

We often talk about strengthening community and few people have ever lived those words more fully than Stan Peterson.

Across decades of service as a board member and volunteer, Stan helped shape the future of our Y with steady leadership and a deep belief in our ability to change the lives of the children and families we serve. Always a fierce advocate for preserving our legacy as a “children’s YMCA” while continuing to support our community members of all ages, he was dedicated to growing and preserving this special place where everyone in our community can feel safe, supported, and seen.

But Stan didn’t just talk about it. He built it.

Over the years, he lent his skills, vision, and countless hours of labor to growing and improving our beloved Y. He was instrumental in bringing the Cyr Family Fieldhouse to life, providing a place for people of all ages to stay active and grow together. He helped install a ramp for the Herb Sargent Family Therapeutic Pool, enabling more of our neighbors to safely experience the healing power and joy of the water. He led the installation of new floors in the Peterson Family Gymnasium, a space that bears his name although he would be the first to modestly deflect that recognition.

In 2018, Stan received the statewide “2 Those Who Care” Award, an honor that simply formalized what we already knew: Stan was one of the good ones. But if you asked him why he volunteered, his answer was beautifully simple, “I think volunteering is about touching lives and they touch you back and that’s all the thank you I need.”

Stan did not serve for applause or recognition. He was often reserved, content to listen thoughtfully, lend a hand whenever there was a need, and let others take the spotlight. Yet his caring heart, infectious smile, and the unforgettable twinkle in his eye whenever he walked through our doors spoke volumes. He loved this community and the people within it deeply and he was “very happy as a volunteer going in and doing a job and sitting back quietly and watching the results.”

The results are everywhere.

They are in the children running, jumping, and flipping across the Fieldhouse floor.
They are in the swimmers building confidence and life-saving skills in the pool.
They are in the families who find connection and build memories over a game of basketball.
They are in the countless lives strengthened because Stan showed up.

His legacy lives on not only through the projects he helped build, but in the spirit of service he modeled so effortlessly. Stan was the true embodiment of everything special about this place: strengthening the communities we serve and ensuring there will always be opportunities for everyone to learn, grow, and thrive at our Y. He proved that one person, guided by heart and fueled by purpose, can shape an entire community.

We are A Better Us because of Stan Peterson.

We will forever be grateful for his leadership, his heart, and his unwavering belief in what our Y can be. May we honor him in the way he would want most: by showing up for one another, serving with integrity, touching lives, continuing to build a community where everyone can thrive, and by always taking the time to Enjoy Life.

