Thanks to a generous gift from Steve Sarowitz, Founder and Chairman of Paylocity, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago has opened the Julian Grace Innovation & Technology Institute, named in honor of the Sarowitz family's Julian Grace Foundation. At this center, located at 3517 W. Arthington, YWCA will address the 21st Century needs of the North Lawndale community by bridging the digital divide, preparing youth and adults for sustained employment and supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses. Specific programs at this center will include TechGYRLS, CONSTRUCT, Developing Digital Diversity (3D) and 3D Youth, Business and Entrepreneurship Services and a host of additional adult and youth technology education and training classes.

“My family and I are proud to play a role in the continued success and growth of YWCA Metropolitan Chicago. We are committed to doing our part in supporting educational programs that have a positive impact on the health and vitality of our communities. We also recognize that education is a critical part of the solution to curtailting violence in our city,” said Steve Sarowitz, Founder and Chairman, Paylocity.

On October 30, the YWCA honored six of Chicago’s most outstanding leaders and raised over $800,000 to benefit our many programs and services. With over 1,200 people in attendance and over 100 sponsors, guests experienced a high-energy event filled with powerful stories, surprise guests and plenty of memorable moments. Highlights included a standing ovation for honoree Maggie Anderson, feminist rabble-rousing by Christie Hefner, a dynamic graphic recording of the event by Ink Factory, an appearance by internationally-renowned impersonator Reggie Brown as “President Obama,” and a YShop after party where guests shopped from YWCA partner retailers.

The YWCA’s Leader Luncheon continues to be a not-to-be-missed occasion by which to raise awareness of the YWCA’s significant impact and invite others to join us in our mission to eliminate racism and empower women.

Save the Date! YWCA Leader Luncheon “Hometown Heroes”
November 17, 2016
Launch of Myrtle’s Club

In early 2016, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago will launch Myrtle’s Club, a fee-based membership program offering training and resources for home and center-based child care businesses. Myrtle’s Club will offer members access to a variety of trainings designed to enhance their curriculum and meet licensing needs. Business development and financial management courses will be offered to assist providers with best practices on business operations and accounting principals. Benefiting from bulk purchasing, Myrtle Club members will have access to discounts on commonly purchased items through centralized purchasing arrangements.

By supporting childcare providers in this way, the YWCA is ensuring children in our region are receiving the highest quality of care and early childhood education, parents can confidently leave their children in these care environments while they go to work, and that the thousands of child care providers we serve build thriving businesses. For more information on Myrtle’s Club, contact Shelley Bromberek-Lambert at shelley.bromberek-lambert@ywcachicago.org.

Expanded Services in Logan Square

In June 2015, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago opened a new center in the Logan Square neighborhood. Made possible by Chicago Finance Exchange and benefactor Cynthia B. Lafuente, this new center will enable program expansions and enhancements to better meet the needs of the community.

Providing neighborhood girls the opportunity to explore their technical curiosity, the YWCA will offer TechGYRLS, a STEM-based experiential learning program for girls ages 9-14. TechGYRLS incorporates a curriculum comprised of design, animation, robotics and programming, among other subjects, to increase girls’ confidence, competency and openness to a range of career possibilities for the future.

Adult members of the community will benefit through computer training and software application trainings. Classes will provide the novice through advanced user the skills necessary to compete in today’s digital world and 21st Century workforce.

The YWCA will continue to provide counseling and advocacy services for children and adult survivors of sexual assault within the Cynthia B. Lafuente center. The new counseling rooms better meet need of our staff and members through enhanced design to provide privacy and a location with proximity to public transportation.

Iesha is a recent graduate of the YWCA’s “Plan for Profit” training program, administered in partnership with the Women’s Business Development Center and with the support of Peoples Gas. Having further developed her business and marketing plans and received individualized coaching during the extensive training program, Iesha’s small business, Brown Sugar Balloons, is steadily growing. Even more impressive is Iesha’s commitment to being part of the growth and development of Englewood. Iesha has now expanded her business to offer training to others on the art of balloon design. By training her community, Iesha is providing others the opportunity to take care of their families. Iesha embodies YWCA’s belief that when you empower one woman, she will in turn empower others.

Iesha and Brown Sugar Balloons provided specialty balloons for the YWCA’s Leader Luncheon in October