



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
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**SUBMIT YOUR Y STORY**

## **CARLENE BRYANT'S Y STORY**

Carlene Bryant, affectionately known as Mama Carlene by the children, parents and staff at the Y's Choice Child Development Center has been with our Y family for close to 11 years. She joined us after hearing that the Moda Tower Child Development Center needed a cook. Although she did know how to cook, "I never had to cook for a large group of people. But, I just wanted to help." Her generosity and compassion for others allowed her to continue to work with children and care for others. At Y's Choice, you can find Carlene moving in between different rooms to lend helping hands, cook, cover breaks, teach and step in for advice. "Wherever they need me, I go."

"Parents, children and staff come to me. I help them stay on a good level." Carlene takes on the Mama role and tells them what to do. She lends an ear to staff and parents when they need guidance. "I just want to help them through, and say what needs to be said—but with love and respect."

Through working at the Y, Carlene has received a lot from the community. The Y provides a lot of support and extra love. She has been able to open up more, express herself and love on the children.



We love, and we care for people, for the kids. We have good staff members and employees who are looking after them."

Carlene gets a sense of hope for the future of the Y through

## **"I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE YMCA CARES ABOUT THE KIDS AND FAMILIES."**

"Sometimes I question why I'm here, but then the Lord brings someone I need to talk to and reminds me why I am here."

As most CDC staff know, working with children is not always easy, but Carlene enjoys the opportunity to put parent's minds at ease when they bring their children to the Y. "I tell the parents that their kids are in good hands. You don't have to worry—even when the children are crying—they will be okay." The CDCs work hard to provide caring places for their families.

Carlene believes that the supporting atmosphere at the Y, is our biggest strength. The Y is a place that does value others—we try hard to do that. "I have no doubt that the YMCA cares about the kids and families. To its core, the Y is working to make a difference.

watching the children grow, learn, be loved and nurtured. "I always have hope, and I know that we will be okay." This sense of peace comes from living out our Christian principles daily in her personal life and through all her interactions at work. Living the way the Lord calls her to live, has made a difference in how she loves children, respects them and interacts with the staff and parents. "Sometimes I will leave the room to go say a quick prayer to help us get through the day." Not only does our Y mission keep her focused, but also it is a great example for the children and parents to see that the staff are living out love, respect and honesty.

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Carlene is deeply influenced by the Lord, her late parents, her pastor, three daughters and the staff at the CDC. They help her walk her path, and give guidance on where she should go. "They keep me on track, and they teach me so much." In times where Carlene and the staff feel like they are falling to the wayside, she encourages them and helps them press on. "You have people looking at you, so you have to get it together and focus."

This community has given Carlene the chance to be herself, share her love and in the process, she has gained an enormous family. "We stay in contact with the families, even after they move on—we celebrate birthdays, holidays and special occasions together. The YMCA is my second family."

Because of Carlene's compassion, willingness to help and her faith in the Y and its mission, she has been able to impact the Y community. We are deeply appreciative for the work that she has done over the past 11 years. Thank you Carlene for upholding the Y and truly being a great advocate for all that we do!

**"THE YMCA IS MY SECOND FAMILY."**

The ability to press on is just one of the things that she has learned while working at the Y. Carlene, has learned to be patient and understanding—understanding that not everyone is the same, but that their feelings and thoughts are valid. "I've learned to love people in spite of what they do, how to go with my feelings—do what is right, and the best of what I can do."

We want to hear from you! How has the Y impacted you or your family's life?

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