COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

A series of Community Focus Groups were conducted in December of 2017. Six groups met based on the following demographics: Teens, Young Adults, Men, Capehart Community, YMCA Members, YMCA Non-Members. The top three responses to the following questions were:

What impact did or does the Y have in your life or in the lives of others?

- It is a place for kids to have fun and do things they like.
- The Y impacts the lives of youth.
- Child care is a lifesaver.

What should the Y consider now, even before any renovations/expansions?

- Gym on location could allow families to do things together in the same space.
- Variety of outings that are affordable and accessible.
- Upgrade locker rooms and new lockers.

When you think of spaces where people can connect with one another, what are the first things that come to mind?

- Basketball creates opportunities to connect.
- Clubs
- Variety of outings that are affordable and accessible.

When you think of helping people practice positive, healthy habits, what are the first things that come to mind?

- Indoor exercise activities
- Life Issues/Life Skills Programs
- Non-Athletic Programs for Youth
- Family Activities
- Community Social Issues to Address

The Bangor Region YMCA has conducted three separate studies to determine what our region needs for social services, what needs are not already being addressed, and how the Bangor Region YMCA can best move forward to fulfill these needs.
The top four needs for adults were determined to be:

- Presence of safe and secure community spaces for adults
- Availability of services that engage senior populations
- Presence of community spaces where adults can develop connections with others
- Availability of non-athletic programs that draw out youths skills, creativity, and confidence

The top four needs for youth were determined to be:

- Safe and secure community spaces for our youth
- Youth are supported in practicing positive habits that include physical activity and healthy eating
- Youth exit high school with college or career readiness skills
- Availability of community spaces where adults can develop connections with others

What are the critical social issues or pressing problems facing our community at this time?

- Substance/opioid abuse
- Poverty & the need for work force training
- Need to improve services and spaces for youth & teens
- Aging population/seniors
- Homelessness & affordable housing
- Transportation & accessibility
- Mental illness & suicide
- Food insecurity
- Obesity, health, nutrition
- Need for community connection, partnerships, and volunteerism
- Need for Community Outreach Center

How could the Y play a greater role in strengthening the community and helping people become their best selves?

- More collaborations with community partners
- Teen Center
- Provide more health consciousness and healthy living programs
- More programs to support underserved populations
- Expanded hours for childcare
- Offer more transportation for outer Bangor Region
- Basketball court is needed
- Tutor program/mentorship

What are the most impactful programs and services offered by the Y?

- Aquatics
- Childcare
- Camps
- Seniors/Second Wind
- Scholarships
- Youth Sports
- Health Related Programs
- Cardiac Rehab
- Biggest Mover

If the Y were to expand its facilities, what features or facilities are most needed?

- Gym Complex
- Indoor track, walking space
- Multipurpose gym- must be big, not helpful if only one program can use at a time
- More parking
- Community multiuse space for non-sports activities
- Larger childcare space
- Teen Center
- Rec areas, social areas, game room
- Become a hub in Bangor, should utilize ‘offsites’
- Café
- Better and larger locker rooms
- Meeting rooms and conference space available to the community

What is the community’s perception of our Y?

- Strong Leadership & Good Staff
- Family Oriented
- Camps are amazing
- Perception of the Y as a whole is mostly positive
- Downtown location is nice, walkable
- Accessible- Transportation to schools, The Y stays open on snow days whenever possible
- Multi-generational tradition for families
- Local resource to approach when other resources can’t serve clients i.e. Senior Center
- Kids are better prepared for life

Areas for Improvement

- Physical space isn't good enough, too small, dated
- No basketball gym or multiuse gym space
- Lacking a space for teens to go
- Financial accessibility, too expensive for low income people
- People don’t realize all the Y does
- Doesn’t represent everyone in the community
- The Y is for older and younger populations- Not a cool place for 18-40 year olds
- Limited space inhibiting family/community feel

Positive

- Strong Leadership & Good Staff
- Family Oriented
- Camps are amazing
- Perception of the Y as a whole is mostly positive
- Downtown location is nice, walkable
- Accessible- Transportation to schools, The Y stays open on snow days whenever possible
- Multi-generational tradition for families
- Local resource to approach when other resources can’t serve clients i.e. Senior Center
- Kids are better prepared for life