

YWCA chief to retire from lofty to-do list

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May 20, 2009

Carol Green has two lists in front of her. One of the things she is most proud of during her tenure as executive director of the YWCA. The other of the things she would have liked to have done.

Guess which is longer? The second list, of course.

Green is a visionary, which she explains by revealing her astrological sign, Gemini.

"I have so many ideas for programs, but it takes money and staffing," she said. "I ran out of time."

Green is retiring at the end of the month, after more than six years at the helm of the resurging nonprofit organization.

She will be remembered for her vision, and for spearheading a successful \$3 million capital campaign.

Her legacy is the four-story building at 1255 Broadway NE, where the YWCA houses its offices and most of its programs.

"She's the reason we have the building," board member Jan Margosian said a while back at a fundraiser.

That was after she joked about about Green's distinctive hair, which is black with a prominent white patch in front. "I've known her since before she copied Cruella De Vil's hairdo."

Of course, Green is the antithesis of the fictitious villain from the Disney film "101 Dalmations."

Green is a heroine, having helped rescue the YWCA when it was on the verge of closing its doors.

Today it has a prominent headquarters and nine thriving programs that provide safe places for women and children, keep women healthy, build strong women leaders and advocate for women's rights.

"To do what we have done is kind of a miracle," Green said.

She agreed to become interim director in January 2003, when the organization's finances were in shambles.

"I was passionate about the mission, really passionate about it," said Green, who at the time was on the YWCA board as a representative of the Salem Outreach Shelter.



Timothy J. Gonzalez | Statesman Journal
Carol Green is retiring as executive director of the YWCA.

The Green file

Age: Turns 65 on Sunday.

Work history: Taught elementary school, sold real estate and worked as a fund developer before becoming executive director of the Salem YWCA in 2003.

Family: Husband, Jim, of 46-plus years; two children; and five grandchildren.

Hobbies: Photography, particularly Polaroid emulsion lift and image transfer; writing classes and jewelry making; traveling, with Sweden, Spain, China, Africa and Eastern Europe on a list of desired destinations.

She had been an elementary school teacher, a real estate agent and a fund developer, and most recently had worked at Willamette University as director of development and alumni relations, first for the College of Law, and then for the Atkinson Graduate School of Management.

"Although odd and looking strange on a resume, it really helped in this job," she said. "I knew program curriculum, I knew real estate, and I knew fund development."

Her first challenge was the budget, or lack thereof.

She had 95 employees on the payroll at the time and realized within six months she wouldn't have a dime to pay them.

"I had many sleepless nights — many, many," Green said.

The YWCA's only recourse was to part with the building it had occupied for nearly 90 years.

Willamette wanted it because of its proximity to campus and was willing to pay a fair price.

Without the university's assistance throughout the transaction, Green said, the YWCA would never have been able to move forward. Willamette agreed to lease the building back for three years, while the YWCA made plans for a new home.

At the end of Green's six months as interim director, she told the board of directors she would like to stay on, even though she knew there were more tough decisions to be made.

The day-care program and the pool would need to be closed.

"I guess I'm just an optimist," she said.

Most of the board members took a leap of faith and supported the pursuit of a new building. A few resigned because they didn't think it was possible.

Green proved it was more than just possible.

"I am focused once I get a goal," she said. "I had a lot of the right people helping me."

Green noted that development director Jawaea Mockabee raised almost \$1 million in foundation grants. Of course, Mockabee had help, too.

Those closest to the organization were unexpectedly generous.

Board members gave individual gifts of \$50,000 and \$25,000. The staff pledged a combined \$17,000.

"They gave more than I ever thought possible," Green said. "We don't have wealthy people. They're all working women, every one of them, or retired."

Construction of the building catapulted the renewal of the North Broadway district.

One of the things Green is most proud of is the increased visibility the YWCA now has in the community. She also is proud the YWCA has been a leader in developing partnerships within the social services network.

The YWCA served 4,230 people last year, and 4,400 more attended events like the Discover Pink walk for breast cancer awareness, the Women Helping Women Luncheon and SnoBall.

The executive director oversees a staff of about 50, including 38 full-timers, and a budget of nearly \$1.5 million.

Green regrets she never had the time, because she was so ensconced in the financial turnaround, to work with and empower the staff more.

She also would have liked to have completed funding for the building and the new shelter on Center Street NE, and endowed a scholarship fund for the teen parent program that pays tuition and child care while the mother works on an associate degree.

At the same time, she leaves satisfied with what she has accomplished and knowing that the YWCA is financially sound.

"I kind of feel like I have done the big thing I was here to do," said Green, who turns 65 on Sunday. "It's probably time for someone else to take things on."

She plans to continue "beating the turf" for gifts for the shelter until her last day on the job, May 29. She said \$162,000 is needed to pay off the mortgage, which she called the No. 1 priority.

She also is busy packing the contents of her second-floor corner office, and compiling detailed notebooks on each program the YMCA offers. The notebooks, her gift to the next executive director, will include information on who each program serves and how each is funded.

Her replacement has yet to be announced.

Green will stay connected to the organization, because she was elected to serve on the national board of the YWCA USA.

But she's looking forward to being able to spend more time with family, especially her five grandchildren, ages 8 to 15. They all live in Seattle.

"I've really missed out on some opportunities with them," she said.

She also will have more time to pursue some of her hobbies, lounge at her beach house in Lincoln City, and travel abroad.

And she no doubt will spare time for community projects. She already has been asked by US Bank to serve on the Walton Charitable Trust grant advisory committee, noting that "it will be fun to give away money instead of having to apply for it."

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