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Local Program to Prevent Violence and Support At-risk Youth Expands to Brainerd

YMCA Community Action Program will support hundreds of additional at-risk youth and families at new Brainerd location as part of Mayor Tim Kelly's One Chattanooga Relief and Recovery Plan

Chattanooga, Tenn. (March 20, 2023) — The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga and the Kelly administration today announced the expansion of Chattanooga's YMCA Community Action Program (Y-CAP) into Brainerd, where their new location at the Chris L. Ramsey Community Center [will help at-risk youth](#) turn away from violence and substance abuse, and embrace sustainable behavior and positive opportunities.

"Y-CAP is, in a nutshell, early intervention prevention – we help at-risk youth build the relationships and skills they need to thrive, before it's too late," said Andy Smith, Regional Executive Director of YMCA Y-CAP. "It's truly incredible to see the kids who come through our program grow, heal, and completely change the trajectory of their lives. Our expansion to Brainerd will allow us to support even more students and families in need, and I'm incredibly grateful for Mayor Kelly's vision and financial support that made it possible."

The program, which accepts students between 10 and 15 years of age who are referred by Hamilton County Schools or the juvenile court system, provides personalized treatment plans to address each student's academic, behavioral, and spiritual needs. With daily intensive treatment and support – including mentoring, tutoring, hot meals, family nights, and group therapy – students and their families are given a safe environment to make healthy changes in their lives, so they can live up to their fullest potential and build a successful future.

The Brainerd location opened in February as part of Chattanooga Mayor Tim Kelly's [One Chattanooga Relief and Recovery Plan](#).

"Nothing is more powerful than seeing the life of a struggling child transform through new, positive relationships and experiences filled with hope and opportunity. That's what Y-CAP is doing for one hundred at-risk students in our community every single day," said Kelly. "I'm thrilled that we were able to support the program's expansion into a particularly vulnerable neighborhood. The lives we are changing today will lead to a safer, more prosperous community in the years to come."

Announced in July 2022, Kelly's One Chattanooga Relief and Recovery Plan provided \$30 million in federal American Rescue Plan dollars to community-based initiatives that demonstrated the potential to make long-term, positive change in the city.

Nearly \$4 million dollars went to youth mentorship and empowerment programs to curb violence and support vulnerable students and their families, including \$300,000 to support Y-CAP's expansion to Brainerd.

Since the new location opened, 25 new students and their families have enrolled from the program's waiting list. Y-CAP now has a total of four locations in Chattanooga, which serve 100 students per day from neighborhoods across the city.

About the Y

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chattanooga is more than 150 years old and today serves more than 35,000 members—strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Its programs reach 120 area locations and serve 12 counties throughout Southeast TN and North GA. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 22 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background. The Y empowers everyone, no matter who they are or where they're from, by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives, and generations, the Y's goal is to improve overall health and well-being, ignite youth empowerment and demonstrate the importance of connections in and across 10,000 communities nationwide. ymca.net www.ymcachattanooga.org

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