



**POSITIVE
VIBES FOR A**

NEW GENERATION

**2023 Summer Late Nite Impact Report
YMCA OF PIERCE AND KITSAP COUNTIES**

YMCAPKC.ORG

The Urgent Need for

Safe Spaces for Teens



In March 2023, Tacoma Mayor Victoria Woodards gave a State of the City speech in which she addressed the “deeply distressing uptick in violence” that had rocked communities citywide. She pleaded with people not to give up on Tacoma.

“Tragically we have already lost six lives to homicides this year, three of which happened in just the first three weeks, and heartbreakingly involved gun violence among our youth,” Woodards said during the speech. “This level of violence is unacceptable and must stop.”

As the violence continued over the next few months, Dr. Josh Garcia, Superintendent of Tacoma Public Schools, reached out to a coalition of local community organizations to support Tacoma in its time of need. In collaboration with the YMCA, the City of Tacoma, Metro Parks Tacoma, Boys and Girls Club of Puget Sound, and Greentrike, Late Nite was reborn to help kids stay safe.

During the summer, Late Nite was open to teens every weeknight from 5pm to 10pm. Teens had free access to our community centers and school outreach locations to participate in games and open gym time, sports tournaments, Xbox competitions, and other fun, constructive activities. They also received free dinners while under the Y’s care.

“The Y has long been committed to our community and supporting our youth, and they’ve used their experience to pivot quickly to reestablish Late Nite. The work they did over the summer along with our partners gave our young people a safe place to be themselves and hang out with friends where they could engage in activities, new opportunities, and feel cared for, and I am thrilled Late Nite will be here year-round,” said Mayor Woodards.

To further aid in curbing youth violence, the Y expanded its program beyond Tacoma and offered additional sites for teens in Lakewood and Silverdale.

U.S. Representative Marilyn Strickland (WA-10), an unwavering supporter of Late Nite and the Y, visited the program at Baker Middle School, a popular site for teens in Tacoma.

“Sadly, young people experience high rates of gun violence, but community partners are working to ensure they have safe spaces to stay active, explore their interests, and socialize in a positive setting,” said Representative Strickland. **“It was great to spend time with students at Summer Late Nite at Baker Middle School and hear more about how the Y continues to support young people in the South Sound.”**

Y staff served as positive, caring role models promoting the Y’s values and supporting youth in developing character, leadership, and communication, among other life skills.

WHAT TEENS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT LATE NITE



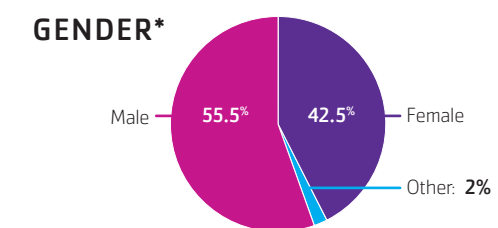
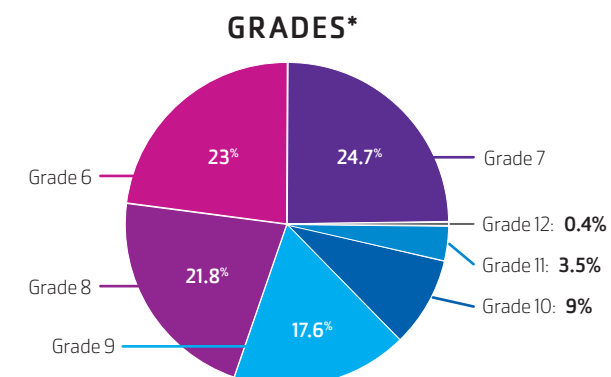
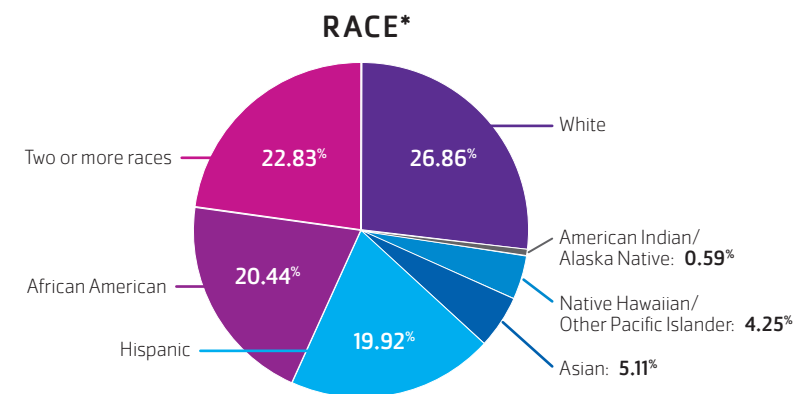
“Late Nite has impacted my life by creating an environment for me to meet new people that have become my friends now, and I started hanging out with old friends I haven’t seen in a while.”

- Late Nite Participant

2023 Summer Late Nite at a Glance

Demographics of Teen Participants

Across all locations, the Y served **1,865 individual teenagers** who signed into Late Nite 7,143 times.



Providing Free Meals to Teens

According to a state-wide survey conducted by the University of Washington and Washington State University, 31% of children’s households reported “very low food security.”

That is why the Y, along with its community partners, made it a priority to provide teens with a warm meal and snack at Late Nite. Doing so has given youth in our community a sense of security when food may be low at home.

9,700+
Total Meals Served



NUMBER OF MEALS SERVED

Lakewood: **2,500+** Tacoma: **7,140+** Gig Harbor: **60+**



Emphasis on Staffing

The Y is committed to providing teens with an excellent experience at Late Nite. We know this isn’t possible without hiring high-quality staff, which is why individuals who had prior experience with social-emotional learning and working with youth, particularly teens, were prioritized throughout the process.

NEW STAFF HIRED

Tacoma: **27**
Lakewood: **8**
Silverdale: **4**
Gig Harbor: **9**

REQUIRED STAFF TRAININGS

Child Abuse Prevention
Mental Health First Aid
First Aid/CPR
Compass/Partner Portal
Teen-specific Training

*Data not available for Tom Taylor Family YMCA and Haselwood Family YMCA.



A Letter from Charlie

Back in 1991, the city of Tacoma was confronted with challenges it had not seen before. Gangs and drugs pervaded the entire community. Community coalitions were formed in an effort to find solutions and there was an outcry to provide a safety net for the teens, in particular, as they were the most vulnerable to these destructive influences. The YMCA was part of that safety net, creating the Late Nite program to provide a safe location for teens to be on Friday and Saturday nights.

Late Nite provided an environment where teens could engage with caring adults and mentors. The Y and Late Nite became the pillar the community needed, thanks in large part to individuals like Phil Carter, the long-time executive director at the Tacoma Center Y, and Charles Carson, a community activist who at just 20 years old helped develop the Late Nite program.

Late Nite quickly gained popularity among the teens in our community. It wasn't long until other Ys in our association and even across the country started offering the program. By 2016, 25 years after its founding, more than 1,500 teens per week participated in Late Nite within Pierce and Kitsap counties. The community celebrated the Late Nite program for having a positive impact on the youth.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic caused us to pause the program for nearly three years. In early 2023, the community found itself facing a new crisis, eerily similar to the one it faced in 1991. Gun violence became too prevalent in Tacoma, tragically taking the lives of 9 youth in the first six months of the year. As they did in 1991, local community leaders asked the Y to be part of the solution.

We did just that, and in June, we began offering Late Nite across Pierce and Kitsap counties every weeknight. It was an amazing and inspiring response by our Y. I'm proud of our staff for working diligently to bring Late Nite back and I'm proud of the youth in our community for responding positively: On June 26, Late Nite's first day back, more than 120 middle and high school students showed up to the Lakewood Family Y.

To everyone who made the return of Late Nite possible over the summer, thank you. It truly takes a village. We have bigger and brighter plans for the program moving forward and I'm grateful I can count on you to help us turn those plans into a reality.

- Charlie Davis, President and CEO of YMCA of Pierce and Kitsap Counties

