

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER



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

August 2022



PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE

Dear Board Members:

What a summer it has been! Our camps are overflowing with energetic, excited kids ready to run, play and learn, truly a sight for sore eyes! I am happy to report that this summer we served almost 1,000 children in our nine summer camp locations! Check out pages 7 and 8 for some highlights from the season!

With camp almost in our rearview mirror, we of course are looking forward to the start of the school season! Our school age child care programs are at almost 100% capacity and our Early Ed programs are also filling up quickly! We are looking forward to another productive year at our Learning Centers and Early Learning Centers.

On another note, this summer I, along with my husband Bob, had the privilege of volunteering for a week at the Sioux YMCA at the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation on a transitional housing project. I believe that as President & CEO, it is important that I set the example of social responsibility firsthand. This project was extremely fulfilling, and we left knowing that we had made a difference in the world. You can read the story on page 12.

We have some exciting events coming up this fall! We kick things off with our 5K Run/Walk on September 25th. I hope to see representation from our Board to either run, walk or volunteer at the event. Following this event, we have our Golf Outing planned for October 6th and our Tot Trot & Fall Festival scheduled for October 9th. You can get more information on all of these events on page 5 and of course you can also reach out to Elizabeth Bennett, Director of Financial Development, at elizabeth.bennett@ymcaofmews.org.

I look forward to our first Board meeting post-summer break on September 28th! We plan to meet in person, more details to follow!

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

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MY Y STORY...MEET ARVID HOLT

The South Amboy YMCA Amboy has been around for twelve years and during that time, our staff have interacted with a good number of members. While there are many members that stand out for their commitment and persistence to workout every day regardless of their age, some stand out more than others. One such member is Arvid Holt. We admire Holt's tenacity to maintain a healthy and active life, as well as his pleasant attitude when he comes to check-in at the front desk every day. His smile is contagious and his positive outlook on life sets a great example for others. Because not only is Mr. Holt a role model for everyone, he has also been a member of the YMCA for sixty years and is 91 years young.

Mr. Holt states that he has always been physically active, starting at a very young age playing baseball and swimming, sports that he still enjoys to this day. He grew up in Staten Island and when he was eighteen years old, and joined the Navy for four years sailing all around the Mediterranean Sea. After leaving the Navy, he married his wife of sixty-six years, Ms. Peggy. Both avid swimmers, his wife taught swimming lessons and their four children were all swimmers in college. Mr. Holt's secret to being in good shape is to stay active and do activities that you enjoy. He swims 40 laps every day which takes him 46 minutes. He credits the YMCA as being a great place to remain fit and healthy. Mr. Holt's passion does not stop at physical activity. He also loves gardening, which also keeps him fit as well as being outdoors. He is truly an inspiration for everyone and is a prime example that age is not a barrier to living a healthy life.

Despite going through a difficult time when his wife passed away one year ago, Mr. Holt still maintains a positive attitude. He is truly a "giant" at the South Amboy YMCA, a title he very much deserves. His outlook on life is truly inspirational and an example to all.

-Contributed by Gerry Gessie



Mr. Arvid Holt with South Amboy YMCA Aquatics Director, Melia Parchman

COLONIA LC CELEBRATES AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP



Colonia Learning Center YMCA Camp invited Woodbridge Mayor McCormac to their "Party in the USA" party, to celebrate that their counselor, Miss Luci Brewer, became an American citizen this month.

Everyone is very proud of her and her big accomplishment. Welcome to the greatest country in the world!

-Contributed by Cindy Shields

UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

September 28



October 26



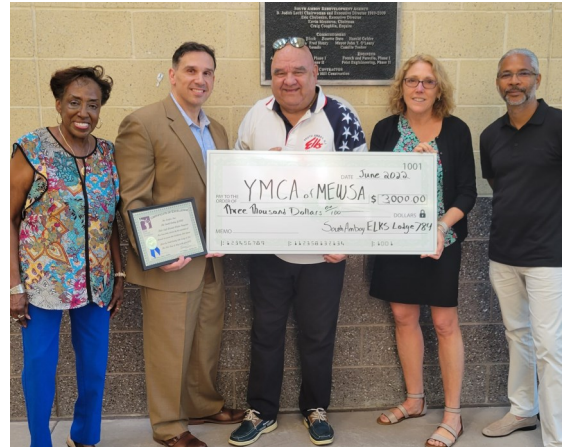
December 14

ELKS LODGE DONATES GRANT FOR SWIM LESSONS

The South Amboy YMCA received a donation of \$3,000 from the South Amboy Elks Lodge #784, National Foundation Grant committee. The YMCA was selected because of its commitment to the children's safety around water activities and educates parents about the importance of water safety. This is the Elks cause to strengthen our community. "Elks Care/Elks Share".

-Contributed by Gerry Gessie

Pictured (l. to r.) Branch Board Member Mary Taylor, South Amboy YMCA Director of Operations Gerry Gessie, South Amboy Elks National Foundation Chairman Valentine Tarr, YMCA President & CEO Rose Cushing, YMCA Board Member/South Amboy Branch Board Member Anthony Conrad.



PISCATAWAY CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH

The Juneteenth Flag was created in 1997 to commemorate June 19, 1865, when the citizens of Galveston, Texas were finally notified about the abolition of slavery. President Lincoln had signed the Proclamation of Emancipation more than two years earlier, on January 1, 1863.

Juneteenth is among the longest-running celebrations of emancipation in the United States, though many Americans have not been conscious of the celebration. Interest in Juneteenth has surged as a way to celebrate the achievements of African Americans and recognize their foundational role in the nation's history from the arrival of the first slave ship from Africa in America in 1619, up to the present day.

"The raising of the Juneteenth flag gives us the opportunity to educate the public about the history, power, resilience, and unbroken spirit of Black Americans"

-Contributed by Kyle Strohmman



The Juneteenth flag was raised at the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center by Rev. Dr. Kenneth L. Saunders, Sr., Chair of Piscataway Civil Rights Advisory Commission, Reginal Johnson, President, NAACP Metuchen/Edison, Councilmember Linwood D. Rouse, Mayor Brian C. Wahler, Councilmember Gabrielle Cahill, Councilmember Frank Uhrin, Kyle Strohmman, Executive Director, YPCC and other Township residents.

ENBRIDGE POSTS BLOG ON YMCA SUMMER CAMP



Thank you to YMCA supporter Enbridge, who has posted to their blog about our summer camp programs! You can read the article here:

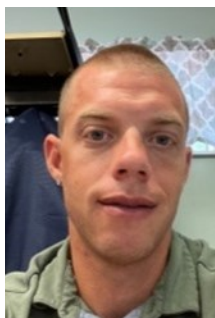


<https://www.enbridge.com/stories/2022/july/ymca-new-jersey-metuchen-summer-camps-enrichment-education>.

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER NEWS

WELCOME KYLE HARTY!

Welcome aboard, Kyle Harty, new Child Care Director for Avenel Learning Center! Kyle graduated from Raritan Valley Community College with an Associate's degree in Education K-12 and Kean University with a Bachelor's degree in Recreation. He has a vast background in childcare, having previously worked at Fanwood Scotch Plains YMCA, the Summit YMCA and KinderCare. Some of his experiences include Site Supervisor, Assistant Teacher, Lead Kindergarten Teacher and Summer Camp Counselor. He has also served in the Coast Guard for the past 5 years and is currently serving in the Coast Guard Reserve. In his free time, you can find Kyle in the gym, at the beach or playing co-ed softball.



CONGRAULATIONS TO BOARD MEMBER ANTHONY CONRAD!

Congratulations to Board member and Branch Board Chair Anthony Conrad, who was successful, along with Mayor Fred Henry and Mickey Gross, in their bid in the South Amboy Democratic Primary Election! We wish you all the best of luck in November!



GERRY GESSIE WEDS!

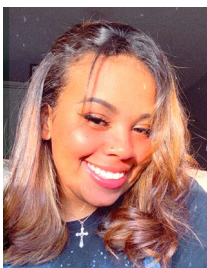
Congratulations to Gerry Gessie, Director of Operations for our South Amboy branch, who has recently wed! Gerry and his wife, Renee (nee Giuliano), were married at the Brownstone in Paterson on July 21st in an intimate event with family and friends. We wish them many years of wedded bliss!



WELCOME ABOARD FATIMAA RIVERA!

Welcome aboard new Member Experience Coordinator for the Edison YMCA, Fatimaa Rivera!

Fatimaa joins our family with a strong background in the arts, and especially loves working with young children. She was a member of the Arts Honors Society in high school, and continued to her love of the arts by teaching a children's art class in Metuchen. Fatimaa is looking forward to creating new experiences for Y members. In her spare time, she enjoys spending time with her friends and family.



BOARD MEMBER KATHY KOVACH BECOMES A GRANDMA!



A big congratulations to proud parents Caolan Kovach-Orr and Rebecca Diamond, son and daughter-in-law to Kathy Kovach, who became parents to a beautiful baby boy on July 25th! Their new addition, Henry, weighed in at 6 lbs. 2 oz. Many blessings!

MISSED AN ISSUE?

All Board newsletters can be found on the YMCA website at

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

GABBY ST. FLEUR ON NEWS 12 NJ

Check out our very own Gabriella (Gabby) St. Fleur's [spotlight](#) on News 12 New Jersey's coverage of National Night Out. You can catch her at location 1:05!

New Jersey communities celebrate National Night Out

Aug 02, 2022, 10:21pm • Updated 4h ago

By: News 12 Staff



UPCOMING EVENTS

BLOOD DRIVE

28
AUG

8:30a-2:30p
Metuchen Y



SCHOOL BEGINS

6
SEP

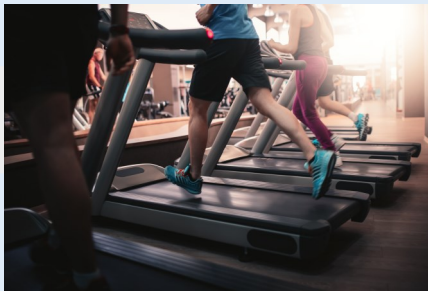
Various Y
Child Care
Centers



FALL REGISTRATION

9
SEP

All Branches



5K RUN/WALK

25
SEP

Roosevelt
Park



WELCOMING WEEK

9-18
SEP

Various Times
and Locations



GOLF CLASSIC

6
OCT

Metuchen
Golf &
Country Club



OKTOBERFEST

6
OCT

Save the
Date



TOT TROT

9
OCT

Metuchen
High School



TOGETHORHOOD UPDATE

-By Richard Husar



Food Drives

As of June 2022, 1,920 items were dropped off in the Metuchen Y lobby and then brought to the food pantry. This is 71 items less than last year, but considering the increased price of food, it is testimony to the charity of our members.

The high number of donations in the first quarter is carrying the numbers so far this year. In the second quarter, there was a decrease in donations every month. Continued message blasts will hopefully increase donations.

Of note is that in July, Gabriella St Fleur, Camp Munsee Director, came up with a great idea. She set up a contest between camp groups to see which one would contribute the most food items. These donations will benefit the third quarter numbers. It's also an example of thinking out of the box – tremendous!

We remain optimistic in our mission of helping those that are food insecure.

Blood Drives

The next blood drive is scheduled for Sunday, August 28th from 8:00am to 12:30pm at the Metuchen YMCA. Appointments can be scheduled at www.nybc.org/njdrive and entering sponsor code 15750 and clicking "Schedule" on the August 28th drive. Any questions, please contact Christine Tolley at christine.tolley@ymcaofmewsa.org.



Gabby St. Fleur and Rose Cushing, President & CEO

EDISON Y TEAMS UP WITH HOUSING AUTHORITY



Earlier this year, the Edison YMCA teamed up with the Edison Housing Authority to offer a technology and STEM program for teens from housing authority families. Curriculum was provided by [GoIT](#), and teens created apps that addressed real world problems, such as poverty and gender inequality. At the end of the session, one lucky participant won an Oculus! The Edison Y looks forward to a continuing relationship with the Edison Housing Authority.

-Contributed by Caroline Rankin

OAKCREST OTTERS SHINE!

The Oakcrest Otters swim team, joined by Oakley the Otter, worked very hard this year and showed great improvement!

The swim team is for children 6 to 18 years old and is designed to help swimmers with strokes and improving their time for competitive swim.



SUMMER

CAMP



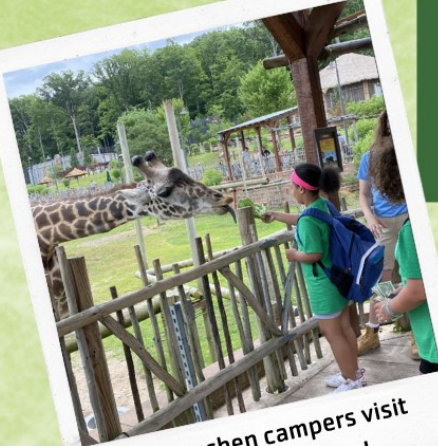
What the Scoop ice cream truck visits Metuchen camp!



Field trips are back!



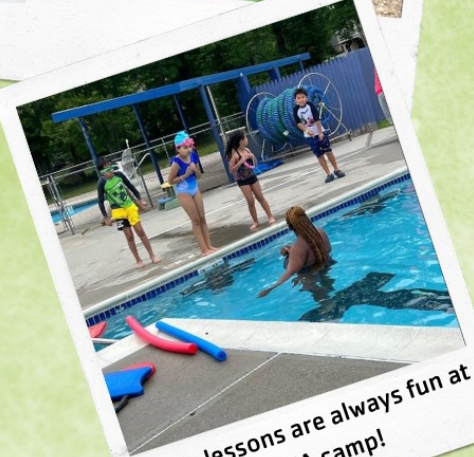
CAMP



Metuchen campers visit Turtleback Zoo!



Camp Oak Tree campers build a catapult in Mad Science camp!



Swim lessons are always fun at YMCA camp!



Camp counselors are ready for a great summer!



Centenary campers build a Dinosaur Garden!

Magic moments



Metuchen camp counselors
Nyaja Brandon and Gabby St.
Fleur



Campers celebrate Camp Kindness Day,
celebrated by spreading kindness!



Camper tries out the slide in the
new playground at Oakcrest!



Summer fun at the Splash Park at the
Piscataway YMCA!



Oakcrest campers make jester hats to celebrate
Carnival Week Kick-Off Week!



Harborview campers create a water park!



Camp Oak Tree campers learn
about space in Mad Science Camp!

MEET OUR GOLF COMMITTEE!



The MEWSA Golf Committee holds its first meeting to prepare for the golf outing on October 6th!

Shown l. to r.: Alap Purani, Sam Prasad, Gary Wade, Joe Cascio-Chair, Sunil Gopinath, Raj Thakar. Not shown: Joe Costello, Thomas Lankey, Jason Shao.

MHS VOLUNTEERS AT METUCHEN Y

Young adults ages 18-21 from the Metuchen High School Transition Program volunteered at the Metuchen YMCA for several



hours a week helping to clean, organize and fold camp shirts this summer. The work-based learning program is designed to give the young adults an opportunity to increase their work skills. It was a great experience for both the them and YMCA staff! Shown above with Brenda Werneiswei, Metuchen Y Wellness Director.

-Contributed by Brenda Werneiswei

CAMP LENAPE HAS VISIT FROM NFL STAR

On July 20, 2022 Camp Lenape was invited to the Tajae "ShowTime" Sharpe field day in Piscataway. Tajae Grew up in Piscataway and is now a WR for the Chicago Bears.

The field day took the children through an NFL football practice and was thoroughly enjoyed by all! Thank you Tajae Sharpe!

-Contributed by Meghan Doriety



SACC HOLDS IN-PERSON TRAINING

After a 2 1/2 year hiatus from in-person training due to COVID-19, NJSACC trainers kicked off June and the summer season with some impactful camp training delivered on-site and in-person.



Over 110 camp counselors from the YMCA of MEWSA attended this training, exploring Behavior, Inclusion and Communication strategies towards working positively with the kids, families and co-workers involved in their camps.



Everyone was excited to be back in person and the day was one filled with strategies, awareness and education.

-Contributed by Cindy Shields

YMCA HONORED AT MANASQUAN BANK EVENT

The YMCA of MEWSA, along with 29 other local organizations, were honored by Manasquan Bank at their Q2 Charitable Foundation grant recognition breakfast! Attendees had a chance to learn more about Manasquan Bank's philosophy for its future success and commitment to its community-based partners and to tell their story of how their organization will use the grant to assist in their overall mission.

The YMCA of MEWSA received a \$5,000 grant from Manasquan Bank which will support our mission of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

<http://ow.ly/WJtx50JYkTf>

[#ManasquanBank](#)

From l. to r.: Elizabeth Bennett, Director of Financial Development, YMCA of MEWSA, James Vaccaro, President & CEO, Manasquan Bank, Rose Cushing, President & CEO, YMCA of MEWSA, Lorraine Mulligan, VP, Business Development Officer, Manasquan Bank



WHY VOLUNTEERING AT THE Y IS IMPORTANT



Volunteers Melinda DiBenedetto, Tish Coughlin and Lorraine Mulligan, along with Y Executive Staff, Rose Cushing, Kathy Minaeff, Kyle Strohman and Liz Bennett (pictured left) meet with Rutgers University Summer Intern Peyton Lepping to share with her their reasons for contributing their time and talents to the YMCA. This is just one of the ways that Peyton is learning about the Y and the philanthropic work we do and our commitment to community service.

Peyton comes to us from Rutgers RSSI (Rutgers Summer Service Internship). This new university-wide program was announced by Rutgers University president, Scott Holloway. Under the direction of the

Eagleton Institute of Politics and their career offices, the internship program would connect rising juniors or seniors with public service internship experiences in an attempt to developing community and civic minded students. Proudly, our Y was chosen to participate.

Under the guidance of Kyle, supported by Liz, Peyton is spending the vast majority of her time in Piscataway engaging with our campers, members, families and community to assist us in developing connections and stories that will support our philanthropic efforts. Peyton has a bright future ahead of her with a passion for the community and a goal of supporting those in need, especially in the area of mental health as it continues to be an area of need for so many. We wish you the best of luck, Peyton, and welcome you to the YMCA of MEWSA family.

-Contributed by Elizabeth Bennett

PISCATAWAY HOLDS BIKE RODEO

On July 16th, Piscataway Township and Mobile Success Center of Middlesex County sponsored a Bike Rodeo held at the Piscataway YMCA. At this free event, children learned about bike safety, the importance of wearing a helmet, and other important information. Games, raffles and prizes were also on hand and everyone enjoyed the day very much!



CAMP MUNSEE HOLDS FOOD DRIVE

Camp Munsee campers flexed their social responsibility muscles and held a food drive contest for the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen Food Pantry. To encourage the campers, a contest was held for the group that collected the most food items, with the prize being a pizza lunch! Over 210 items were collected for the pantry!



-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Two children, two weeks for 35 summers = 70 lives, 700 days, 5,600 hours, countless memories.

That's the impact that ONE donor has had for the past 35 years to 70 lucky children in the Edison area. The donor and her husband shared a passion of helping others, especially children, and giving back to their community. When her husband, a long-time school administrator passed away, his school, Washington Elementary, collected enough funds to send two children to camp in his honor. An experience that these children would not have had without financial support.



The donor found this so important, that she has made this a tradition, every year, for 35 years. A tradition of sending two children to YMCA of MEWSA summer camp to make sure they have the same advantages they had as children as well as what they were able to provide to their own children – outdoor recreation, educational stimulus, interaction with friends, field trips and so much more. The school continues to play a role by selecting respectful and intelligent students to go to camp each year, making families across Edison proud.

Those first children helped by this family are now 45 years old and have families of their own. The donor makes sure each year this continues, ensuring another generation of children are able to thrive and make the most of their summers. For each child, the impact of these two weeks is immeasurable. The YMCA of MEWSA is truly grateful for such an extraordinary gift year after year. And the kids are too!

EDISON STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT HANDWASHING



Edison YMCA preschoolers learned about germs and the importance of handwashing from girl scout Lara! She created an interactive activity that showed how soap and water kill germs and how quickly germs can spread if they don't wash their hands. Our students loved the activity and hope to see Lara again soon!

-Contributed by Caroline Rankin

CEO VOLUNTEERS TO BUILDING HOUSING

CEO Rose Cushing and her husband Bob spent a week on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation working on a transitional housing project for the [Sioux YMCA](#), also known as the YMCA of the Seven Council Fires. The YMCA is located in Dupree, South Dakota and is the third poorest county in the United States. Rose and Bob spent the week working alongside a group of YMCA Alumni putting in the foundation for two of the four tiny houses that will be located on the YMCA property. Some days the temperature rose to 108°!



While at the Y, they took a break to visit Camp Marrowbone, a Y-sponsored sleepaway summer camp program free of charge for area children. Rose notes that the week was extremely rewarding knowing that they made a difference for the Lakota Indian tribe who continue to struggle with poverty resulting in extreme food and housing insecurity.



Original site



Rose and Bob standing in front of the structure after creating reinforcements with cement and rebar.

GRANT AND DONOR RECOGNITION

New York Life Foundation	\$500	Operating support and program funding.
Y-USA	\$6,500	To support swim scholarships for youth from underserved communities.
NJ State Bar Foundation	\$5,000	To support our Youth & Government Program
Manasquan Bank	\$5,000	General Operating support.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

AUGUST

- 5** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

- 2** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m.
- 7** BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.
- 8** DEI COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 9** INVESTMENT COMMITTEE
8:00 a.m.
- 13** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
6:00 P.M.
- 14** EDISON BRANCH BOARD
5:30 P.M.
- 14** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
6:00 P.M.
- 16** IT COMMITTEE
8:00 A.M.
- 20** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
6:30 P.M.
- 21** METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD
8:00 A.M.
- 21** FINANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 P.M.
- 28** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
6:00 P.M.

