

# DIGGING THE PORTAGE POOL



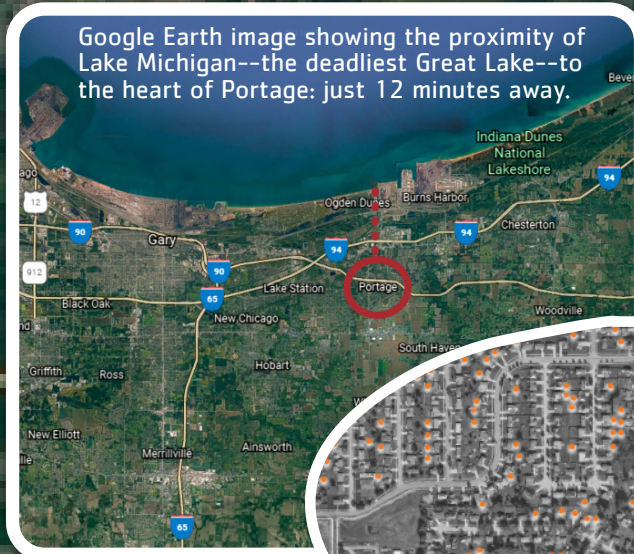
FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**Because drowning is preventable.  
Because there is a Great Lake in our backyard.  
Because Portage deserves a community pool.**

**It's time to invest in saving lives through the  
PORTAGE TOWNSHIP YMCA**

# DROWNING DEATHS RISING

94



# NEED FOR A PUBLIC POOL



Google Earth image of a typical Portage neighborhood. Each orange dot represents a private pool.

## Water everywhere, but no place to learn life-saving skills

The city of Portage, Indiana has a problem: there is a lake in our backyard. We are located on the southern shore of Lake Michigan and enjoy access to several recreational beaches, many of which are not guarded, just a few minutes away from any home in the city. Satellite images from Google Earth reveal that countless homes, trailer parks, and apartment complexes have private pools. It is ironic that one of the only places in the city that does not have a pool is our local YMCA.

the national network of Y's to deliver its own high-quality aquatics programs to the community.



The Portage YMCA has offered swim lessons for decades despite its lack of a pool. The organization has rented time at local private pools including the high school and nearby hotels, but each off-site location severely limits the program's capacity by restricting hours of operation and number of participants allowed in the small pools.

Building a pool on the YMCA's property located in the center of the city will expand the community's ability to offer SAW, swim lessons, aquatic aerobic cardio classes, and lap-swimming. People of every age and fitness level will benefit from the pool which promises to deliver the Y's mission to build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

YMCA's are renown for aquatic programming. In over 10,000 neighborhoods nationwide, YMCA's teach a drowning prevention program called Safety Around Water ("SAW") to over 9 million children and offer traditional swim lessons to another 1 million people each year. The Portage YMCA leverages the strength and expertise of

**Drowning discriminates.** While no one is immune, statistics indicate that race, income, and parental swimming know-how put certain groups of people at a greater risk of accidental death or injury than others.

- Over 4,000 people drown each year. That's an average of 11 fatal drownings per day. Nearly 80% are male.
- There are over 8,080 nonfatal drownings annually which can lead to brain damage or long-term disabilities.
- 23% of child drownings happen during a family gathering near a pool.
- Children younger than one-year-old are more likely to drown at home.
- 87% of drowning fatalities happen in home pools or hot tubs for children younger than 5. Most take place in pools owned by family or friends.
- 64% of black, 45% of Hispanic/Latino, and 40% of white children have few to no swimming skills.
- When parents have no/low swimming skills, their children are unlikely to have proficient swimming skills.
- Black children ages 5-19 drown in swimming pools at rates 5.5 times higher than white children in the same age range.
- 79% of children in households with incomes less than \$50,000 have few-to-no swimming skills.

**2 KIDS DIE EVERY DAY FROM DROWNING**

**DROWNING IS THE 2<sup>ND</sup>-LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR KIDS AGES 5-14**

**88% OF KIDS WHO DO SO UNDER ADULT SUPERVISION**

**60% OF KIDS WHO DROWN ARE WITHIN 10 FEET OF SAFETY**

**DROWNING IS PREVENTABLE**

# IMPACT & OUTCOMES

**SAVING LIVES.** There is no higher purpose to building a pool than to prevent drowning deaths through educational water safety programming available to the whole community.

Building the Portage Pool will **improve the quality of life** in Portage and the surrounding area in the following ways:

- Increase the Portage Y's capacity to provide swim lessons to hundreds more children and adults every year, building strong swimmers and confident kids
- Increase public safety through SAW and swim lessons and general awareness of drowning risks
- Improve community bonds by bringing people into close contact with each other in a fun environment that fosters friendships and engagement
- Add to community's recreational and property values
- Encourage fitness for the whole family
- Provide access to fitness for those who cannot participate in strenuous or high impact workouts including the elderly, pregnant, and those with knee, ankle, and back conditions
- Increase access to fitness classes
- Combat childhood obesity as swimming is one of the best ways to maintain physical fitness
- Create jobs and financial health for teens and young adults as lifeguards plus other staff ranging from swim instructors to administrative support
- Introduce young swimmers to the world of competitive athletics
- Provide a controlled environment for first responders to train and conduct water rescue drills



# EXPERT MANAGEMENT

Celebrated worldwide for its successful SAW program and evidence-based swim lessons, "the Y" is a common household name that means "pool." Decades of development by leading experts in drowning prevention has produced robust resources for independent Y's to deliver the highest quality, consistent water experiences for its participants. From facilities maintenance to pool deck safety procedures to progressive swim curriculum for all ages to assessment reporting to staff development, the YMCA has a well-written and polished best practice to accompany every aspect of aquatics programming.

There is no other organization better equipped or more experienced to teach life-saving skills in the safest environment possible than the YMCA. The Portage Y has been utilizing these resources for decades in its own aquatics program that has been held off-site at rented venues like hotels and a school. The Portage Y is poised to easily level-up its aquatics program when the new pool is delivered, backed by the strength and confidence of the national YMCA's expertise.

## Portage Township YMCA to the RESCUE



# FOR ALL.

The mission of the Portage Township YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body **FOR ALL.**

We do all of this for just one reason, to **STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY**

Simply put, the Portage Pool is for EVERYONE. Literally, it's FOR ALL people regardless of age, size, color, gender, income level, zip code, or religion.

	School children who learn SAW as part of their physical education curriculum		Seniors who want to exercise without impacting their joints
	Children ages 0-5 enrolled in SAW, parent-&-tot classes, and swim lessons		First responders in need of training space for water rescue drills
	Families looking for fun and fitness in the water		Staff who become life guards, instructors, or administrators of the programs
	Adults seeking private or small group lessons		Students taking school or camp fieldtrips

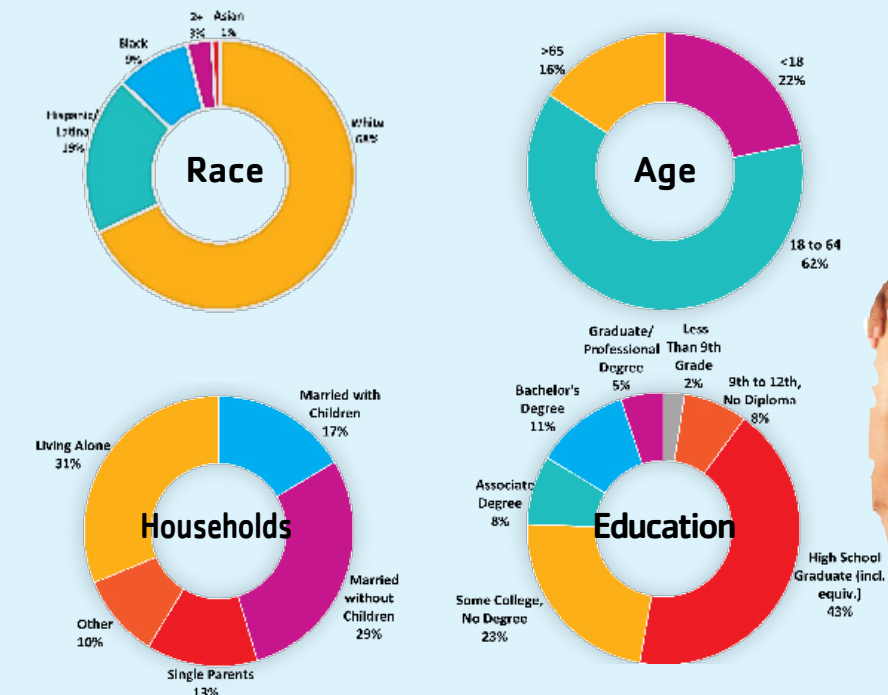
# WHO BENEFITS

37,000 people live in the city of Portage. The Y's service area stretches out to include South Haven, Lake Station, and Gary. Prior to the pandemic, the Portage Township YMCA served over 6,000 members. One out of every 6 residents rely on the Y for a wide array of programs and services including free meals every weeknight for children under 18, preschool, youth sports, off-site swim lessons, before and after school care, summer camp, open gym/basketball, group exercise classes, access to cardio and weight equipment, and social engagement and volunteer opportunities.

The Y strives to meet the needs of its community and fill the gaps in service to improve the quality of life in Portage. Examples include delivering meals to families in need who lack transportation, offering a virtual platform for health seekers to exercise at home at their convenience, and offering scholarships to make programming more affordable.

The Y fields dozens of phone calls daily and the #1 question asked is, "**Do you have a pool?**" The Portage Y is ready to respond to this unmet need with your support.

## Portage by the numbers



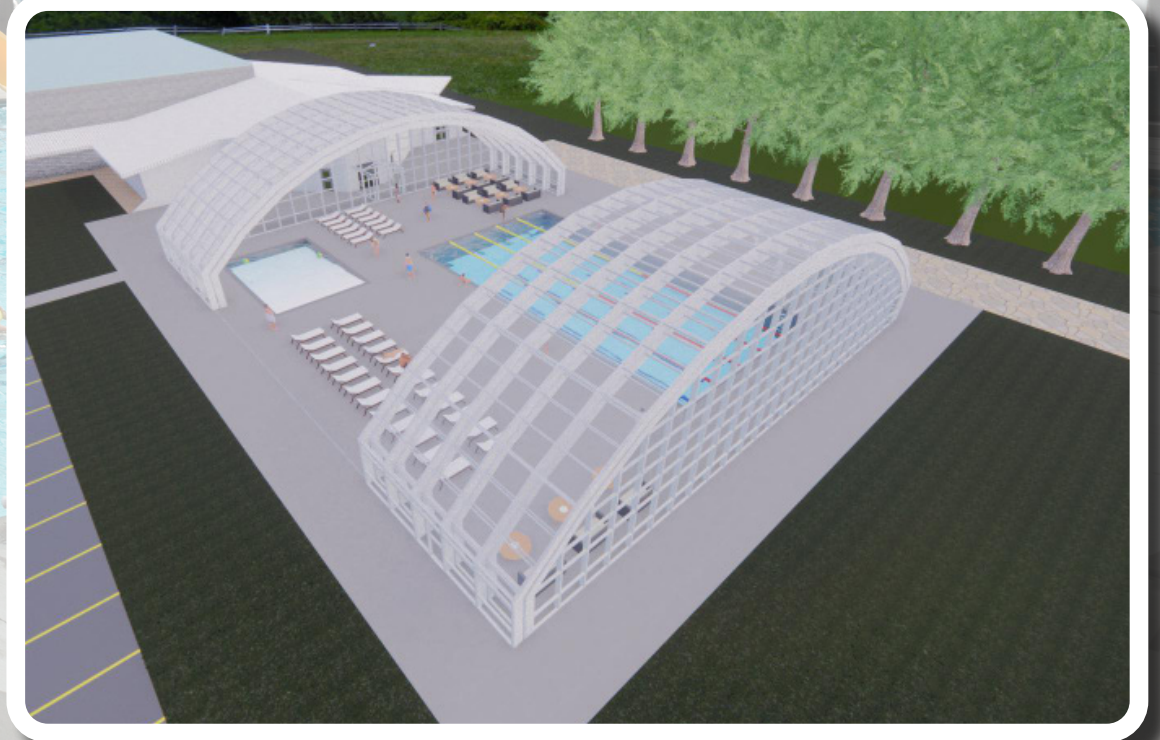
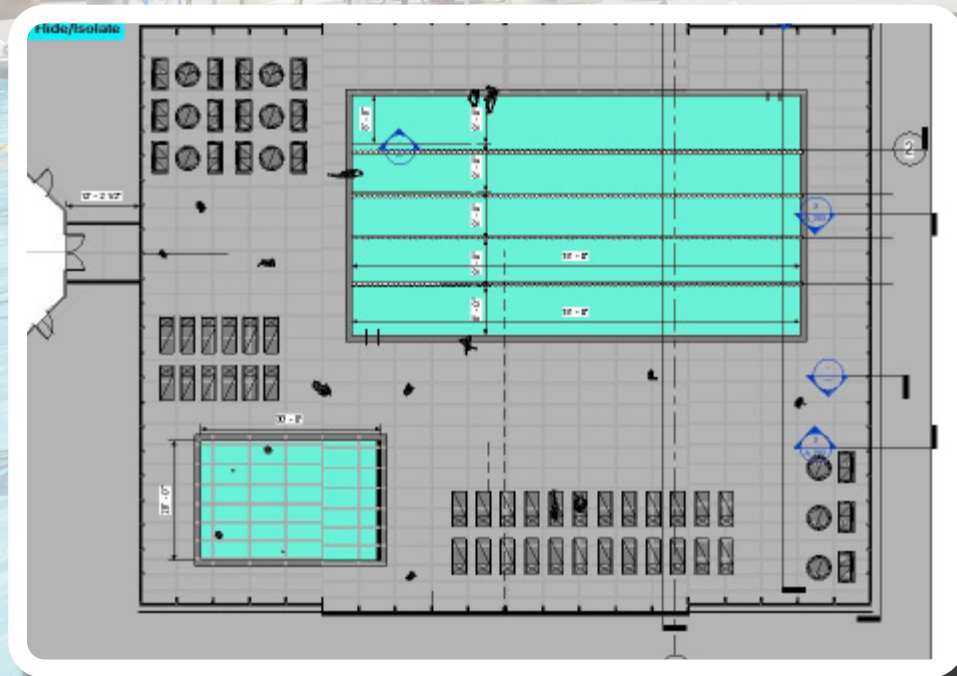
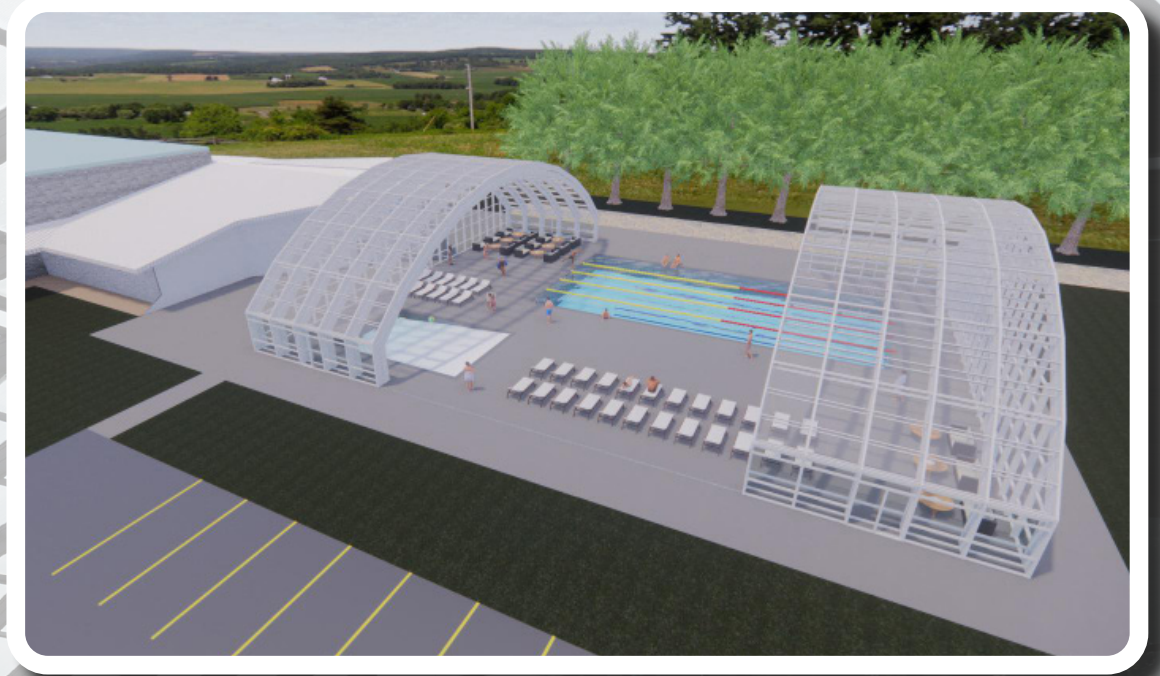
Median Household Income: \$58,486  
 Poverty Rate: 16.0%  
 Housing Units: 16,516  
 Homeowners: 69% | Renters: 31%  
 Average starting rent: \$750



# JUST ADD WATER

On the east side of the Portage Township YMCA's building is an expanse of land that extends to Willowcreek Rd. Currently, it's nothing more than a lawn under which there are no utility lines. It was meant to be the location of a pool in 2007 when the building more than doubled its footprint from 25,000 sq. ft. to 58,000 sq. ft. with an expansion project that cost \$5.5 million. Lack of fundraising support caused by the Great Recession scaled back the project's scope and the pool was not installed.

The Portage Pool will be built on this site and covered with a low-maintenance and economical retractable roof that will allow for year-round programming.



# LEADING VOICES



Shannon Burhans  
CEO  
Portage Township  
YMCA

**WHY DOESN'T PORTAGE HAVE A POOL?** As a resident, business owner, and now the CEO of the Portage YMCA, I hear this question nearly every day. I hear you Portage and I agree. This isn't a want, it is a need. We have done our best to continually offer an aquatics program through many different partnerships, but we can do better. We are finally in a position to make this happen, so please help us make this a reality. It will not be easy, but together, we can make this happen!



Sue Lynch  
Mayor  
City of Portage

**Portage DESERVES a pool.** It's time for our residents to have a place where families can splash together, seniors can aquacise, and kids can learn to respect water. The city prioritizes projects based on the number of people it will serve, the improvement to public safety, and the potential harm from not acting. Of course saving lives is paramount, but we also know that a pool will enhance the city's recreational value. This amenity is long overdue and our city is worthy of a pool. I want to see this happen.

**It is the right thing to do!** Due to the proximity to Lake Michigan, the Portage area desperately needs to be able to educate people on the dangers of Lake Michigan and general water safety/swimming skills. Everyone knows that Portage needs a proper pool to achieve this, and the Y is an organization that has historically taught people how to swim. My dream is for our communities to pull together and make this pool a reality for the greater good—for all.



Nancy Simpson  
CEO  
Portage Chamber of  
Commerce

Good health is good for business. Companies are scrambling to combat the rising cost of health insurance and medical care for workers. Productivity takes a hit when employees with preventable chronic conditions take time off work. There is a clear link between the health of a community and the health of its businesses. The Portage pool has the potential to improve mental and physical wellness for individuals, families, and the bottom line of our local businesses.

Nothing good comes from boredom. Teens, especially, need a safe place where they can hang out, interact with their peers, and engage in physical activity. The Y is the ideal place for this. It's a supervised, safe place, which offers many opportunities. As a teenager and young adult, I spent countless hours at my local YMCA in the gym and the pool. I will always remember those days with extreme fondness. Our Portage Y is able to offer these same experiences to today's teens, but adding a pool will only increase the ability to serve more kids at once. Investing in our Y will keep kids active, safe, and out of trouble.



Michael Candiano  
Chief of Police  
City of Portage

I've dedicated my life to education. **Knowledge is power: it's also prevention.** Statistics show that parents who can't swim are highly unlikely to have children who can. Students in our community don't have a chance to experience a swim class until high school. With the number of private backyard pools and beaches in the area, kids need to learn about water safety as infants and throughout early childhood. The Portage Y has the evidence-based curriculum and expertise to teach our kids water lessons at the ages it's needed most.

Dr. Shaunna Finley  
Education Expert  
Portage School  
Board



Jenny Brown  
YMCA Board Secretary  
Ogden Dunes

It's probably not popular, but I think we should talk about this pool in terms of dollars and cents. Building the pool is easy: what happens next is the tricky part. Sustaining the cost of maintenance and staffing 5, 10, or 50 years in the future needs to be addressed. I think that it's smart that the Portage Y is building an endowment fund to cover annual operating expenses. Being backed with the resources and guidance of the national network of Y's will ensure that this project is well managed everyday for decades to come.



Nina Rivas  
Clerk-Treasurer  
City of Portage



Ferdinand Alvarez  
Portage City Council  
City of Portage

I've been able to witness the needs of our community from a front row seat. As a Portage City Councilman, attorney, and volunteer for various local organizations, I regularly come in contact with citizens of all ages. I see the need for a place for seniors who would like to stay active. I see parents who would like the option of having their children swim in a safe environment year-round. Sure, building a community pool won't solve all of our problems, but it can go a long way towards improving our quality of life here in Portage, which is why...I believe we need this.

**This is personal.** In my job, I see a lot of things I wish I didn't. Recovering a lifeless body from the lake or a home's pool is devastating. It's hard for me to see just how little is spent on drowning prevention. Most people will focus on the fun and health benefits of a public pool, but for me, I imagine the number of parents whose lives won't be shattered by an accidental drowning.

Jessica Bailey  
Porter County Clerk



Portage is the largest city in the county and the closest to the lakeshore. Installing a pool in Portage will serve and save the greatest number of people by giving them access to water safety education. The benefits of this project expand to the entire county as more lifeguards are trained then hired at nearby beaches and pools. It also takes the pressure off pools in other cities that are overcrowded and understaffed.

Amy Parker  
Business Development Manager  
Portage Economic Development  
Corporation



I ask two questions whenever evaluating a prospective project: 1) will this strengthen the fibers of our business and social communities, and 2) will this attract new businesses to our city? When I consider the impact of the Portage pool, **the answer is YES** to both. The pool improves our public safety, recreational appeal, and home values--qualities that are very attractive to businesses deciding if Portage is the right place for them to drop anchor.



Randy Wilkening  
Fire Chief  
City of Portage

Our daughter worked at the Y as a swim instructor and head lifeguard until a fatal accident in 2011. In her honor, we established The Ashley Carole Burbee Memorial Scholarship Fund to provide swim lessons to disadvantaged children in hopes that other families would not feel the grief of losing a child through an accidental drowning. Ashley was passionate about teaching children to enjoy and respect water and this pool will advance that work for generations.



Jeff Liggett  
YMCA Board President  
Portage

# FEASIBILITY

**\$6.3M**

## TOTAL PROJECT COST

CONSTRUCTION COSTS	
Pool installation	\$2,875,000
Dynadome enclosure	\$900,000
Locker room expansion & renovation	\$990,000
Covered walkway	\$20,000
Parking Lot	\$200,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,985,000</b>

ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS	
Staff (Aquatics Director, Program Coordinator, Life Guards, Instructors, Maintenance Crew)	\$285,000
Pool chemicals	\$17,000
Equipment and supplies	\$21,500
Scheduled maintance	\$62,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$385,500</b>

ENDOWMENT INVESTMENT	
	\$1,000,000

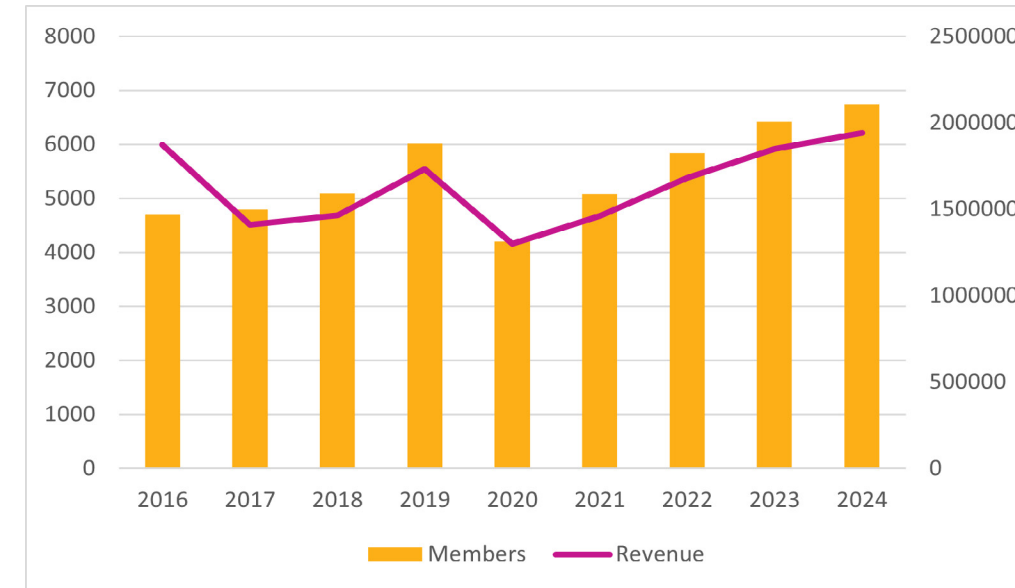


# SUSTAINABILITY

The cost of managing, programming, and maintaining a pool is exorbitant causing many community pools to close indefinitely every year. The fatal mistake is in assuming that "if we build it they will come." Historically, installing a pool only increases membership by a small percentage after an initial spike. Since many aquatics programs are free or low cost, the fees collected for swim lessons, etc., are so low that they hardly cover the instructor and life guard salaries. Education and services centered around a pool are known as a missional program: one that is essential to the community but operates at a deficit. So then, how can the Portage Y sustain a pool?

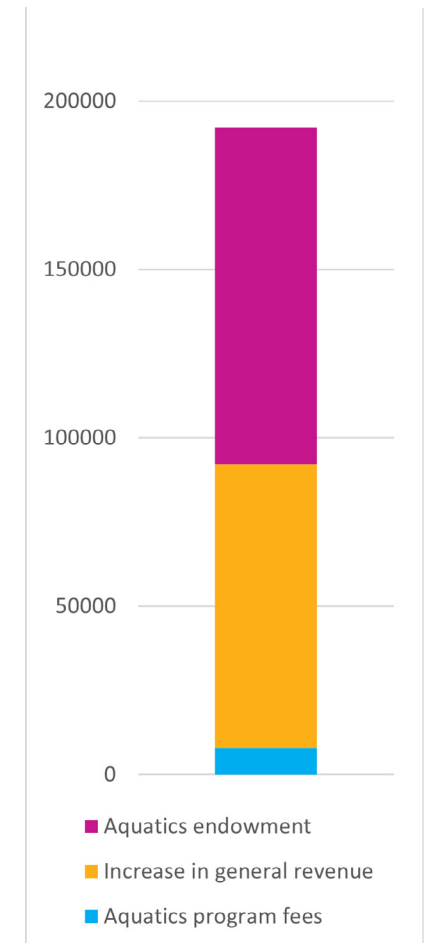
## REVENUE PROJECTIONS

Historic and projected membership and revenue



The Portage Township YMCA will sustain the cost of a new pool by relying on a mix of program fees, 50% of increased membership revenue, and annual distributions from the Portage Pool Endowment managed by the Porter County Community Foundation. While the endowment funds are not absolutely necessary to operate the pool, it will ensure that that the Portage Y will have a steady stream of funding not dependent on external factors that affect membership trends and correlating revenue. That's why the Portage Y is fundraising to construct the pool and invest in its endowment fund.

Sources of operating income for aquatics expenses



# DONOR RECOGNITION

## WILL YOU HELP DIG THE PORTAGE POOL?

It's going to take financial support from the whole community to raise the capital needed to install the pool. The Portage Township YMCA will launch its capital campaign in three phases.

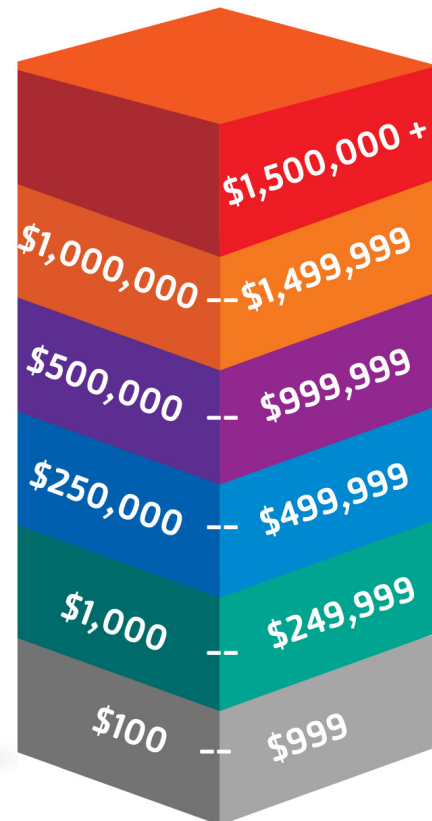
The first step is to identify the lead donor (the Aqua Hero) who will kickoff the fundraising with the largest donation. The lead donor will be given the right to name the pool and be included in all media releases.

Next, the campaign will need two major donors (Life Savers) to commit to funding the next largest donation amounts.

The final phase will ask the community--individuals and businesses--to make meaningful contributions to the project. Their gifts will be recognized in a number of ways defined by their levels.

Raising \$3-5 million will require more than 600 donors to invest in the community at amounts never before seen in Portage.

This is an unprecedented rally cry for help. It's up to the people to respond.



- Pool Partners**
- Aqua Heroes**
- Life Savers**
- Good Neighbors**
- Safety Stretchers**
- Pool Pals**

### LEVELS OF RECOGNITION

NAME	AMOUNT	RECOGNITION
<b>POOL PARTNERS</b>	<b>\$1,500,000+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Naming Rights</li> <li>• 2-3 minute of microphone time at the ribbon-cutting ceremony</li> <li>• Name on giveaway item for attendees at the ribbon-cutting</li> <li>• Joint media releases</li> <li>• Link on Digging the Portage Pool campaign page and YMCA home page.</li> <li>• Tag in every social media post during fundraising and construction</li> <li>• Name on temporary banners located in/outdoors during construction</li> <li>• Donor spotlight on website and social media</li> <li>• Thank you message on electronic sign during construction</li> <li>• Name printed in large letters on the dome's windowpane</li> <li>• Name listed on permanent "glass banner" inside the pool dome</li> </ul>
<b>AQUA HEROES</b>	<b>\$1,000,000+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name on giveaway item for attendees at the ribbon-cutting</li> <li>• Joint media releases</li> <li>• Link on Digging the Portage Pool campaign page and YMCA home page.</li> <li>• Tag in social media posts announcing the donation</li> <li>• Name on temporary banners located indoors during construction</li> <li>• Donor spotlight on website and social media</li> <li>• Thank you message on electronic sign during construction</li> <li>• Name printed in large letters on the dome's glass windowpane</li> <li>• Name listed on permanent "glass banner" inside the pool dome</li> </ul>
<b>LIFE SAVERS</b>	<b>\$500,000+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Named in collective media release</li> <li>• Link on Digging the Portage Pool campaign page</li> <li>• Tag in social media posts announcing the donation</li> <li>• Donor spotlight on website and social media</li> <li>• Thank you message on electronic sign during construction</li> <li>• Name printed in small letters on the dome's glass windowpane</li> <li>• Name listed on permanent "glass banner" inside the pool dome</li> </ul>
<b>GOOD NEIGHBORS</b>	<b>\$250,000+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Named in collective media release</li> <li>• Name on Digging the Portage Pool campaign page</li> <li>• Tag in social media posts announcing the donation</li> <li>• Name printed in small letters on the dome's glass windowpane</li> <li>• Name listed on permanent "glass banner" inside pool dome</li> </ul>
<b>SAFETY STRETCHERS</b>	<b>\$1,000+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name on Digging the Portage Pool campaign page</li> <li>• Name printed in small letters on the dome's glass windowpane</li> <li>• Name listed on permanent "glass banner" inside pool dome</li> </ul>
<b>POOL PALS</b>	<b>\$100+</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name listed on permanent "glass banner" inside the pool dome</li> </ul>

For gifts over \$50,000, the Portage Township YMCA is able to customize channels of recognition to maximize exposure for donors. Contact the CEO for details.



# PROJECT STOPPERS

While the Portage Township YMCA leaders and staff have been anticipating the addition of a pool since the building expansion project in 2007 (just before the Great Recession), there are two key factors that are needed before the first shovel pierces the soil.



1. Firm financial commitments to cover the cost of construction and initial operations:
  - City of Portage
  - Lead donor
  - Other municipal sources of funding including gifts and grants
  - Community support resulting in meaningful donations from businesses and individuals
2. 100% cash in-hand. The Portage Y will not finance any portion of this project.

## DONATE TODAY!

Texting is the fastest way to donate. If you prefer to use paper, please fill out return this form to the Portage Y.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your employer matches charitable gifts? Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Options (choose 1 of 3 below):

1. Cash or check (payable to the Portage Township YMCA)

2. Credit card

VISA/Master Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

3. ACH withdrawal

Bank Name \_\_\_\_\_

Routing # \_\_\_\_\_ Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**PORTAGE TOWNSHIP YMCA**

3100 Willowcreek Rd., Portage, IN 46368

219 762 YMCA

[www.ymcaofportage.org](http://www.ymcaofportage.org)