

pay it forward

Building a child's spirit, mind, body

By Brad Barnes
*Greenbrier Family Y
senior program director*

Most people might agree that helping children develop positive values and ethical traits is important, but not many would jump to offer their hard-earned dollars to make it happen.

Paul Ewing, a lifelong resident of Hampton Roads, opens his wallet every year as part of the summer day-camp program at the Greenbrier Family YMCA in Chesapeake.

Each year, the camper who best demonstrates the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith is selected by the camp staff as the Camper of the Summer, and is recognized on the last day of camp with a special gift from Mr. Ewing – cold hard cash.

This year's Camper of the Summer, Cameron McClain, 6, of Chesapeake, was visibly excited when Mr. Ewing gave him \$50 during the last camp assembly on Friday.

But Mr. Ewing wasn't done rewarding deserving children.

He gave Alexandra Corona, 9, of Chesapeake, the 2006 Camper of the Summer, \$20 for returning to camp this year. Mr. Ewing instructed both children to put some of the money in a bank account and to use the rest to buy something for themselves.

A 1941 graduate of Norfolk's Booker T. Washington High School and retired longshoreman, Mr. Ewing knows the value of hard work. He's also no stranger to the YMCA. A member for more than 50 years, he comes to the Greenbrier Family YMCA three times a week to exercise and socialize.

He also has raised more than \$1,000 each year the past several years for "We Build People," the Y's annual giving campaign.

"It is a place that helps all people and has everything for young and old," he says of the Y. "There are so many kids with no place to go, but the YMCA provides a safe place with proper supervision that can help build a child's spirit, mind and body."



Paul Ewing of Chesapeake is surrounded by campers at the Greenbrier Family Y. Ewing gives a cash award to the Camper of the Summer.

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