

“We have so many stories to tell at the YMCA. To have a storytelling pro like Eddie on our side really makes our fundraising efforts stand out. I wish we'd done it sooner.”

Dale Cross
Executive Director
Waldo County YMCA

Changing Lives... One Neighbor at a Time

Dear Mike,

Donors often ask me the same question. “**Where exactly does my donation go?**” Well, let me share a story with you...

Eight years ago, Sandi Roman moved to Belfast, along with her husband and two small boys. She came from NYC to become the “Director of the Children’s Theater” at the National Theater Workshop of the Handicapped. In addition to an exciting new job, she could raise her children in a **safe and healthy environment**.

Things went quite well for the first seven years. Sandi loved her job. Her husband, John, had steady work as a carpenter. And the boys, Zavier 11 and Zander 9, were happy in their new life. They especially loved coming to the After School Program at the Y, and playing with their chums. Life was good.

But then, disaster struck...

Sandi’s husband was arrested for drug abuse and sentenced to nine months in the minimum security wing at the prison in Warren. It was a terrible blow to the family, both emotionally and financially.

“John is a good man with a problem,” Sandi said. “He’s getting treatment at the facility and even started the NA program there. All of us deserve a second chance. And, through it all, he’s always been a great father. The boys just worship him.”

However, with John’s income now gone, Sandi was having extreme difficulty making ends meet. She had to make some **tough financial decisions** for her and the boys. One of those decisions was to discontinue their attendance at the Y’s After School Program.

The boys were crushed. Instead of going to the Y with their friends after school, they would come to Sandi’s office and just sit around, bored. The combination of missing their father and being denied their favorite activity was causing them to act up and misbehave, at home and at school. Sandi was at wits end. Her health was also declining - suffering two mild heart attacks during this period. But Sandi had too much pride to ask for help.

Enter Robyn Thibodeau

Many of you know Robyn. She's the Childcare Director at the Y. "I knew something was wrong when the boys stopped showing up," Robyn said. "I was pretty sure it was financial. Those boys loved coming here. And the other kids missed having them around. I needed to do something."

That's when Robyn approached me. Fortunately, there was a solution. Thanks to the generous contributions of **neighbors like you**, we were able to reach into our Financial Assistance Fund. Within days the boys were back in the program. Sandi's gratitude can be summed up in just one sentence...

"Thank you for not turning your back on us."

The fund also allowed the boys to attend the YMCA summer camp. "I'm hoping there'll be enough to send my boys back to the program in the fall, when their father finally comes home. Then it's our turn to **give back** - with a donation of our own."

How do the boys feel? Just ask Zavier. "When Zander and I have our ups and downs, the counselors at the Y help us through it." How do you put a price on that?

Sandi Roman is our neighbor. And there are scores of other Sandi Romans in our community who are too proud to ask for help. But we're not too proud to offer it. And we're certainly proud of our...

- Before and after School Programs
- Teen Access Programs
- Health and Fitness Programs
- Sports Programs
- Active Older Adult Programs

But the stark reality is that all these programs cost money to run. And The YMCA can't do it alone. We're merely the vehicle. It's **your generous donations** that power the car.

So, we're asking you to step up to the plate – right now - and knock in the winning run. Who knows? Your \$25 donation (or more!) might just be the one that pushes Zander or Zavier across home plate this fall... While a very proud mother looks on.

Because of you we didn't turn our backs on Sandi. And thanks to you we're changing lives... One neighbor at a time.

Gratefully yours,

Dale Cross

Executive director

PS: I personally guarantee that **one hundred percent** of your donation will go directly to the programs provided to the children and families here at the Y.