

The Doors Have Opened

by Allison Stinger

The Phoenixville YMCA opened its doors in 1952 in a modest storefront rowhome on Bridge Street. H.O. West and employees of the West Company had a dream to create a place that stressed togetherness, regardless of age, income level, physical abilities, ethnicity or religion. Although much has changed since those days in 1952, Mr. West's dream lives on in the mission of the YMCA.

If you have driven on Pothouse Road over the last 18 months, you have witnessed significant change to the physical appearance of the Phoenixville Branch. In June, the YMCA completed a 48,000-square-foot addition and renovations to the existing structure. This building project, however, was about more than bricks and mortar. It was about changing lives. From the youngest of our members to those young at heart, the Phoenixville YMCA is providing programming and services to enrich the lives of our neighbors and friends. This expansion gives the YMCA an opportunity to touch more lives by providing a community-based environment where all are welcomed.

For the YMCA to provide a safe and nurturing environment, a capital campaign, Deep Roots, Strong Branches – A Campaign for Growth was launched and private donations from individuals,

local and national foundations and corporations were sought to underwrite the project. With the leadership of Honorary Chair, Richard A. Kunsch, Sr. and other members of the community, gifts and pledges have

exceeded \$4.2 million dollars. These gifts, coupled with donations received from a previous campaign have enabled the YMCA to provide additional space for child care, recreation and healthy living programs. It has provided a means to enhance programs that build character and leadership in our youth while providing fellowship for adults and families.

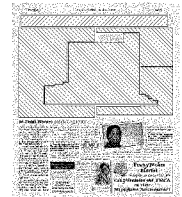
Although we value every gift, it is those "lead gifts" that have built the foundation for support. The Detwiler Family Foundation and Mr. and Mrs. Joe Thomson have

played integral roles in the success of our efforts. In recognizing them

for their generous and continued support, the YMCA has renamed the branch the Daniel J. Detwiler

Phoenixville Branch and our new recreation center, The Bradley S. Thomson Activity Center. The

legacy of these families along with everyone who financially supported this campaign will forever impact the community and will enable the YMCA to continue its mission of building Strong Kids,



Strong Families and Strong Communities.

In today's world where we question our financial stability, where children are searching for a safe place to simply be kids and where seniors and families seek a welcoming place to gather, it is nice to know that the Phoenixville community has a place where all these concerns can be handled by simply walking through the open door of the YMCA. The YMCA is and will continue to be this community's home

away from home. All are welcomed in the YMCA family. With more than 12,000 members at the Phoenixville branch, we still have room for you. Come as a visitor and leave as a member of our growing family.

