Neighborhood community members and leaders came to the YMCA to express their concern for the high failure rate of the children in their neighborhood. The YMCA listened to these concerns, worked with key community members, and established the Y-Achievers program at local church sites fifteen years ago. Shortly after that, the YMCA was able to build its Harbordale YMCA facility and offer the program there. As a result of this beneficial program, these children now have the character and education in which to build on all aspects of their lives.

The Harbordale YMCA was built with a City of St. Petersburg's Community Development Block Grant. Participation at the facility requires that 90% of all participants qualify as low income by Federal Poverty Guidelines. This is a necessity based on the location of the services and the surrounding community. All program participants qualify for an 80%-90% reduction in program fees based on a sliding scale fee structure due to income levels. Most participants pay just \$4 per month for the Y-Achievers program. These families are living in poverty and could not afford any other after-school care. The remainder of the program costs is raised through grants and the YMCA's annual fundraising campaign, Strong Kids.

Although this community has numerous risk factors, it also has a rich cultural heritage and has developed a strong Neighborhood Association that engages community members to get involved and invest in their community. The YMCA is very proud to be located within the community and actively involved with community members in strengthening it.