

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

YMCA OF METUCHEN, EDISON, WOODBRIDGE & SOUTH AMBOY
ROSE CUSHING, PRESIDENT & CEO

April 2021



PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE

Dear Board Members:

Spring has sprung! As we emerge from a long, dark and cold winter, we can always be assured of one thing...there will always be a spring. And as we emerge from this pandemic, our spring has arrived, and we are looking forward to a fresh start!

The Governor has increased maximum capacity to 50% within our branches and just in the nick of time, as our members have started returning, wanting to work out, swim and take fitness classes. For those who are still not comfortable entering the facilities, the courtesy hold will stay in effect until June 1st.

In order to accommodate even more members, beginning April 1st, hours of operation were expanded at the branches. We have created a page on our website devoted to welcoming back our members and giving them information on member safety protocols, adjusted hours of operation and on-site and virtual offerings. You can check it out [HERE](#).

Our Early Ed and School Age Programs continue to grow and summer camp is on the horizon and I know this season is going to be better than ever! We are already at 300 campers registered! Open Houses and tours are scheduled throughout the next few months both in-person and virtually.

To regain our foothold on increasing revenue through fundraising events, we are in the planning stages for some new and exciting ideas, such as our first ever virtual wine tasting fundraiser! Details on page 9! I hope to see all of our Board members in attendance! We are also in the planning stages for our golf classic, to be held on October 7th at the Metuchen Golf and Country Club and our Janice Garbolino Memorial 5K Run/Walk to be held in September. Stay tuned for more details!

We continue to serve the community through blood drives, special outdoor events and virtual workshops to engage and keep our members active. Please read through the newsletter to see what else has been going on at our Y!

Rose Cushing

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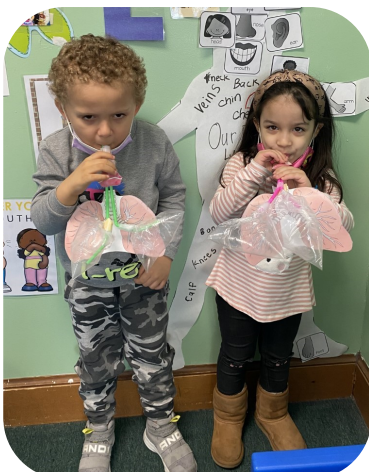


FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

STUDENTS LEARN HOW LUNGS FUNCTION

The students at Harborview Early Learning Center learned how the lungs help them to breathe. They were very excited to be able to see how their lungs function through the use of plastic bags and straws and were fascinated to see how the plastic bags inflated. It was a great science activity to teach children about the body.

-Contributed by Rita MacNeill and Magaly Vega



YPCC NOW A SILVER SNEAKERS PROVIDER

When the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center opened its doors, they had many requests from



seniors asking if they were a Silver Sneakers provider. Well, thanks to the efforts of Kyle Strohman and Bryan Elsasser, now they are! Silver Sneakers is a health and fitness program designed for adults 65 and older that's included with many Medicare plans. They now have over 30 Silver Sneaker members!

To learn more about Silver Sneakers, you can visit their website at <https://www.silversneakers.com/blog/silversneakers-questions-answered/>

YMCA CELEBRATES 100 DAYS OF SCHOOL

The Metuchen YMCA SACC students celebrated being 100 days smarter at the end of February. As the school year is slightly different this year they were especially excited to hit this milestone!

-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur



"Centenarians" Bradford Lindsey and Gabby St. Fleur get into character for the celebration of 100 days of school!





SAVE THE DATE!
Thursday,
October 7, 2021

●
Metuchen Golf & Country Club

TEE OFF FOR KIDS **RICHARD HALE MEMORIAL GOLF CLASSIC** Supporting the Send a Kid to Camp Scholarship Program



MEET...JORGE RUIZ

Jorge has been a member of the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center since the day our facility opened. Jorge suffers from multiple sclerosis, and the YMCA has "helped him out a lot" with this disease and every day in more ways than just one. When he first started, Jorge was only able to come in and swim in the exercise pool. Once his swim ended, he was so tired that he had just enough energy to change and make it back to his car. At that time he was also unable to drive, but that did not stop him from coming in each and every day. He had little feeling in his hands and legs, and when he did have feeling, it was slight pains, however, swimming in the pool was able to alleviate those pains. Since then, he has only missed a day here and there. He has built up enough strength to extend his daily visits by double the amount of time. Now, when he finishes his swim, he goes up our stairs to the walking track and walks for an hour. When he is done, he now has the strength and ability to drive his car once again. Earlier, we mentioned how the Y helps him in more ways than one. His wife and three daughters also use the facility regularly, and it brings him joy knowing that everyone can come in and improve their overall health and well-being. Jorge and his family are thankful for the YPCC staff and amenities during such a difficult time. We are even more grateful to have Jorge as part of our family! *-Contributed by Bryan Elsasser*



KEN SHIRK HOLDS SPRING GARDEN FUNDRAISER

The Ken Shirk Learning Center is holding a fundraiser selling spring flower bulbs to raise money for the Annual Support Campaign. The fundraiser ends on April 26th. Please use the link below to place your order today!!

[Spring Garden Fundraiser \(giveandgarden.com\)](https://giveandgarden.com)



#WEWEARBLACK

At the end of February YMCAs across the U.S. participated in #WeWearBlack in unity with those who are working daily to fight injustice, prejudice and inequity. #WeWearBlack to show support of equality and because the YMCA welcomes EVERYONE regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or social status. At the Metuchen YMCA, our SACC staff wears black because every child comes in different shapes, sizes, and colors and deserves to be celebrated.

-Contributed by Bradford Lindsey



VIRTUAL LiveSTRONG BEGINS PROGRAM AT YMCA

Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the Summit Area YMCA and the YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge and South Amboy have teamed up to provide a free Virtual LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program for cancer survivors, funded by the New Jersey Department of Health. The LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program is a 12-week physical activity program designed to assist cancer survivors in returning to physical activity. It is provided by certified YMCA fitness instructors that are trained in cancer survivorship and post-rehabilitative exercise. The

LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program is geared to getting cancer survivors back on their feet to increase physical activity, reduce cancer-related fatigue and promote overall health.



To increase the amount of impact and access for participants, the Virtual LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program will be available in both English and Spanish through Zoom. English sessions will meet twice per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., while the Spanish sessions will run twice per week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. The series will start on March 29, 2021.

Participants of the Virtual LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program will be able to exercise in the comfort of their homes, as well as gain access to resources, information and support for post-cancer rehabilitative health maintenance and improvement. The goals of the program include teaching participants important skills for self-sufficiency, health management, encouraging personal accountability, progress tracking and bonding exercises to not only strengthen the body, but to encourage healthy socialization and building confidence. Participants will also receive fitness equipment delivered to their homes in order to participate in program exercises that will help improve strength, endurance, flexibility and more.

Participants will also have the opportunity to meet with a nurse navigator from Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey to create or update their cancer survivorship care plan. The virtual Zoom sessions will also include a workshop on nutrition, cancer survivorship as well as a session dedicated to gentle yoga and meditation.

Register or learn more about the Virtual LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program and visit www.thesay.org/livestrong or contact Mike Johnson, Virtual LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA Program Coordinator at (732) 494-3232 ext. 3529 or email mike.johnson@ymcaofmewsa.org.

TOGETHERHOOD UPDATE

By Paul Edgcomb

Addressing the Problem of Food Insecurity

Last month our Metuchen Branch YMCA took more steps to help reduce local food insecurity. In addition to bringing donated items and cash left at our branch to the pantry, *Togetherhood* volunteers now pick items up at people's homes and deliver them to the pantry. Residents can schedule "contactless pickups" each Wednesday, between 1-3pm.

We also expanded our street drive initiative, as seven volunteers conducted one-week drives in five neighborhoods, comprising all or part of fifteen streets.

These combined efforts resulted in *1,488* total items being collected—*308* dropped-off items, *50* picked-up items, and *1,130* items gathered at street drives – and brought to the pantry along with cash donations totaling *\$311* and gift cards totaling *\$100*.

Metuchen Branch staff, plus fourteen volunteers from the community – including several from our branch board – collaborated to make our March Food Insecurity Initiative possible.

We aim to continue this initiative in April and thereafter, but we will need more—and new—volunteers to make that happen.

Addressing the Need for Donated Blood

We have hosted four blood drives at three Y-MEWSA branches this year, helping to collect 185 units of whole blood, and meet the medical needs of as many as 550 people.

Our South Amboy Branch took the lead, holding one drive on February 3, in conjunction with *American Red Cross Blood Services*. This drive resulted in 23 collected units of whole blood.

The South Amboy branch then held a second drive on February 28, this time working in conjunction with *RW/Barnabas Health* and the *We Love U USA Foundation* to collect 55 units of whole blood.

Branch Director *Joe Cohen* and Branch Board member *Maureen Strzykalski* led South Amboy's efforts, collecting an impressive single-month total of 78 units.

Our Metuchen Branch also hosted its first of six planned drives in 2021, collaborating with *New Jersey Blood Services* to collect 54 units of whole blood. Eight *Togetherhood* volunteers recruited and helped pre-register donors and provided guidance for donors on the day of the drive. Branch Director *Christine Tolley* lent a big day-of-drive hand, and her staff did another outstanding job supporting the NJBS team.

Our Y at the Piscataway Community Center hosted its first-ever drive on March 19. Also working in conjunction with *New Jersey Blood Services*, our new YPCC branch in Piscataway collected 53 units of whole blood that day.

Branch Executive Director *Kyle Strohman* and Healthy Living Director *Hannah Thomas* worked to make this drive happen and to bring blood drives to the YPCC.

Upcoming Y-hosted blood drives

Metuchen Branch – Sunday, April 25

Piscataway Branch – Thursday, May 20

STAFFING NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO BRADFORD LINDSEY!

Congratulations to Bradford Lindsey from our Metuchen Y, who has been promoted to Program Director at Oakcrest Community Pool! Bradford has been a YMCA employee for years working as a lifeguard, camp counselor, enrichment instructor and more. He can always be



found creating fun for our kids, dressing up as Bob Ross, Santa Claus or an elf, walking around on stilts, building an outdoor haunted house, creating a themed stand at community events, decorating a float for the town parade and so much more! Bradford was most recently providing leadership to our Enrichment programs at Metuchen Y. As he takes this next step in his Y career, Bradford will be providing leadership to Oakcrest Community Pool and Camp during the summer months and continuing to oversee enrichment at both our Metuchen and Edison Y locations. We are overjoyed to have him taking on this role and extending his reach to benefit both the Metuchen and Edison communities with his talent and commitment to the Y's mission.

CONDOLENCES TO KEN DRINKARD

Our heartfelt condolences to Board member Kenneth Drinkard, who lost his mother last month.

The YMCA staff and Board will keep you and your family in their thoughts and prayers.

Have an article or item of interest for the newsletter?

Please submit to Veronica Vargas at veronica.vargas@ymcaofmews.org.

SOUTH AMBOY GAINS NEW BOARD MEMBER!

The South Amboy Branch Board welcomes its newest member, Patrick Walsh! Patrick is 21-year-old lifetime member of the YMCA. He is currently a graduate student at Rutgers University pursuing a master's



degree in public policy with a concentration in finance. He is the current president of the board of education for South Amboy Public Schools, the vice president of South Amboy's Municipal Alliance, the captain of the cross country and track and field team at Rutgers University, and also a member of the board of directors of the Middlesex County New Jersey School Boards.

In his spare time, Patrick likes to run!

NANCY CORCORAN-DAVIDOFF SET TO RETIRE

Congratulations to Board member Nancy Corcoran-Davidoff, who is set to retire on this month. Nancy has served on the Y's Board of Director's since June 2019 and also served on our Human Resources



Committee. Nancy serves as the Executive Vice President, Chief Experience and HR Officer for Hackensack Meridian Health and in that capacity, she has been instrumental in coordinating complimentary training in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion for our Boards and staff.

We thank Nancy for her support and efforts as a Board member and wish her the best of luck in her retirement!

REMEMBERING PETER J. BARNES, III

Last month we lost a legacy in our MEWSA YMCA community, Peter J. (Pete) Barnes, III. A lifelong resident of Edison, Pete began his professional career as a pro bono attorney for the Edison Democratic Organization and served as the President of the Middlesex County Bar Association. Following his father's footsteps, Pete led a life of public service, serving as a member of the Edison City Council, as a New Jersey State Assemblyman, and as a New Jersey State Senator, and finally ending his career as a New Jersey Superior Court judge.



For those who knew Pete well, however, it was not professional accomplishments for which he will be best and most remembered. Firstly, Pete Barnes was a man who always put family first, a devoted husband, father, son and brother who recognized the grounding influence family has on anything else that followed in life. It was doing things like coaching his children's sports team or enjoying a family pizza Friday night that brought him his greatest joy.

Family was the cornerstone from which Pete built upon his humanitarian endeavors. He was an active parishioner in his beloved St. Francis of Assisi Cathedral in Metuchen, serving as a Eucharistic Minister and on the parish council. On the Edison council, Pete was an environmentalist, working to protect the Dismal Swamp, and also a leading supporter Edison's military veterans, honoring them, in their memory, by naming after them the streets where they resided.

Pete was a long-time member of the MEWSA Y family and assisted the organization in the establishment of our Edison Y. His wife Katie, a MEWSA Y Board member, and his children Meg, Jack and Ken have all spent a great part of their lives supporting and enjoying our Y mission. It is with this that we remember Pete Barnes, a trusted friend and colleague, who did so much for his family, his community and the MEWSA YMCA. Our thoughts and heavy hearts are with Katie and the Barnes family.

STEM MENTORING PROGRAM

On Thursday April 8, 2021, the Edison YMCA is launching a STEM Mentoring Program as a collaboration with the Edison Housing Authority. Our talented Y staff will be delivering a dynamic, STEM based curriculum called goIT provided by Tata Consultancy Services to expose a group of ten at-risk middle school students to technology and computer science career exploration at no cost to the families. This grant-funded



program will meet once a week for ten weeks after the students return home from school for two hours. Over the ten weeks the students will begin by breaking down misconceptions around computer science and will culminate with students presenting a pitch for an app that they have created, from identifying a problem to planning a prototype. It should prove to be a fun, educational experience for all involved!

-Contributed by Erin Siemers



OAKCREST COMMUNITY POOL 2021



CLEAN UP

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

**OAKCREST COMMUNITY POOL NEEDS HELP
GETTING SETUP FOR THE SUMMER SEASON.**

970 Inman Ave. Edison, NJ 08820

- Painting walls, Tables
- Setting up chairs tables
- Cleaning chairs and tables
- Planting and weeding in the gardens
- Wiping down the bathrooms
- Sweeping and power wash the pavilions
- Cleaning up debris

Clean Up Days

Friday, April 23rd
(10am-2pm)
Saturday, April 24th
(12pm-4pm)
Tuesday, April 27th
(10am-2pm)

For more information Contact Bradford Lindsey Program Director
Bradford.Lindsey@ymcaofmews.org

Virtual Wine Tasting

FUNDRAISING EVENT



FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021
7:00 P.M.

\$125.00 per household*

(Package includes four bottles of wine and surprise gift!)

*All proceeds to go to the Annual Support Campaign

For more information, visit

ymcaofmews.org/giving/virtual-wine-tasting-event

REGISTER NOW!

YMCA CELEBRATES READ ACROSS AMERICA WEEK

At the Metuchen YMCA, the children in the program were read stories over zoom calls all week long. Thanks to Miss Gabby who was able to recruit Amazon employees and past Summer Camp counselors to read to the children, as well as do crafts with them based on the stories they read.



The children were so engaged and loved meeting new friends over zoom!

-Contributed by Bradford Lindsey

HEALTHY KIDS DAY



Don't miss out on a day chock full of fun activities that promote active minds and healthy bodies! Volunteer opportunities available!

Metuchen YMCA	April 17
South Amboy YMCA	April 17
Edison YMCA	April 25
YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center	May 8

UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

April 28



May 26



June 23

<bits & pieces>



Grace Early Learning Center receives supplies from their garden grant! Also on the way is a table top garden and \$250 in cash!



Avenel Child Care students celebrate St. Patty's Day!



Avenel Child Care students are all dressed up for Picture Day!



The Grand Fallon poses with the children at South Amboy's ShamROCK the Y event!



The children in YPCC's Remote Learning Program love to swim after class!



Alexis Brown, Aquatics Director at the Metuchen Y, leads a demo small group exercise class for Aquatic Exercise.



The Leader's Club, led by Gabby St. Fleur, built over 400 lunch packages over the course of four days that were sent to St. Joseph's Social Service Center. Great job!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

APRIL

- 7** BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 8** D&I COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 p.m.
- 9** INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—9:00 A.M.
- 13** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.
- 13** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—6:30 p.m.
- 16** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—9:00 A.M.
- 21** FINANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 21** AUDIT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—8:00 A.M.
- 23** IT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—8:00 A.M.
- 28** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.

MAY

- 6** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 p.m.
- 7** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
Zoom Call—9:00 a.m.
- 13** D&I COMMITTEE
Zoom Call—6:00 p.m.
- 11** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
Zoom Call—6:30 p.m.
- 17** EDISON BRANCH BOARD
Zoom Call—8:30 a.m.
- 19** FINANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 19** METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—8:00 A.M.
- 26** CAMPAIGN WRAP-UP
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.



MISSED AN ISSUE?

All Board newsletters can be found on the YMCA website at

<http://www.ymcaofmewsa.org/about-us/association-newsletter>