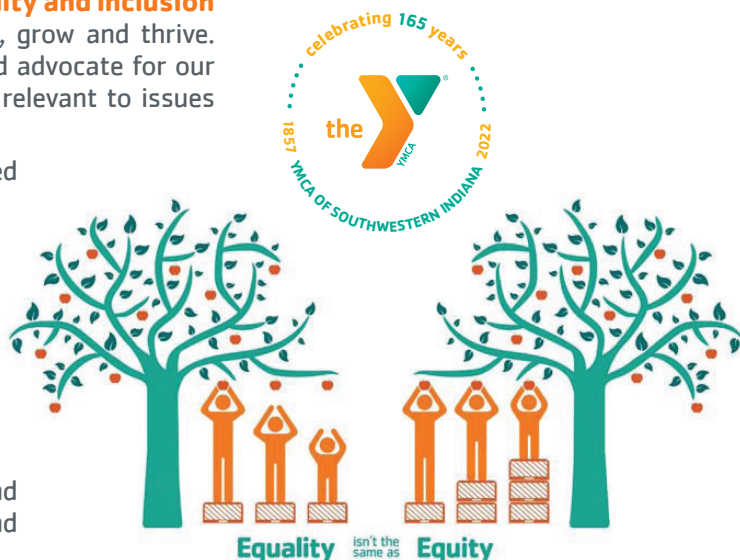


The YMCA of Southwestern Indiana is committed to **equity and inclusion** by ensuring that all youth have the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. We celebrate diversity and effectively engage, connect and advocate for our community, which will position us to respond and remain relevant to issues that impact us all.

Oftentimes, the terms equity and equality are used interchangeably. However, while related concepts, **equity and equality have distinct meanings**. Equality is treating everyone the same, while equity is providing people the tools and resources to be successful. Everyone should have the opportunity to be successful and live a fulfilling life. Far too many young people, especially those in under-served areas, lack equal access to resources, opportunities or support systems.

In order to fully promote equity, **the Y is “leveling the playing field”** by identifying and eliminating barriers and developing solutions and support systems so that youth and families are able to successfully realize their potential.



READY FOR COLLEGES AND CAREERS

The College and Career Readiness (CCR) program is an after-school program, serving 5th-9th grade students. It focuses on career exploration, postsecondary planning, and character building. The program served 6 schools and 82 students in 2020-2021, and is currently serving 9 schools this year.

CCR is designed through a MindWorks Resources Imagine Kit called Pathfinders, which exposes students to different occupations through hands-on, interactive and educational materials.

In addition to the curriculum, the CCR program exposes youth to career opportunities in our community through off-grounds visits to businesses and colleges. This past year, we embarked on 56 field trips to show students first hand experiences.

The ultimate goal of the program is to inspire students to see their potential and equip students with the next steps towards reaching their goals. It provides the opportunity to establish a foundation for more in-depth conversations and exploration about their futures in later years.

The program partners with local



businesses and business owners to offer tours that discuss jobs the students have been learning about through their curriculum.

Allison Phillips, the owner of Orange Leaf, says, “I love our partnership with College and Career Readiness because it opens up students’ eyes to what it is like to have their first job. In the program, we talk about what students can do to prepare and what they need to learn to be successful in their first job. Starting at a place like Orange Leaf can be a stepping stone for a young person. With my staff, I love to be able to help them pick up good work ethics,



take pride in their work, and discover the skills needed to be successful later on. In our partnership with CCR, we try to help the students prepare for these first steps too.”

This year we had some field trip restrictions but can take more kids on busses so we are hoping to continue getting kids out in the community in a safe way.

Funds from the YMCA Annual Campaign help provide youth with the opportunity to explore career paths and plan for their future.

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– Allison Phillips, owner Orange Leaf
