



FOREVER IN SERVICE

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S NEWSLETTER October 2020

Dear Board Members:

It's hard to believe that seven months has gone by since we closed our doors on March 17th. As you know, one of my biggest concerns during the pandemic was not if and when we were going to reopen our doors again, but how were we going to continue to serve our members even though our doors were closed. I am proud to say that we have achieved that goal through the many innovative offerings that we have provided to our members, from infants to seniors, since mid-March. We have moved from an entirely virtual and online experience to slowly and safely beginning to welcome members back into our facilities.

Our outdoor classes have been a great success, and we are thrilled to be able to begin offering indoor Group Ex classes starting October 17th. State guidelines prohibit the number of participants in a class, but we are hopeful that we will hear word from the Governor increasing the capacity maximum in the near future. In the meantime, adding indoor GroupEx classes provides yet another way we can provide services to our members.

Our fitness center, studio rooms and weight rooms are now open to members without needing a reservation in advance. In order to continue to comply with the 25% maximum occupancy State requirement, we have installed a facility usage tracker on our website that gives members the real time number of people in the facility. Check it out [here](#)!

Because of the high demand, we will continue to offer to members our virtual online fitness classes. However, we will be upgrading the way the classes are offered, through a virtual streaming service as opposed to Zoom, which will maximize their experience and eliminate the need for a staff person to monitor each and every one of the 33 classes that we offer weekly. This will free up a considerable amount of staff time to be utilized in more efficient ways. We are also in the process of creating pre-recorded fitness classes that members may view at any time.

During this time I have relied heavily on our Board for their expertise and support to get us through the last seven months. I have also relied on our leadership and support staff to provide services to our members, including academic tools for their children, a safe place for children of front line workers to come during the day, exercise classes for our members, supportive programs and services for our swimmers and swim team and outreach support for our seniors, while continuing to help the community at large through our food drives and blood drives. I celebrate the progress that we've made in the past seven months and know that we have grown as an organization, reaching deep and learning to provide to our membership in new and innovative ways.

I'd like to share you with the video below that one of our Edison Y staff, Peter Buckley, made for our Y. Peter is the Coordinator for the School Age Child Care Program at the Edison branch and has used his videography talents to give an update for our members. Membership & Marketing Director Jillieanna Peguero also did a great job on the narrating!

Rose Cushing
President & CEO



HONOREE DINNER



On Monday, October 5, 2020, the YMCA celebrated their 2020 honorees, including Paul Edgcomb, recipient of the Charles S. Edgar Memorial Award, George Trapp, recipient of the Peter J. Barnes, Jr. Community Champion Award and Hackensack Meridian JFK University Hospital, recipient of the Community Partner Award.

The YMCA of MEWSA Board of Trustees gathered on October 5th in an outdoor venue at the Pines Manor in Edison to honor outstanding community services contributed by three outstanding recipients – Board members Paul Edgcomb and George J. Trapp, and Hackensack Meridian JFK University Medical Center. The Y also released their 2019-20 Community Impact Report underwritten by Hackensack Meridian Health.

Paul Edgcomb was recognized for exemplifying outstanding service to community through a variety of organizations and in many roles, particularly the YMCA and others serving youth. In presenting Paul's award, Marie Patterson, friend and former YMCA of MEWSA Branch Director, recognized his generosity of spirit and selflessness in working for the greater good, key attributes for those selected to receive the Charles S. Edgar Memorial Award. Serving as a YMCA Board member and Co-chair of the Annual Support Campaign, Paul also spearheads the Togetherness Program, the Y's premier Social Responsibility, volunteer engagement

initiative.

George J. Trapp was honored with the Peter J. Barnes, Jr. Community Champion Award in recognition of a legacy of community service to the YMCA and many other non-profit organizations, public entities and within the private sector. Bill McDuffie, a friend and long-time YMCA volunteer leader, commended George for his many years of dedication to education, his alma mater, Rutgers University, and his church. As YMCA Board Secretary, George chairs the Governance Committee and currently serves as the Board Chair of the Center for Great Expectations in Somerset, NJ. George truly embraces the Y's Youth Development mission and embodies the Y's core values.

As the recipient of the Community Partner Award, Hackensack Meridian JFK University Medical Center was applauded for more than five decades of service to the rapidly expanding population in Middlesex County over that time. Board Chair Michael Lackland shared wonderful accolades about JFK's growth from a small community hospital to a major academic center of New Jersey's largest healthcare network. In accepting the award, JFK Hospital Executive Amie Thornton spoke eloquently about the vital role JFK plays in community health and recognized the YMCA for its' long-standing commitment and partnership to community-based health initiatives, a key principle of the Y's Healthy Living tenet.

In concluding the program, YMCA President and CEO Rose Cushing expressed deepest appreciation to the Board of Trustees and YMCA staff for their dedication in navigating our YMCA through the most challenging time in our organization's history. "We are grateful for the support of our donors and grantors and proud of our ability to be responsible stewards of our resources. We are creating the legacy for our YMCA's next 100 years of service to the communities we call home."

Please visit [our YMCA website](#) to read full honoree biographies contained in our 2019-2020 Community Impact Report. Donations in honor of award recipients and to support continued YMCA cause-driven work may be made [here](#).

THE YPCC OPENS IT DOORS!

After a long and seemingly endless wait, the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center finally opened its doors on October 1st!! Staff were eager to welcome the new members into the facility, and gave tours to potential members. Here is a listing of key staff who helped to launch our newest branch!

Kyle Strohmman, Executive Director
Bryan Elsasser, Member Experience Director
Kelly Molinelli, Aquatics Director
Hannah Thomas, Healthy Living Director
Meghan Doriety, Remote Learning Coordinator
Muhammed (Mo) Derti, Senior Facility Director

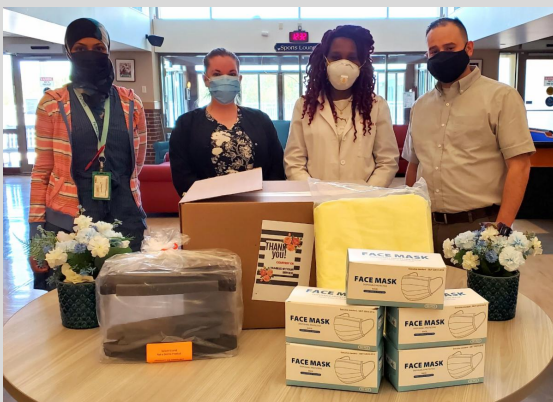
Rose Cushing was also on hand to welcome those who entered the branch and noted that the energy and commitment of the staff was commendable and their enthusiasm was contagious as they engaged with the members.



Great job to all!



LOVE TAKES ACTION AWARD



The YMCA of MEWSA has received notification that it was awarded a \$50,000 Love Takes Action Award from the New York Life Foundation. This award, administered by the New York Community Trust, invited employees and agents of New York Life to nominate extraordinary individuals in their communities who embody the value of selfless love and are serving their communities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each honoree selected a nonprofit to receive a \$50,000 general support grant from the New York Life Foundation. YMCA Board member and New York Life employee **Seema Pande** nominated YMCA Board member **Alka Aneja** who was chosen as one of the 35 community members from across the nation to be recognized, as a result of selfless work giving back to the community, through her community volunteer group **Humbled By Your Service**, which she created and organized to address pressing needs in the community caused by the pandemic. These funds will allow the YMCA of MEWSA to continue to support our communities through our vital programs and services.

Alka and her group have worked tirelessly



during the pandemic to organize food drives, PPE drives, bottled water drives and solicited food donations from restaurants to feed hospital staff, and donations of gifts for children in foster care. They continue to organize and volunteer their time to help the community during this time of need and are actively seeking nonprofit status! Way to go, Alka! We invite you to visit HBYS' [Facebook](#) page and support Alka's worthy cause!

Thank you Seema and Alka!

#LoveTakesAction

#GoodAtLife

#NYLFoundation

CRAZY 8's MATH CLUB AT YPCC



The YPCC's Crazy 8's Math Club kicked off yesterday with glow-in-the-dark geometry. The younger children learned about 2-dimensional geometric shapes, counting and pattern recognition. The older children learned about 2-dimensional geometric shapes, pattern recognition of both shapes and numbers and ratios. Next Wednesday's class will be Daring Darts! The children will learn how to play and score a game of darts.

*Contributed by Meghan Doriety,
Remote Learning Coordinator, YPCC*

WELCOMING WEEK AT THE Y



Members at the Metuchen YMCA show they are welcomers!

This year Welcome Week was a little more special than other years as we Welcomed Back our members in the community which we serve. Our staff were excited to see our members coming in through our front doors and even if things are being done slightly different--our smiles though not completely visible were still warm and welcoming. Our Y is a community within a community and not seeing each other for over five months really let us know how much of a family we really are. We are beyond thankful to our members for Staying With Us during these uncertain times and will continue to welcome back more of our members in the days and weeks to come.

*Written by Mary Valera
Membership & Marketing Director
South Amboy YMCA*

HALLOWEEN AT THE Y!



While it will look very different this year, Halloween will continue at the Y! Please save the dates below to visit one of our branches to enjoy the festivities and see all the hard work our staff put into making Halloween successful this year! All events will be held outside this year, and each branch is customizing their own SPOOKTACULAR celebration!

METUCHEN BRANCH

Friday, October 23, 2020

6:00-7:15pm or 7:45pm-9:00pm

Haunted Playground, Trick or Trunk, Games, Activities, Music, Arts and Crafts

EDISON BRANCH

Friday, October 30, 2020

5:00 p.m. (at Oakcrest)

Zumba, Jack-O-Lantern contest and a movie, Hotel Transylvania

SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH

Friday, October 30, 2020

4:00-6:30pm

Pumpkin Painting, Tattoos, Obstacle Course, Bowling, Photo Booth and Costume Parade!

STAFFING NEWS

Metuchen Y Welcomes New Healthy Living Director!



Bibiana Sampaio has joined the team in Metuchen as the new Healthy Living Director starting October 12th. Bibiana has a passion for health and well-being and loves to inspire members on healthy living.

Bibiana has her Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science from the University at Buffalo, the State University of New York. Bibiana holds multiple certifications in group exercise, personal training, Barre and Tabata GX.

Bibiana has been married to her husband Eduardo for one year and lives in Edison. In her spare time Bibiana likes to hike, run, snowshoe, camp, and spend time with her family and bake tasty treats.

TESTIMONIALS

We would like to share some testimonials that we received from grateful parents who were able to utilize our child care services during the pandemic. Great job to Cindy Shields, Senior Director of Child Care and her staff!

"Just wanted to say thank you to Melinda Wilson and to express our appreciation at how seriously you and all the teachers are taking safety precautions and how well cared our girls are while at school. We were struggling having them home for so long and I was considering quitting a job I really love because it was getting too hard to work from home with them here. Lily would scream for me at the basement door while I was trying to do therapy sessions with high risk clients! It was a nightmare and she was miserable and having tantrums all the time. We are so happy with the decision to send them back! Lily is SO much happier and loves her teachers and friends and I'm pleasantly shocked at how well and quickly Madelyn adjusted. She almost leapt out of my arms to get to Karen the other day. Please pass along the thanks to all their teachers. It's a tough and often thankless job to do in the best of circumstances and it must be even more challenging wearing a mask and shield and sanitizing and putting themselves at increased risk. We really appreciate it!"

"I cannot thank Mr. Randy Smith, Ms. Heidi, Mr. Miles, and Ms. Isabelle enough for your support during this time. My daughter has truly had a great experience.

I appreciate the attention my child received, all the while juggling multiple students from various schools with assorted schedules. She was able to stay focused, gain assistance with staying on schedule, and consistently talked about the games she learned and the crafts that she created, requesting that I pick her up later some days. (I have never heard this in any daycare or school she attended!)

We are living in a unique time where socializing with others her age is difficult. Additionally, she is transitioning from a Catholic school to a public school and with our families schedules, making friends and having play dates has been difficult.

I genuinely feel that the Ken Shirk Learning Center was more than support with remote learning."

Thank you for everything!
Jamie Wolenter

AQUATICS UPDATE

Swim Team Tryouts

CALLING ALL SWIMMERS!

The MEY-SABY Swim Team is looking for new swimmers to join their team! The swim team is for boys and girls ages 6-18 who have an interest in competitive swimming. Any interested persons should email Alexis Brown at alexis.brown@ymcaofmews.org or visit the swim team page [HERE](#) for more information.



AVENEL CHILD CARE PLANTS MUMS!

The children at Avenel Early Learning Center planted mums just in time for the fall! Children were able to get outside, learn about horticulture and make the front of their school beautiful!



UPCOMING MEETINGS

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday, December 16, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Board Governance, November 4 @ 6:00 p.m.

IT Committee, November 6 @ 8:00 a.m.

Property Committee, November 6 @ 9:00 a.m.

Finance/Audit Committee, November 18 @ 6:00 p.m.

Child Care Committee, December 3 @ 6:00 p.m.

Financial Development Committee, December 8 @ 6:00 p.m.

All meetings will be held via Zoom calls.
