



Cortland County Family YMCA

**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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For Immediate Release

YMCA introduces new program director

CORTLAND—The Y is pleased to announce the hiring of David Burnette as the new program director of the Cortland County Family YMCA.

David has been with the Cortland Y since 2008 where he spearheaded the Active Kids! afterschool program. Burnette is a SUNY Cortland graduate with a bachelor's degree in Therapeutic Recreation, where he also received many accolades for civic engagement and was awarded the Dr. Bettie Lee Yerka award for excellence in therapeutic recreation.

Burnette was raised through the Y, having spent many years attending YMCA programs in his Y home in Buffalo, from UPK to countless Y summer camps. Burnette said those years growing up in the Y, gave him deep passion for the YMCA core values of: Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility. His passion eventually led him to become the Assistant Director of the Day Camp at the Ken-Ton Family YMCA in Tonawanda and a Unit Leader of Resident Camp Weona, part of the YMCA of Buffalo Niagara.

Don Kline, Executive Director of the Cortland YMCA, said “We want the Y to be the first place community members think about when it comes to fun and safe youth, family, adult and senior programming.” Kline added that Dave has many ideas and hopes the community will look into and participate in some of the new programming at the Y.

Kline said since the Cortland YMCA is stable, we now have to start growing. “The Y will focus on youth development and healthy living working together with others in Cortland County to create programs and services that are vital and essential to the community” said Kline. He added that Burnette will continue to work to improve the YMCA core programs of swim lessons, youth basketball, gymnastics, karate, while also addressing more programs aimed at obesity and wellness, through the national YMCA initiative, Activate America.

Activate America is the YMCA’s response to the nation’s growing health crisis, focusing on health seekers, community collaborations and outreach. Burnette says that Activate America ties in directly with the new YMCA branding strategy where program and Y focus should be around Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. Burnette said he is excited in looking to develop “incredible” programming for everyone- adults, youth, seniors and families. He adds that his programs will still and always continue to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities.

Matthew Kemak, Membership Director, said he is excited to see many great family and youth programming coming from the Y. “It is amazing to see so many new programs offered to the community.” Kemak said that Burnette has added afterschool and weekend programs such as: Pee Wee Champs (ages 3-5, basic sports fundamentals), Pee Wee Chefs(ages 4-7 healthy/safe snacking), and many different “pick up” style games.

Kemak said all new programming options can be found online at www.cortlandymca.org, or by stopping down at the Y at 22 Tompkins Street.

Burnette said he has many great ideas. “I would like to establish a health seeker series, which would include seminars, fitness classes and programs for the people in the community that are looking to make a positive lifestyle change.” Burnette said he will be

looking to add more senior programming for the active older adult crowd, focus on civic engagement and volunteerism at the Y, and host many more special events.

Burnette and the Y will be hosting a Cortland-wide “Great Leaf Raking” event Oct. 30, where he hopes to bring out the great sense of community all Cortland area residents have to help their neighbors. “The Great Leaf Raking, is a way to show your neighbor you care, by doing a socially responsible act of raking leaves up to help beautify the community.” He adds that he is taking requests for lawns to be raked and any donations to help with the event. Please call Dave at 756-2893 if you are interested in the Great Leaf Raking or any YMCA program.

Burnette said the YMCA will be a place of change and inspiration. “We can no longer wait for change to occur, but be the change we want to see, idealism CAN be realistic, otherwise they would call it fiction, I hope and pray we can exemplify the change we want in our community together, and that can start here at the Y.”

The Cortland YMCA seeks to be a community leader in improving the quality of life for all, focusing on youth development, healthy living while promoting social responsibility. We have proudly been serving the Cortland community for the past 142 years.

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