

# C O M M U N I T Y

## CALL TO THE CAUSE

### LOOK BETTER, FEEL BETTER, BE BETTER



*Kirk Smith is President & CEO, YMCA of Greater Springfield 413-739-6951 www.springfieldy.org*

*By Kirk Smith*

Like many of our YMCA members, I am what we at the Y refer to as a "health seeker." Growing up, good nutrition and steady exercise were not a priority. Every once in a while, my mom would have some fruit in the house. Sure, we had vegetables, but can you really count fried okra as a vegetable?

Every few months, I find myself compelled to shape up. I get back into a steady routine of healthy eating and working out. I spend time running outdoors and exercising in our wellness centers. I focus on being healthy and fit. But, after a few months, something will trigger a break in the routine a vacation, an unusually busy work schedule, family responsibilities and suddenly my quest to shave off a few pounds becomes less of a priority until something prompts me to jump back on the fitness train and the cycle starts all over again.

While I'll likely never practice perfect physical health all the time,

I'm proud of the fact that I understand that good health goes beyond just the physical. Achieving good health requires a careful balance of spirit, mind and body. Can an individual who spends half their day at the gym, but lacks spirituality and hasn't read a book in years, really be considered healthy? Fortunately, I can say without any doubt, that my desire to learn and grow academically and spiritually has never faltered. My quest for knowledge and longing to live according to God's will, will be with me until I die.

By all three measures, I am a true health seeker. Are you?

Answer the call to the cause: look better, feel better and be better! Learn to strike a consistent balance of spirit, mind and body. And when you feel yourself starting to

stray, find a reason to get back on track. In my case, that means getting back to the track. ■

One of the reasons why I love my YMCA work so much is because I can relate so closely to the thousands of people from all over our region who walk through the doors of our family centers and outreach locations every day.

Like many of our youth, I grew up in a troubled, poverty-stricken neighborhood; struggled in school; and relied on the outreach of community organizations to provide me with the structure and encouragement that I needed to build a brighter future for myself.

Like many of our volunteers, I am determined to do whatever it takes to ensure that we are creating opportunities for youth, teens, families and seniors to lead healthier, more productive lives.



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