

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

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

August 2021



PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dear Board Members:

I hope you are all enjoying your summer! As you know, summers at the Y are one of our busiest times of the year! I am thrilled to be able to say that our camp season was one of our best ever! We had 1,075 children attending camp this summer, and they were so excited to be back! See pages 4 and 5 for some of our highlights!

We are very excited to announce the winner of our Ryan Patterson Memorial Scholarship, Shreya Shivakumar. Shreya is the epitome of a young adult who embodies the principals that we seek to be deserving of this scholarship. Please read about our winner's accomplishments on page 7!

As we continue to focus on new ways to enhance our membership, I am so excited to announce the launch of YMCA360, a new, free virtual service for full facility members that will be available through a PC, television, Roku, Apple TV and mobile devices. This program is unique from other fitness products in the market in that it offers programs for the mind *and* body, including group exercise classes, virtual training for sports such as gymnastics, basketball and soccer and nutrition classes, art classes and more. Read more about our exciting new venture on page 3!

Although COVID-19 put a temporary hold on an in-person celebration of our 100 year anniversary, we are still moving forward with getting the word out to the community that we have a strong foundation and an even stronger future! I hope you have had an opportunity to drive down Main Street in Metuchen to see our banner and street flags. If not, you can see a picture of them on page 10!

I look forward to seeing everyone again in-person at our September 22nd Board meeting, which will be hosted by the YPCC. Tours of the facility will be available prior to the meeting.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

1	PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE
2	DEI PRESENCE ON WEBSITE
2	YPCC HOSTS BLOOD DRIVES
2	EDISON ELC RECEIVES 4 STAR RATING
2	CENTENARY STUDENTS DO FLOWER EXPERIMENT
3	YMCA 360 TO BE LAUNCHED
3	MY Y STORY...MEET ADELE HUESTON
4	SUMMER CAMP
4	SUMMER CAMP
6	STAFFING NEWS
7	RYAN PATTERSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP
7	BRUCE PERAGALLO RETIRES
8	CENTENARY STUDENTS RAISE DUCKLINGS
8	OUR SAVIOR'S LC REOPENING
8	SAY OFFERS CHAIR YOGA CLASS
8	KEN SHIRK STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT NUTRITION
9	TCNJ PROVIDES FREE TUTORING FOR CAMPERS
9	YPCC LAUNCHES MARITAL ARTS PROGRAM
9	MANASQUAN BANKS SUPPORTS YMCA
10	BITS 'N PIECES
11	SAVE THE DATES
11	SAY STAFF RECEIVE CAMP TRAINING
11	IMPORTANT DATES
12	UPCOMING MEETINGS



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

DEI PRESENCE ON WEBSITE

The YMCA of MEWSA has always had a deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion within our doors and in our communities. As a rebirth to our former D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) Committee, the newly formed Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee has been created. The mission is to strengthen our communities by respecting and valuing differences and provide everyone with an equal opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. The Committee meets monthly to discuss the organization's diversity and inclusion priorities to ensure all segments of society have access to the Y. We invite you to view the new landing page which contains information on their mission and goals.



ymcaofmewsa.org/about-us/diversity-inclusion

YPCC HOSTS BLOOD DRIVES

The YPCC has hosted three successful blood drives in collaboration with New Jersey Blood Services in March, May and July. The blood drive in March and May collected a total of 47 and 45 pints, respectively, with the blood drive in July totaling the highest collected to date with 62 pints. There are two more blood drives scheduled for September and November 2021.

BLOOD DRIVE

Sunday, August 29, 2021

8:30am-12:30pm

Metuchen YMCA

Schedule your appointment online at nybc.org/njdrive, enter Sponsor Code 15750, then click "schedule" next to August 29 at bottom of page.

 **New Jersey Blood Services**
A Division of New York Blood Center

EDISON YMCA EARLY LEARNING CENTER RECEIVES 4 STAR RATING!

The Edison YMCA Early Learning Center received notification that they have received a four-star quality rating from Grow NJ Kids, New Jersey's Quality Rating Improvement System!

Grow NJ Kids is a state-sponsored initiative to raise the quality of child care and early learning throughout New Jersey. Working with a trained professional from Grow NJ Kids, programs are assessed and rated using a comprehensive, research-based tool.



Congratulations to Jennifer Guthlein, Child Care Director and Erin Siemers, Edison Director of Operations on this great accomplishment!

CENTENARY STUDENTS DO MAGIC FLOWER EXPERIMENT

The preschool students at Centenary Early Learning Center did a Magic Flower experiment to show "capillary action" in plants. Capillary action allows the paper to absorb water very rapidly, causing the folded petals of the Magic Flower to open up. The children used a plastic tray and filled it with water so they could do lots of flowers at once. The students were delighted and amazed to watch the flowers bloom!!

-Contributed by Sangeetha Anand



YMCA360 SOON TO BE LAUNCHED!



We are so excited to announce an innovative new benefit for members that matches their on-the-go lifestyles and puts healthy living at the center of 2021. Scheduled to be launched in September, YMCA360 is a 360-degree seamless Y experience on mobile devices, TV and web. It will be included free with every full facility membership.

With YMCA360, healthy living for people of all ages and activity levels is possible anytime, anywhere. The robust digital experience combines immersive, healthy living with the values of the YMCA in a transformational presentation utilizing best-in-class people, programs and systems delivering the ultimate connected community. More than 300 on-demand exercise classes and programs are accessible 24/7 as well as live stream classes, to provide another way to engage with the Y from home or when a branch isn't nearby. New content will be added weekly. Check out [Y360](#) today!

MY Y STORY...MEET ADELE HUESTON

When one talks about determination, Adele Hueston should come to mind. Piscataway YMCA member Adele Hueston took on the self-proclaimed challenge of swimming Green Lake, located in Wisconsin, where 70-year-old Adele spends her summers, not only swimming, but also volunteering at the Great Lake Conference Center in their ceramic studio. It is no surprise that Adele was a YMCA swim instructor for many years, first as a volunteer when she was a young teenager, and then becoming a certified swim instructor and teaching all through high school and college. Adele became a member of the Piscataway YMCA when she decided to train for her challenge of swimming five miles across Green Lake and back on June 9th.



Photo credits Sophia Voight/The Ripon Commonwealth Press & Green Laker

She had previously completed swimming two and a half miles across the lake four years ago. To train, Adele swam two miles at the Piscataway YMCA for three days a week since September. Cheered on by her friends, Adele successfully completed her challenge in four hours!

We are so proud of Adele and grateful that she is a member of our YMCA family! See full story [HERE](#).



SUMMER CAMP



Campers enjoy the Mad Science at Enrichment Camp at Oakcrest, where they got to test out the famous Mentos and Coke experiment!



Children at Camp at South Amboy learn swimming and water safety skills.



The Grand Falloons perform for the campers, making them laugh while learning!



Camp Munsee's first time ever Theater Camp was a huge success! The campers put on an amazing show of "Broadway's Greatest Hits"!



The Knights of Crossford visit Camp Lenape to educate the children about medieval times.



Oakcrest Camp has been a huge success this year!

SUMMER CAMP



Camp Munsee campers blasted off to travel and explore the stars and planets!



Campers at Camp Munsee explored magical, mystical creatures, made slime, searched for Big Foot, did magical experiments and more.



Camp Director Bradford Lindsey dresses the part as campers celebrate Christmas in July!



STAFFING NEWS

WELCOME GERRY GESSIE



Welcome Gerry Gessie, new Director of Operations at the South Amboy YMCA! Gerry has over 15 years of operations experience as an Executive Director and CEO. His background includes fund development, project management, membership

development, community relations, program development, fiscal management, events and strategic planning. He graduated from William Patterson University with a B.A. in Sociology/ Psychology.

Gerry has multiple accreditations from Y-USA including Senior Director, Volunteerism, Group Work, Organizational Leader, along with attending the CEO Institute.

Gerry has a daughter who is currently attending the University of Hawaii. In his spare time, he has earned national awards in natural bodybuilding competitions. He also likes to add to his collection of over 9,000 CDs!

Welcome aboard, Gerry!

GOOD LUCK TO SHARON LIST

We extend our best wishes to Board member Sharon List and family who have decided to relocate to sunny Florida.

Sharon has served as a Board member for over three years, and has also served on the Board Governance, Financial Development, Child Care and Audit Committees, and most recently, the DEI Committee, which she co-chairs with Seema Pande. Because of her strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, Sharon will be continuing her work on that Committee remotely until the end of the year.

We thank Sharon for her hard work and for supporting, serving and forwarding our Y mission and wish her and her family good wishes on their new journey!



HANNAH THOMAS NAMED COACH OF THE YEAR

Hats off to Hannah Thomas, Healthy Living Director at the YPCC, who was named Softball Coach of the Year! This accolade was well deserved as she brought the Metuchen High School Bulldogs to a victory in the Greater Middlesex Conference Blue Division and has advanced to the GMC Tournament semifinals for the first time since 2014. Great job, Hannah!



WELCOME BRENDA WERNEIWSKEI

The Metuchen YMCA is excited to introduce their new Wellness Director, Brenda Werneiwski!

Brenda is a seasoned fitness director with 30 years of experience in both profit and nonprofit organizations, including an 11-year tenure as Healthy Living Director at the YMCA of Old Bridge. She has worn many hats during her Y employment, including fitness, camp, membership and child watch, but her passion is for group fitness, which makes her an excellent fit! She is looking to create a member experience for the Metuchen members as well as the community. In her spare time, Brenda enjoys spending time traveling with her family and going to the theater with her friends. We know you are going to do a great job, Brenda!



CONGRATULATIONS TO JOE COHEN

Congratulations to Joe and Megan Cohen, who were married on July 14th by Metuchen Mayor Jonathan Busch! Joe and Megan met while working at the Westfield YMCA a few years ago. Joe is currently the Facility Director at the South Amboy YMCA. We wish you many happy years together!



RMP SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNER ANNOUNCED

The winner of this year Ryan Patterson Memorial Scholarship has been announced! This year's winner is Shreya Shivakumar, a student from John P. Stevens High School in Edison, who, despite the fierce competition, rose head and shoulders among her peers. We believe, once you hear Shreya's story, that you will agree.

Shreya has a diverse and impressive resume, despite her young age. Her high school accomplishments include receiving the AP Scholar with Distinction medal, earning the NJ Seal of Bi-literacy in Spanish and English, and being named a National Merit finalist. She is also the president of her school's Spanish Honor Society and is part of their mock trial team.



Shreya and her family are first-generation Indian immigrants, and struggled with food insecurity for years. Years later, while volunteering at a local food pantry, she discovered that many underprivileged people with food allergies had no access or could not afford allergy-safe foods. To address this issue, Shreya took it upon herself to found [Nourish America](#), a charitable organization that provides allergy-friendly food to people in need. She has hosted several allergy-friendly food drives to donate over 2,800 lbs. of food to communities across the tristate area and has hosted fundraisers which raised \$7,000 to alleviate hunger in her community. Earlier this year, Nourish America began a partnership with Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE), the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to food allergies. She joined the FARE Teen Advisory Group and became an anti-hunger and food allergy advocate. She attended the virtual FARE Living Teal Global Summit in October and received the inaugural Living Teal Spotlight Award for combating hunger within the food allergy community. As a Girl Scout Ambassador, Shreya is educating local girl scout troops about food allergy safety and has hosted food allergy education webinars for 430 children in 16 U.S. states. She has also volunteered with the Refugee Assistance Partners (RAP) as an English, Math and Science tutor to refugee children, eventually working with the organization to provide food to hundreds of refugees affected by the pandemic.

In her spare time, Shreya enjoys playing pop songs on her violin, going to the gym or reading a mystery novel.

We feel that Shreya portrays all of the ideals and standards deserving of this scholarship and we congratulate her on her impressive and noteworthy accomplishments!

BRUCE PERGALLO RETIRES



Congratulations to Bruce Peragallo, former Chairman of the Board and current Board member, who has retired from his long-standing tenure as principal at Metuchen High School as of July 2021. Bruce has worked in the field of education for 44 years, starting his career in 1977 as a teacher for the Woodbridge Township school district, followed by positions at other school districts and then becoming Vice-Principal at the high school from 1985-1989. In 2007, Bruce then became principal of MHS. Prior to his tenure at Metuchen High School, Bruce served as the Supervisor of Health and Physical Education in West Orange schools.

We wish Bruce a restful and long retirement!

CENTENARY STUDENTS RAISE DUCKLINGS!

Summer Campers at Centenary helped raise eight ducklings! Farmers from Quiver Farms in Pennsylvania dropped off an incubator with eight duck eggs on a Wednesday morning. Campers waited until Monday, when the ducks began hatching. The duck eggs were turned three times a day, while the incubator temperature was closely monitored and water added each morning. Five ducks hatched overnight and the three remaining ducks hatched on Monday! The children took care of the ducks until Friday morning when the farmers came to bring them back to the farm. Campers helped feed the ducks and we were able to pet them and watch them swim!

-Contributed by Olivia Whitmer



OUR SAVIOR'S LEARNING CENTER REOPENING

We are pleased to announce that Our Savior's Learning Center, located in Edison, will be reopening its doors for the 2021-2022 school year! The school program was suspended in 2020 when the owner, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, was forced to close its doors due to the pandemic. However, they have re-opened their doors, and Our Savior's will now be serving school age children from Menlo Park School for Kindergarten Extended Day and afterschool care. For more information, please contact Program Supervisor Shyby Joy at shyby.joy@ymcaofmewsa.org.



SAY OFFERS CHAIR YOGA CLASS



The Chair Yoga class being taught by Nancy at the South Amboy Y has been a big hit with their members! This class is a community within itself as each member shows their care and concern for one another. The past year and a half has been very difficult for everyone, however, staff note that seeing these members come to the South Amboy YMCA and how they care about their own and other classmate's health and well-being puts a big smile on all of their faces! They are thankful for their members and the feeling of community, both in class and in everyday life.

-Contributed by Mary Valera

KEN SHIRK STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT NUTRITION

Students at Ken Shirk Learning Center learned about nutrition when staff from SNAP-Ed, part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, visited their summer camp to teach them about how to make easy, healthy snacks that don't require an oven. The campers discussed food groups, natural sugar vs. added sugar and how to make tasty snacks with low fat, low sugar ingredients and were given fresh bags of ingredients to make them at home too! SNAP-Ed has visited many of our camp programs this year, including Oakcrest Camp!



-Contributed by Heidi Robbins

TCNJ PROVIDES FREE TUTORING FOR CAMPERS

To address COVID-19 related learning loss, the College of New Jersey partnered with the NJ Pandemic Relief Fund and the Overdeck Family Foundation to launch the "Summer Tutoring Corps". The program provided tutoring this summer for campers in grades K-5 who have experienced pandemic-related learning loss. The tutors provided eight weeks of mathematics instruction for the Y's campers for about 45 minutes a day on Monday, Wednesday and Thursdays. The program was built into the camp day. Each camper received a workbook and worksheets while they were at camp. There is no cost to the program.



Much thanks to TCNJ, NJ Pandemic Relief Fund and the Overdeck Family Foundation for providing this much-needed instruction for our campers. They benefited greatly from this program!

-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur

YPCC LAUNCHES YOUTH MARTIAL ARTS PROGRAM

The YPCC launched its brand new Youth Martial Arts Program in April and is now beginning their third session. Beginning with 40 students in April, their June session has 81 participants enrolled!



The class became so popular that they received requests to add an adult class as well. That program was also launched and is currently in the middle of their first session.

The Township previously ran this program through the Piscataway Recreation Department and taught by Sensei Ray Buaron for many years, however, COVID-19 forced them to shut the program down. Now, with the Township's blessing, the YPCC was able to restart the program by bringing it into the Y.

-Contributed by Bryan Elsasser



MANASQUAN BANK SUPPORTS YMCA OF MEWSA

Kyle Strohm, Executive Director of the YPCC, accepts a check on behalf of the YMCA of MEWSA from James Vaccaro, President & CEO of Manasquan Bank in support of the YMCA's Annual Support Campaign. Manasquan Bank has been a loyal and consistent supporter of the YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy to support our programs and services that benefit our communities.



Annual Support Campaign pledges keep our programs running smoothly and allows us to support our members in need.

-Contributed by Kyle Strohm

UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

September 22



October 27



December 15

<bits & pieces>

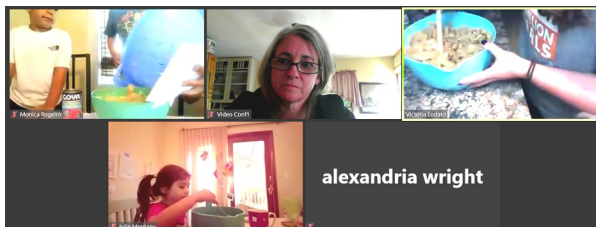


Grace Early Learning Center Director Samantha Coté doesn't mind getting wet as she joins in the fun with her campers!



First Camp Munsee winner of the bike raffle, Angela!

Children and parents at Grace Early Learning Center were thrilled to have a "Safe Photo Day" which was held outdoors in order to maintain a safe environment.



Child Care families enjoy another free Family Fun Night to learn how to make Strawberry Pepper Salsa!



Swim instructor Elizabeth helps members wave their calories away in a Group Aquatics Exercise class.



Camp Director Gabby St. Fleur is a good sport at Family Fun Night as she gets "pied"!



Main Street in Metuchen has come to life with the Y's anniversary flags on every light pole and an overhead banner commemorating our 100 years in the community!

SAVE THE DATES!

the **Y** YMCA

SAVE THE DATE

12th Annual
TOT TROT & FALL Festival

VENDORS • GAMES • ACTIVITIES • FOOD TRUCKS • MORE!
OCTOBER 10, 2021 • METUCHEN HIGH SCHOOL
THE FUN BEGINS AT 9:30AM • RACE BEGINS AT 11:00AM

the **Y** YMCA

TEE OFF FOR KIDS RICHARD HALE MEMORIAL 2021 GOLF CLASSIC

Supporting the
Send a Kid to Camp
Scholarship Program

SAVE THE DATE

Thursday,
October 7
Metuchen Golf & Country Club

Presented by
YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy

SAY STAFF RECEIVE CAMP TRAINING

On Saturday, June 19th, South Amboy Camp Director Annmarie Sabovick led a summer camp training with her staff. The morning began with an ice breaker and then moved on to more serious topics such as keeping all children safe and policy and procedures on how to keep every camper engaged. Even though this was an intensive training, the staff left with a great feeling knowing they would be playing an integral part in the lives of these impressionable children they would be responsible for throughout their time at summer camp. The success of our program depends upon our staff and the amount of love and care they pour into the job they are doing!



-Contributed by Mary Valera

IMPORTANT DATES

Blood Drive @ Metuchen Y
August 29, 8:30a-12:30p

Janice Garbolino 5K Run/Walk
September 25

Richard Hale Memorial Golf Classic
October 7

Fall Session Begins
September 13

Welcoming Week
September 10-19

Tot Trot & Fall Festival
October 10

UPCOMING MEETINGS

AUGUST

- 6** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
9:00 A.M.
- 17** FINANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.



SEPTEMBER

- 1** BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.
- 2** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 3** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m.
- 9** DEI COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 10** INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m.
- 14** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 14** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
6:30 p.m.
- 15** METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD
8:00 a.m.
- 17** IT COMMITTEE
8:00 a.m.
- 20** EDISON BRANCH BOARD
8:30 a.m.
- 21** FINANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.
- 22** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S (HOSTED AT YPCC)
6:00 p.m.

MISSED AN ISSUE?

All Board newsletters can be found on the YMCA website at

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