

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

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

December 2020



PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE

Dear Board Members:

It doesn't seem possible that the year has flown by so quickly! While the holidays will certainly look differently this year, we are prepared to adapt as needed to maximize health and fitness options and engage our membership. Here's what's been happening!

The Y received notification that we have received full forgiveness on our PPP loan, which is great news!! A huge shout-out to Mariam Lesnewski and John Dowd, as well as all the members of the Finance Committee! The process was a tedious and time-consuming one, but one that has paid off.

We have begun to offer more family-oriented events which have really been successful! Halloween at the Y was hosted outdoors this year, with some very creative offerings, such as a drive-in movie and trunk-or-treating. The branches are now planning their Winter Wonderland events!

Our Child Care Education Programs continue to grow as we operate under strict guidelines. A mini-session of Virtual Preschool has been added this month for our youngest students. We continue to remain flexible to meet the needs of our families.

Our Child Care Centers also received over \$113,000 in Stabilization Grants from the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Family Development, which was a huge help in supporting costs including rent, staffing and PPE equipment.

During this time of uncertainty, we take each day as it comes, hoping for the best but prepared for the worst. I wish each of you and happy and healthy holiday season. It is a time to contemplate not only all the blessings in our life, but to be thankful that 2021 is going to be a healthier and happier year!

Rose Cushing

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE
- 2 VIRTUAL PRESCHOOL OFFERED
- 2 EDISON STAFF MEMBERS MAKES VIDEO
- 2 EAGLE SCOUT HELPS OUT AT CENTENARY
- 3 KINDERGARTENERS LEARNING ABOUT VOTING
- 3 TOGETHERHOOD UPDATE
- 4 MEET: THE LADY BEHIND THE FENCE
- 5 STAFFING NEWS
- 6 HALLOWEEN AT THE BRANCHES!
- 7 LEADER'S CLUB CLEANS UP
- 7 LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL
- 7 FIVE DAYS OF ACTION
- 8 YPCC HOSTS TRIATHLON
- 8 HUMBLED BY YOUR SERVICE HOLDS COAT DRIVE
- 9 BITS 'N PIECES
- 10 WINTER FESTIVITIES AT THE BRANCHES
- 11 SHOP WITH AMAZON SMILE
- 11 METUCHEN RECEIVES PING PONG TABLE DONATION
- 11 EDGAR KINDERGARTENERS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING
- 11 GRANT & DONOR RECOGNITION
- 12 UPCOMING MEETINGS



VIRTUAL PRESCHOOL OFFERED

Virtual Preschool began in October and was an immediate hit! Ms. Gina (pictured top right) offers a 45-minute class three days per week where children ages 3-5 have the opportunity to interact with a teacher and classmates in real time. Children are fully engaged in activities such as story time, show-and-tell, and academic lessons based on The Creative Curriculum, and parents have been sending positive and motivational feedback about how much their child enjoys attending. Due to its resounding success, we now offer a second Virtual Preschool class with Ms. Nazia (pictured bottom right) which began this November, and we look forward to continuing both classes for the upcoming winter and spring sessions. Here are some of the testimonials received from parents:

"I just wanted to let you know how great this week was! Our son loves it so much and it's made him eager to learn!"

"I cannot tell you enough how my daughter loved this class. I have definitely noticed her opening up more as well too. We are so happy!"

Contributed by Angelique Nabi



EDISON STAFF MEMBER MAKES CHILD CARE VIDEO

Once again, Edison employee Peter Buckley created a video for the Y highlighting our child care services to give parents and caregivers peace of mind knowing that when their child comes to the Y, they will be well protected as well as educated! Edison staff member Jillieanna Peguero also contributed to the video as the voiceover. Watch the video below!



EAGLE SCOUT HELPS OUT CENTENARY ELC



Augie Hines (pictured left in blue shirt), who is working on his Eagle Scout Award, offered his services to Centenary Early Learning Center to make improvements to their play yard. He worked over the weekend to remove bushes, level the area, put in a retaining wall and add mulch. He also created a Go Fund Me page so that people could make donations to help with the cost of the project. He is hoping to raise funds to also include picnic tables for Centenary's families and children. If you wish to contribute to this project,

please visit the Go Fund Me page [HERE](#). So far he has raised \$694 of his \$1,000 goal!

-Contributed by Melinda Wilson



KINDERGARTENERS LEARN ABOUT VOTING!

The Kindergarten children at Centenary Early Learning Center learned about voter registration, why people vote and even wrote and delivered their own campaign speeches! Their election was to vote “which pet is best”. The candidates were a cat, dog and a fish. After all of the votes were tallied the winner was DOG. Special thanks to Mayor Jonathan Busch for the “Metuchen Votes” stickers!



Contributed by Lindy Rutter

TOGETHERHOOD UPDATE



Togetherhood restarted its efforts in October, after hitting the “mute” button on March 15 in response to COVID-19.

As the year ends, we are “unmuting” by resuming support of the First Presbyterian Church Metuchen Food Pantry and additional pantries in Edison. In late December we’ll also resume support of New Jersey Blood Services with a Blood Drive at the Metuchen Y.

Regarding collecting food as the virus continues, Togetherhood is concentrating on outdoor activities. We held our first Outdoor Drop-off at the Metuchen Y on November 11 and offered our first

Contactless Pickups at donor’s homes on November 18.

At the suggestion of Metuchen Branch Board member Nelson Li, who is Market Manager at the Metuchen Farmers Market, we set up highly successful YMCA Togetherhood tables at the market on each of three Saturdays in November.

Overall, YMCA Togetherhood efforts helped collect over \$500 in cash, over 500 nonperishable food items, and a large amount of fresh produce to give to local pantries. Much of the produce was from farmers who were vendors at the market.

Togetherhood volunteers Rich Husar, Kathy Higgins, Leigh Garfield-Levy, Bill Levy, and Matthew Melchione were key contributors to food drive efforts along with Y-MEWSA Board member Seema Pande and Y staff members Chrissy Tolley, Erin Seimers, Gabriella St. Fleur, and Rose Cushing.

In December, through Togetherhood, the Y will continue its efforts to address food insecurity in our communities and we will hold a blood drive on Sunday, December 27.

-Contributed by Paul Edgcomb

MEET...THE LADY BEHIND THE FENCE

If you happen to drop by the Metuchen YMCA on a Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday morning to take Cathy Haugh's Step & Tone class, you might notice something strange. You might see a lady. Behind a fence. Taking the class. Here's her story!

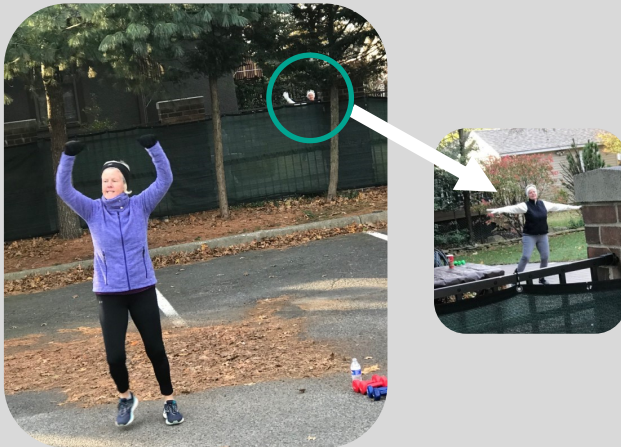
WHY I'M THE LADY BEHIND THE FENCE

I was very blessed to have good health until the year 2000. I became ill with what I thought was a stomach bug, but several trips to the E.R. and three months later, I found myself having surgery. During my recovery, I started walking, first a half block, then a block, and then up one side of the block and down the other. Exercise was never part of my routine until I lost my health. I will never take that for granted again. I joined the Metuchen YMCA and shortly began working out part time. After a while, exercise was no longer a chore, but something I looked forward to. It makes me feel better and I have a more productive day when I start my day with exercising. I am very thankful for all the wonderful teachers that I have come in contact with over the years at the Metuchen YMCA.

So why am I the lady behind the fence? During these trying times when the Y was closed, I become very nervous. I had a great routine going and now I thought, "what am I going to do?" I exercised at home, but it is just not the same as taking classes at the Y. At this time I am helping with my granddaughter and I found it difficult to squeeze Cathy's class into my busy schedule. I happened to live next door to the Metuchen Y, so I started exercising on my side of the fence so I didn't have to miss her class anymore. I now feel much better and have noticed an increase in my stamina.

Good health is a gift that I will never take for granted again. I do what I have to do to make it work for me. This is why I am the lady behind the fence.

Kathy DeNicola



Kathy DeNicola and Cathy Haugh

Have an article or item of interest for the newsletter?
Please submit to Veronica Vargas at
veronica.vargas@ymcaofmews.org.

STAFFING NEWS

MEET MIKE JOHNSON!

Please meet Mike Johnson, the new Wellness Coordinator at the Edison YMCA branch.

Mike Johnson has been a YMCA professional for over 30 years. The majority of this time has been within the Health & Wellness area and most recently focusing on Chronic Disease programs. Mike has been a Personal Trainer, Fitness Specialist and National Trainer for YUSA. The YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge and South Amboy is Mike's third YMCA Association as he was previously with the Westfield YMCA and The Gateway Family YMCA. Mike and his wife Diane are current residents of Edison and plan on staying there well past retirement! Mike believes in the mission of the YMCA and looks forward to providing his skills and services within his new home town!



MEET PETE BUCKLEY!



Pete Buckley may look familiar to some of Edison Y's child care families, since he has worked as a camp counselor and SACC counselor, but he's now their Program Coordinator! He has also been involved in the Marketing team at the

Edison Y, and is the author of the wonderful child care videos recently published (see a link for his most recent one on page 2 of this newsletter! His favorite part of working at the Y is helping the community and meeting all of our members. Great job, Pete!

THE ELSASSER'S WELCOME BABY BRIELLE!

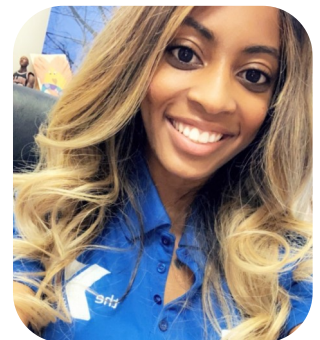
Congratulations to Bryan Elsasser, Membership Experience Director at the YPCC and his wife, Lauren, who welcomed their daughter, Brielle, on Friday, November 13th at 3:32

p.m. Brielle weighs 7 lbs. 12 oz. Mother and Baby are doing great and first-time Dad couldn't be prouder!



GABBY ST. FLEUR SELECTED AS EMERGING LEADER!

We are thrilled to announce that Gabriella St. Fleur, from the Metuchen YMCA, has been selected as one of the NAA's Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders! Gabby was selected along with 45 other emerging leaders from over 125 nominations! Gabby's accomplishments have earned her this very prestigious distinction among her peers. Gabby has been the School Age Child Care Director for three years and in that time she has transformed the program and elevated the bar for quality in programming. Gabby continues to grow her programs and work alongside our principals and school districts as she is an advocate for our youth.



Besides being responsible for the oversight of child care services currently at the Metuchen Y, Gabby also oversees the Teen Leader's Club, Junior Leader's Club, Youth and Government Program and Academic Enrichments. In addition to programming, Gabby is the lead for the association Development Advancement Team for School Age Learning. Gabby continues to grow professionally as she is back in school earning her Master's Degree in Child and Adolescence Psychology. Congratulations, Gabby!

HALLOWEEN AT THE Y!



AVENEL LC



EDGAR ELC



EDISON



METUCHEN



SOUTH AMBOY



**LEADER'S CLUB
VOLUNTEERS**

LEADER'S CLUB CLEANS UP!

Members of the Leaders Club help beautify the playground at the Metuchen Y for the SACC students by raking leaves.



LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL



All of the branches celebrated Lights On Afterschool on October 22nd. Lights On Afterschool is a nationwide event celebrating afterschool care programs like ours. Afterschool programs keep kids safe, help working families, inspire learning and provide opportunities to help young people develop into successful adults!

FIVE DAYS OF ACTION

COMING TOGETHER TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL ABUSE, ONE DAY AT A TIME.

Five Days of Action is a week designed to raise awareness and inspire adults to take action to protect children from sexual abuse.

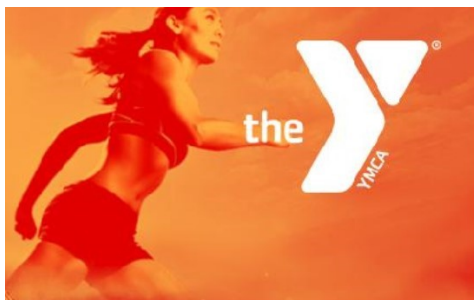
The YMCA of MEWSA encourages adults and organizations in the community to play a vital role in making our communities a safer place for children, especially during this ever-changing environment. As our communities continue to press pause and participate in social distancing, we know that protecting kids looks different this year. Not only is our community dealing with a pandemic that is separating kids in need from the safe adults in their lives, but there are spikes in domestic violence, cries for social justice for Black lives, and more concerns about the mental health of youth and adults.

Five Days of Action will help communities and parents/caregivers take it One Day at a Time and will offer tips, tools, activities, and resources that are relevant to the current environment.

When adults know how abuse happens, see the warning signs, and respond quickly to prevent abuse, they foster a culture of child abuse prevention. Together, we can bring awareness to the issue of child sexual abuse in our communities and have important conversations around how we can all work together to prevent it from happening.

For more information about preventing child sexual abuse visit www.fivedaysofaction.org.

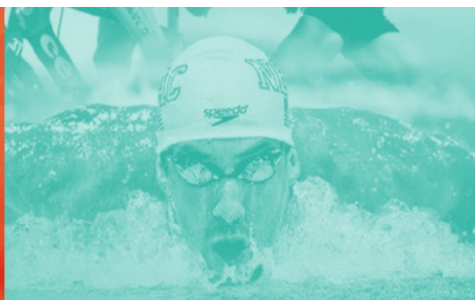




RUN

DECEMBER 2020

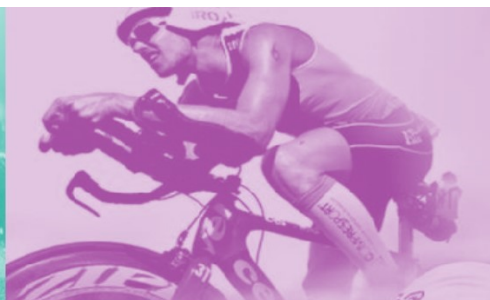
Sprint Tri: 5km (3.1 miles)
Iron Man: 42km (26 miles)
Fun Run



SWIM

JANUARY 2021

Sprint Tri: 750m
Iron Man: 3.8km
Fun Run



BIKE

FEBRUARY 2021

Sprint Tri: 20km (12.4 miles)
Iron Man: 80km (112 miles)
Fun Run

TRIATHLON SERIES

runsignup.com/Race/NJ/Piscataway/YMCATriathlonSeries

YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge and South Amboy
YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center

HUMBLED BY YOUR SERVICE HOLDS COAT DRIVE

Humbled By Your Service ran a coat drive for those less fortunate in our communities. Their goal was to collect 200 brand new coats for men, women and children. Not surprisingly, they collected 281 coats to be donated to a local church and distributed to individuals in need. Some of the coats were also dropped off at Ashiana, a Manavi safe home for women. Great job to Alka and her team!!



UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

December 16

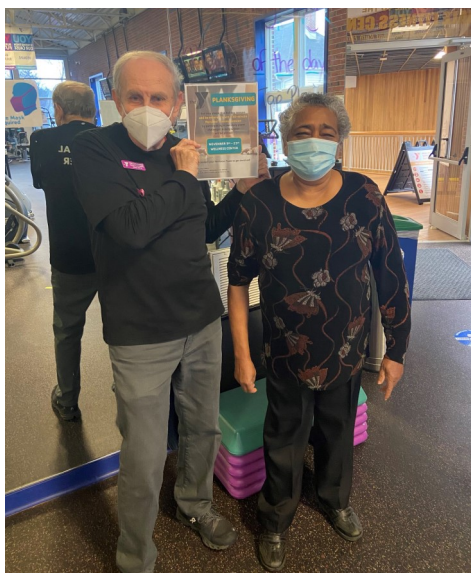


January 27



February 24

<bits & pieces>



Metuchen's Planksgiving Winner!



South Amboy raffled off two bikes at their Halloween Spooktacular. Over 75 people were at the event!



Annmarie Sabovick, South Amboy Healthy Living Director and daughter enjoy the branch's Halloween festivities.



Fall Programming begins at Edison!



Kids enjoy Metuchen's Robotics Program! Funded by a grant from Provident Bank.



Teen Leader's Club meets outside!



All the branches held their annual Thanksgiving food drive (shown above, Edison Y).



Ken Shirk students have fun cleaning up leaves!

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR AT THE Y!

JINGLE BELL JAM

METUCHEN YMCA
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11
4:00-6:00 P.M.

- * Lit-up Playground Wonderland!
- * Holiday-themed games and crafts
- * Photo Booth
- * Hot Cocoa Bar

RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH FUN!

EDISON YMCA

- * Stay tuned for details on our January family event!

WINTER WONDERLAND

SOUTH AMBOY YMCA
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6
11:00 A.M.-2:00 P.M.

- * Outdoor Zumba Class
- * Vendors/Food Trucks
- * Live Music
- * Photo Booth
- * Crafts/Games
- * Hot Cocoa Bar

Help bring joy this season

Buy your gifts at smile.amazon.com
or with AmazonSmile ON in the app
and Amazon donates
amazonsmile



You can make an impact this holiday season! Simply shop at smile.amazon.com/ch/22-1487616 and AmazonSmile will donate to our Y, at no cost to you.

METUCHEN RECEIVES DONATION OF PING-PONG TABLE!



Metuchen members Mr. and Mrs. Wong (pictured left) donated a brand new Ping-Pong table along with a \$1,000 donation. A ribbon cutting was done with the donors playing the very first game!

-Contributed by Julisa Joaquim

EDGAR KINDERGARTNERS CELEBRATE THANKSGIVING

Edgar Early Learning Center kindergartners celebrated the Thanksgiving season by decorating their class room with some fall crafts, and they even made their own pumpkin muffins! They also wrote what they were thankful for on the turkey's feathers!



GRANT AND DONOR RECOGNITION

NJ DEPT OF HUMAN SERVICES

\$113,000

COVID-19 Stabilization Grant for all child care sites

NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION

\$500

Employee volunteer award (Seema Pande)

Visit <https://www.ymcaofmewsa.org/about-us/annual-report> to view the Annual Report and see a full listing of our 2020 donors.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DECEMBER

- 3** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.
- 4** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—9:00 a.m.
- 7** EDISON BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 8** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.
- 10** DIG COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 p.m.
- 15** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—6:30 P.M.
- 16** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.

JANUARY

- 8** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—9:00 a.m.
- 20** METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—8:00 A.M.
- 20** FINANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.
- 22** IT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—8:00 A.M.
- 27** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
ZOOM CALL—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>

