

BOARD of DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy
Office of Rose Cushing, President & CEO

February 2018 ★ Board of Directors Update

IMPACT CELEBRATION/ASC KICK-OFF

The YMCA held its 2018 Impact Celebration and Annual Support Campaign Kick-Off Rally on Tuesday, January 9th at the JFK Social Center in Edison. Rose Cushing started off the evening by welcoming everyone and spoke about how the success of the campaign will be built upon the strong foundation of dedicated volunteers, a Board that leads by example, committed staff and engaged Y members.



This year's campaign is headed up by Chair Katie Barnes and Co-Chair Mike Lackland. Katie and Mike spoke about the critical programs and services that the Y can provide because of Annual Support Campaign donations. They noted that the Y is now embracing a culture of philanthropy with a year-round approach to annual fundraising; one that will ensure that the Y has the resources to deliver on our mission of strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Board members should build ongoing relationships with key stakeholders (such as public officials, major donors, business and nonprofit leaders) to ensure that they understand the Y's value and view it as a partner and nonprofit leader in the community.

IMPACT CELEBRATION/ASC KICK-OFF cont'd.

Among the guests were participants from the LiveSTRONG® at the Y, ESL and Reset...Regroup...Renew Programs who gave testimonials on the programs. ESL Program participant Hui Zhong, or better known by her American name of Vivien, spoke about her experience arriving in America knowing very little English. "When I arrived in America, the only other person I knew was my husband", said Vivien. "So I googled ESL classes and now, I have a new family at the Y". Another participant, Judy R., spoke of how the LiveSTRONG® Program gave her back her life, giving her the confidence and ability to navigate in a world that she no longer felt a part of. "I found strength in myself I didn't know existed", said Judy. "I felt intimidated walking into the gym, but Dean Seda (Edison YMCA Health & Wellness Director) took my hand, and told me everything was going to be fine...and it was." Participants from the Reset...



Reset...Regroup...Renew participants Peter Walsh (l.) and Katie Manchisi (r.) with Robin Guensch, Program Director at the Metuchen YMCA (center).

Regroup...Renew Program also spoke about their positive experiences with the program.



ESL participant Vivien Z. with Angelica Causing, Membership & Marketing Director, Metuchen YMCA

Chairman and Chief Volunteer Officer Bruce Peragallo noted that the powerful testimonials given spoke volumes about the impact that the Annual Support Campaign has on our community...not just for those already benefitting from the programs and services they are able to provide, but for those who still need them. He stressed the importance of not only keeping the momentum going, but expanding our reach into the community to cultivate increased donor giving. "While we raised \$224,000 in last year's campaign, we gave out \$635,000 in scholarships and financial assistance", said Bruce. "The more donations that we can bring in, the smaller the funding gap will be, and the more we will be able to offer crucial programs and services that address critical community needs."



Stanley Ksiazek, a long-time member of the South Amboy Y, spoke about how the Y helped him become part of the community.



**PREPARING FOR THE
KICK OFF!**

Behind the scenes, Katie McAdoo, Director of Association Advancement and Cathy Haugh, her Assistant, spend many long hours organizing and preparing for a seamless event enjoyed by everyone.

STAFFING NEWS



The Edison YMCA welcomes their new **Program Director, Nelson Lopez!** Nelson is a native of the Bronx where he lived until 2016 when he relocated to East Brunswick with his fiancé Sandy and daughter Penelope. He currently attends Middlesex County College where he is majoring in Physical and Recreational Education. Nelson worked and volunteered for 8 years at the Greater New York Councils, Boys Scouts of America. He started as a summer Camp Counselor for Alpine Scout Camp at the age of 16 and eventually served as the C.O.P.E. and Climbing Director, Aquatics Director and Program Director. In 2015, he was offered the position of District Executive to the Scoutreach Program where he oversaw 24 Boy Scout-based After School Programs in the Bronx and Manhattan. Nelson enjoys hiking, camping and playing sports. He is a New York Yankees and New York Giants fan. Welcome, Nelson!

Tamara Pankau, Wellness Coordinator, joins the South Amboy Y with an extensive background in health and wellness. Tammy grew up in Chicago, and moved to Parlin in June of 2017. She majored in Physical Education at Clearwater Christian College but switched her major to Exercise Science at the University of Wisconsin Parkside. She has been working in the fitness industry for 25 years, owning and managing a fitness center with her husband, served as a Personal Trainer Director, and as a Mind Body Coordinator for a large corporate fitness company. Tammy is also a Pilates instructor which she began teaching to recover from a spine injury. Her passion is to help people improve their quality of life. Tammy is married and has two children, 22 and 8 years old. Her favorite hobbies are biking, snorkeling in the Caribbean, zip lining and spending time with her family. We know that she will make a great addition to the South Amboy Y!



Mary L. Valera, Program Director for the South Amboy Y, has previously worked with the Boys & Girls Club of Perth Amboy as a Site Coordinator in charge of programming in the afterschool program and Camp Director for their summer camp. Mary was born and raised in Perth Amboy and still resides there with her 11-year-old son and boyfriend. She is also a chef who thoroughly enjoys cooking healthy and writing poetry. Mary has worked as a teacher artist in the past, providing poetry workshops for youth and adults. In her new position, Mary looks forward to working with so many amazing individuals and creating new programs for youth and adults. One of her many goals is to provide different tools for healthier living, which makes her a perfect fit at the Y!

Staffing News continued on next page..

STAFFING NEWS (cont'd.)

The South Amboy YMCA welcomes to its team **Rylan Poskitt, Aquatics Coordinator!** Rylan started his career at the YMCA of Montclair in 2014 as the Director's Assistant. He later transferred into a Swim Instructor and Lifeguard role, and then Coordinator for the Geyer Family Branch of the Y, where he taught children ages 6 months to 6 years old. He has also taught and lifeguarded at the Lakeland Hills Family YMCA in Mountain Lakes, NJ. Rylan is a six year veteran of the Lincoln Park Volunteer First Aid Squad and is currently attending Passaic County Community College, where he is working on his Associates Degree in Business Administration. We know you will make a great addition to our team, Rylan!



Tara Francis, also joins our staff at the South Amboy Y as **Camp & SACC Director**. Tara is a graduate of Rutgers University and also served as Program/Training Coordinator for Rutgers Recreation for 20 years, where she coordinated and supervised all aspects of the New Horizons Children's Program, including their Summer Day Camp Program. Tara also worked as Program Director for the Boys & Girls Club in Tennessee and the American Red Cross in Princeton where she taught FA/CPR/AED, basic life support for health care providers as well as instructor level courses. She is currently a resident of Yardville, New Jersey. Welcome, Tara!

DIG INITIATIVE UPDATE

Recently, Hannah Thomas, Angelica Causing and Dena Seda all attended the Emerging Multicultural Leadership Experience in Dallas, TX. Upon their return, they challenged our organization to embrace the DIG strategies and to hopefully join the Diversity, Inclusion and Global (DIG) Innovation Network, that consists of more than 75 YMCA's that have made an organizational commitment to integrate diversity, inclusion and global strategies across key operational and programmatic areas to strengthen their capacity to serve diverse and underserved populations, foster community cohesion, and address social equity and inclusion issues. Key accomplishments that have been accomplished by the DIG Initiative can be found [here](#).

The need and opportunity for the DIG is evident because nationwide, communities of all sizes are rapidly changing. By fully integrating DIG work into operations and programs, the DIG Innovation Network is leading the Movement's efforts in outreach to diverse and underserved communities and driving program innovation so that everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has an opportunity to reach their full potential.

Here at the YMCA of MEWSA we see becoming part of the DIG network as a great opportunity to serve our communities in an even more meaningful way. Our commitment to serving ALL will only help us create stronger communities for a better nation and a better world. For a better us.

Angelica, Dean and Hannah, with the support of Paul Casey, VP of Operations & Branch Development, will be organizing a DIG Committee to look at integrating DIG strategies into operational areas to increase our commitment to engagement and inclusion as broadly as possible.

AN INSPIRATIONAL STAFF MEMBER

A staff member from the Metuchen Y, Sarah Simon, in an incredibly charitable gesture, decided that for her birthday this year, instead of gifts, she is asking family and friends to donate to the YMCA instead. She created a Facebook fundraiser with a goal of \$260 to send one child in need to summer camp. Her post (below) is inspirational and portrays what it means to be a true philanthropist! If you wish to donate to Sara's fundraiser, [CLICK HERE](#).

Sara's Birthday Fundraiser for YMCA of Metuchen NJ

Fundraiser for YMCA of Metuchen NJ by Sara Ortiz Simon



Sara Ortiz Simon created a fundraiser for YMCA of Metuchen NJ. January 27 at 10:51am · Facebook Fundraisers · 🌐



For my birthday this year, I'm asking for donations to YMCA of Metuchen NJ. I've chosen this nonprofit because their mission means a lot to me. The \$260 will pay for one week of Summer Camp for a child in need. The Camp Munsee is an awesome experience for a child! We aren't just a fitness center, we are a CAUSE!

They give back to the community in so many ways. My family has been a member of the Metuchen YMCA for 15 years and are witness to their community reach and growth. Even if you can't contribute, come visit us, because maybe we can inspire you to become a member. The YMCA is NOW also a NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP, so when you join our Y, you not only give back, YOU GET TO USE ANY YMCA IN THE COUNTRY. I hope you'll consider contributing as a way to celebrate with me. Every little bit will help me reach my goal.

\$115 raised of \$260

CYCLE FOR M.S.

The Metuchen YMCA is hosting a cycling event to benefit the National MS Society on March 25, 2018. The event will be a one-hour cycling class running from 2-3pm.

There is a requested donation of \$25 for the National MS Society to participate in the event.

Please contact Hannah Thomas at hannah.thomas@ymcaofmews.org for more details or to register.



BLOOD DRIVES A SUCCESS!



Coordinated with New Jersey Blood Services, Metuchen and South Amboy both recently held blood drives on December 27th and 28th, respectively. Both were very successful! Metuchen had 41 donors and collected 36 pints of blood, including one Alyx donor. South Amboy had 14 donors and collected 14 pints of blood. Both facilities raffled off a prize to one lucky donor.



What a trooper! Mary Pahlow (right) had to withstand two punctures when they were unable to find a vein in her left arm.



Another Blood Drive will be held at the Metuchen Y on February 25th, from 9am-3pm.

Please contact Paul Edgcomb for more information at pedgcomb@icloud.com.

UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

MARCH 28



APRIL 25



MAY 2-ANNUAL DINNER



South Amboy Directors proudly wear their Annual Support Campaign t-shirts!

A CRISIS AVERTED

What could have been disastrous turned about to be an incredible demonstration of teamwork and determination at the Metuchen Y when, on January 1, 2018, a water pipe burst in the vestibule in the middle of the afternoon, quickly flooding the first floor. Staff sprang into action evacuating the building and making sure everyone was safe. The Police and Fire Departments responded quickly, abating the problem, but what was left was in its wake was a facility that was incapacitated. However, never underestimate the power of YMCA staff! Thanks to the quick actions of all Metuchen Y staff, but especially **Marie Patterson** and **Tom Sorsch**, the facility was up and running by the next day! Rose Cushing received the letter below from a parent of one of the SACC children, giving praise to all involved, and who acted swiftly and professionally during this crisis.

January 18, 2018

VIA EMAIL

YMCA of Metuchen Edison
High Street
Metuchen, New Jersey 08840
Attention: Rose Cushing, CEO Rose.Cushing@ymcaofmewsa.org

SUBJECT: SACC PROGRAM

Dear Ms. Cushing:

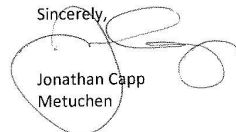
Just a short note of thanks and appreciation from one of the many families that relies on the SACC program at the Metuchen Edison YMCA.

We have been very pleased with the program since enrolling our daughter for the 2017/18 school year. Particularly impressive has been the level of organization, attention to detail and coordination. Program staff truly does not miss a beat.

The manner in which the program handled the pipe break at the facility during the frigid temperatures early this year was especially notable. Without much of a hiccup and with minimal (if any) inconvenience, the program was quickly relocated and alternate arrangements were clearly communicated to parents. Pulling that all together with little time to spare was an impressive feat, and I commend all involved for making it happen.

Thank you for continuing to provide this valuable program to the community, and special thanks to all of those staff members whom we entrust with our most valuable possession every day of the week. As I am sure you are aware, they do great work.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Capp
Metuchen

cc:

Paul Casey, Vice President
Paul.Casey@ymcaofmewsa.org
Marie Patterson, Director
Marie.Patterson@ymcaofmewsa.org
Gabriella St Fleur, Program Coordinator
Gabriella.StFleur@ymcaofmewsa.org

OUR GLOBAL REACH

Marie Patterson has been working with Metuchen resident Robin Bolton, a semi-retired financial advisor who has been doing volunteer work with The Good Samaritan Foundation of Haiti. Robin's initial goal was to teach Haitian children how to swim. After discovering that most of the children didn't have bathing suits, he organized a drive in the hopes of collecting 500 bathing suits prior to his trip to Haiti. Astoundingly, and through great local support, Robin collected over 2,000 bathing suits! Last year, Katie McAdoo organized the donation of our leftover golf vests with Robin so that they could be sent to Haiti to be used by fishermen as winter vests and refashioned into beekeeper suits for the beekeeping program



Robin Bolton, Nestor Destil and Danica Lindsey have a swimming lesson.

introduced by the Good Samaritan Foundation to improve crop production there.

Robin's trip to Ile a Vache in October 2016 was less successful than planned as Hurricane Matthew arrived three days after he did and decimated not only the island, but the swim teaching program too. So this year, Robin's project is to implement a successful program to teach the life-saving skill of swimming to children and adults on Ile a Vache, including fishermen, to prevent drownings that have always been prevalent there. To accomplish this, he arranged for Haitian native Nestor Destil to come to the U.S. for 11 days and during that time, Nestor observed swim lessons, took swim lessons to improve his own water efficiency, observed professional coaches and

reviewed techniques and strategies with Aquatics Director Danica Lindsey. He also attended the MEY competitive swim team practice. Nestor has now taken his newfound skills back with him to Haiti to become a swim instructor at the Good Samaritan School in La Hatte, Ile a Vache.

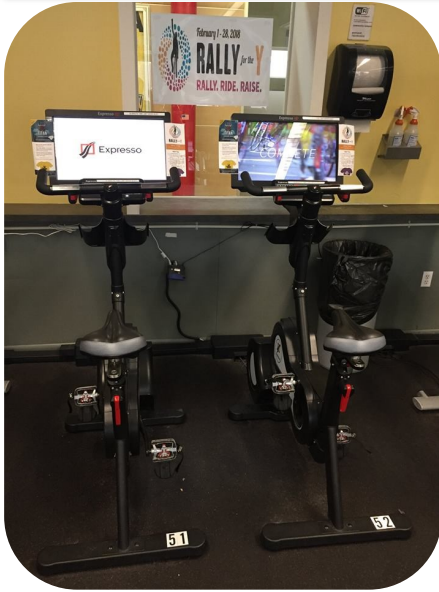
Nestor is a father of 6 children, ranging in ages from 10 to 25, and was a teacher for 25 years. He was a Village Safety Officer following Hurricane Matthew and everyone knows that there will be a wonderful swimming program under his leadership in Haiti. *-Contributed by Marie Patterson & Robin Bolton*

BOARD MEMBER VISITS HAITI!

Board Member Dr. Joseph Gaffney will be visiting Haiti in the near future to do his own philanthropic work! This will be Joe's fourth trip to Haiti where he and a small team will be doing pediatric screening at Saint Damien Pediatric Hospital for children and babies in anticipation of cardiac surgery or interventional cardiac catheterizations as needed. The trip was organized by the Gift of Life International, Haiti Cardiac Alliance and St. Damien Hospital, where some of the surgeries will be performed by visiting surgical teams.

While there, Joe plans to visit the YMCA d'Haiti to meet and explore working together either with their local cardiac program in Port au Prince and/or between our respective YMCA's. Gwénaël Apollon Secrétaire Général YMCA d'Haïti, has graciously extended his hospitality in meeting with Joe to see how we can align our programs and services, as well as visiting the St. Damien Hospital Pediatric Cardiac Program with him. We look forward to hearing Joe's report at the next Board meeting!

RALLY FOR THE Y



FEBRUARY 1-28, 2018

Rally! Ride! Raise! Calling all Expresso Bike riders. Join the Rally for the Y and sweat to support your local community.

Riders will earn 10 cents/mile from Expresso for your Y! Saddle up and invite your friends and family to pledge. Raise \$100 and be recognized with a Rally Badge next to your name on the leaderboards. All proceeds go directly to our Y.



[**REGISTER HERE!**](#)

NEW COLLABORATION FOR EDISON Y

The Edison YMCA has initiated a new collaboration in their community with the Alliance Center for Independence, which supports and promotes independent living and inclusion for people with disabilities. ACI recognizes disability as a natural and beautiful part of human diversity and supports the philosophy of independent living for all individuals with disabilities. They provide many services including independent living skills, job skills training, health and wellness, emergency planning, information and referral services, peer support, transition services, social recreation and much more. They are located in Edison, but serve the counties of Middlesex, Union and Somerset.



Kristine Rosko, Membership and Marketing Director, Cindy O'Neill, Director of Operations, C.J. Dodge, ACI, Tom McCabe, Maintenance Director, Wayne Blum, SACC Child Care Director and Nelson Lopez, Program Director

C.J. Dodge, Information and Research Specialist and Social Recreation Coordinator for ACI, attended the Edison Y's staff meeting on January 24th to speak about the organization and to discuss the many ways that the Y and the Alliance can work together. Cindy O'Neill notes that she is looking forward to this new approach that will help serve the needs of the community.

-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill

GIRL SCOUT "ALL ABOUT ME" PROJECT AT EDISON



Girl Scouts Nayonika Karia and Drishti Kanakia from Troop 81097 held workshops with the children from the Edison YMCA After School Programs as part of their "All About Me" Girl Scout Silver Award project. As part of the project, they conduct several workshops with children from Kindergarten to 8th Grade to help raise self-esteem and self-awareness. The workshops included topics on dental hygiene, healthy eating, superheroes, the human body, a career fair and Valentine's Day projects, among others.

For the dental hygiene workshop, the girls read a book entitled, "Dr. Desoto Goes to Africa" written by William Steig. The students were then given a laminated paper tooth with decay and shown how to clean the teeth with a toothbrush. They then made homemade toothpaste from baking soda, salt and water,

after which they had a chance to floss the teeth of a doll made from a plastic water gallon bottle. The students were most excited when the girl scouts performed a project involving the making of elephant's toothpaste.



The children enjoyed the workshops very much and are looking forward to return visits from the girl scouts in the near future.

-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill



LEADER'S CLUB GRANT RECEIVED!

The YMCA of MEWSA received notification that they are the recipient of a \$10,000 grant from Investor's Bank for the Leader's Club!

This grant will help the program further the Y's mission of youth development and social responsibility by building youth as leaders and fostering a culture of service in the community. The program helps teens learn valuable skills that will help them in the classroom, community and career. They will develop improved leadership skills and self-esteem, changes in behavior and attitudes towards volunteerism and service to others, broadened life experience in preparation for post-high school endeavors, improved commitment to education and ways to access resources to ensure academic success and building trusting relationships with others.

The Leader's Club is available at all three branches of the YMCA.



"I GIVE BECAUSE"...STAFF TESTIMONIALS



"I give because I see how financial assistance helps our community"—Matt



"I give to help bring our communities together for a healthier mind, body and spirit." -Bradford

"I give because I believe that as soon as a person walks through the doors of the Y, they should be given the same opportunities, no matter what." -Gabby

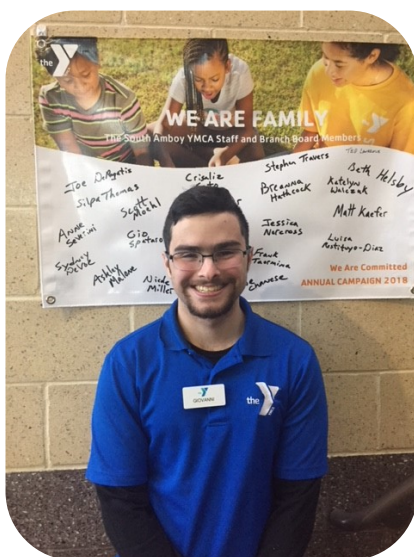


"I give as a way to give back to the community." -Wayne



"I give because I believe in helping the community from youth to senior age to build a positive society." -Walter

"I give because I believe in the Y mission." -Anna



"I give because one act of kindness goes a long way." -Gio



"I give because all children deserve to go to school." -Durriya

MEET NEW BOARD MEMBER SHARON LIST!



The Board of Directors welcomes its newest member, Sharon List!

Sharon is a Certified Public Accountant who currently works for Teligent, Inc., a pharmaceutical company, as an Assistant Controller. She has an extensive background in finance and accounting and has public auditing background with a Big 4 Firm. She holds her bachelor's degree in Accounting from Rutgers School of Business.

Sharon and her husband moved to Metuchen in 2005 and quickly fell in love with the town. They have two sons, ages 3 and 5, who are full time students at Edgar Early Learning Center. They are also YMCA members and enjoy all the programs that the Y offers.

Sharon has a desire to become more connected within the community and to offer her assistance and expertise to the YMCA Board. She has recently taken a part-time role in order to allow herself more time for her family, to pursue her interests outside of accounting, and to contribute to the community. We are very excited to have Sharon join our Board!

MEWSA UPGRADES THEIR WI-FI!

In this rapidly changing world, the Y understands the importance of staying competitive with other fitness centers in our community, and that means having accessible and fast internet connectivity. Wi-Fi is no longer a luxury, it's a necessity in today's market. To meet this need the Y is in the process of upgrading the Wi-Fi in all branches to an Enterprise Class of Wi-Fi. This upgrade will address an increasing complaint by members of a slow or non-existent internet connection and help the ever-increasing amount of iPhones, iPads, Tablets, Chromebooks and Laptops brought into the branches by members and children in our After School Programs. Installing Enterprise Wi-Fi will enable us to stay on the cutting edge of technology and provide a top rate experience that will keep them coming back to the Y!



ANTI-BULLYING SESSION AT EDISON

The Mobile Family Success Center, operated by the Catholic Charities, gave a presentation to the children in Edison's After School Programs entitled, "Stand Up to Bullying". Mobile Family Success is a community-based, family-centered program, utilizing neighborhood gathering places such as the Edison YMCA where the community can go to for family support, information and services.



They visit the Edison Y every month to do activities for their first, second and third graders. For this presentation, they tested the children's knowledge about the topic of bullying and gave them more information to help them determine if someone is a bully. They also had volunteers demonstrate a few scenarios on how to react to bullying. The children were very receptive to the demonstration!

UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS



FEBRUARY

- 2 **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—9:00 a.m.
- 7 **BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—5:30 -p.m.
- 8 **CHILD CARE COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—6:00 p.m.
- 13 **FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—12:00 p.m.
- 21 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—6:30 p.m.
- 25 **BLOOD DRIVE**
Metuchen YMCA
9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

MARCH

- 2 **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—9:00 a.m.
- 7 **BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—5:30 p.m.
- 21 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**
AO Conference Room—6:30 p.m.
- 25 **CYCLE FOR M.S.**
Metuchen YMCA—2:00-3:00 p.m.
- 28 **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
AO Conference Room
5:30 p.m.—Fellowship
6:00 p.m.—Meeting

Association

Edison

Metuchen

South Amboy

