# BOARDOF the DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

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

June 2022

## **PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE**



:

#### Dear Board Members:

As summer unofficially begins, I am pleased to announce that our summer camps are ready to open on June 20th and Oakcrest Community Pool has already been opened and I am happy to report was full of families on Memorial Day. Nothing makes me happier than hearing the sounds of children having fun. I hope you all have an opportunity this summer to stop by and visit one of our summer camps or Oakcrest Community Pool. I can promise that it will bring a smile to your face.

Some exciting things on the horizon include our collaboration with the Raritan YMCA to expand our footprint in Middlesex County. Being a vision of mine since I become CEO, I am so excited that you get to join me on this journey. I hope to see everyone at our collaborative meeting on June 9th at the Woodbridge Community Center.

Our Annual Support Campaign is moving along. I am happy to say that we are at \$300,000 and well on our way to our goal of \$370,000, thanks to our many campaigners and our Director of Financial Development, Liz Bennett. You can see Liz's update on page 13.

Our Annual Dinner was a huge success, as we welcomed in new Board leadership, John Dowd and honored Bruce Peragallo, Piscataway Mayor Brian C. Wahler and Withum, as well as the four Malinowski Rising Star award winners. We also welcomed three new Board members. Please see page 2 for a recap of the night!

We are gearing up for more special events this year, including the 5K Run/Walk, the Richard Hale Memorial Golf Classic and the Tot Trot & Fall Festival. Please save the dates (listed on page 5).

With one more Board meeting before summer break, I will take this opportunity to wish all of you a fun and relaxing summer!

These Cushing

#### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

1	President & CEO Update		
2	Annual Dinner		
3	CHILD CARE BRANCH HOLDS FUNDRAISER		
3	GRACE ELC HOSTS FUNDRAISER		
3	LEADER'S CLUB WELCOMES HEROES & COOL KIDS		
3 4	HARBORVIEW BUTTERFLY PROJECT		
4	Staffing/Volunteer News		
5 6	UPCOMING EVENTS		
6	Togetherhood Update		
7	Child Care Initiatives in april		
8	Ryan Patterson Memorial Scholarship		
8	Edison Child Care Holds Art Show		
8	South Amboy Resumes Safety Around Water		
9	Edison Y Holds Holi Event		
9	PISCATAWAY HOLDS SENIOR FITNESS DAY		
9	Hailey's Beer Tasting Fundraiser		
10	Edison Holds Easter Egg Hunt		
10	Rose Cushing Speaks on Podcast		
10	Youth & Government Wraps Up		
11	Edison Visited by Author		
11	SAY BEGINS LIVESTRONG CLASS		
11	TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK		
11	CHILD CARE HOSTS FUNDRAISER		
12	Bits 'N Pieces		
13	Annual Support Campaign Update		
13	Keller Williams Staff Volunteer		
14	Upcoming Meetings		

#### YMCA OF MEWSA HOLDS ANNUAL DINNER

On May 25, the YMCA of MEWSA held it's Annual Dinner at the Pines Manor in Edison. More than 240 people were in attendance to celebrate for many reasons, beginning with commemorating the 100 year anniversary of the YMCA of MEWSA. Honorees included Bruce Peragallo, who received the Charles S. Edgar Award, Mayor Brian C. Wahler, who received the Peter J. Barnes, Jr. Community Champion Award and Withum, who received the Community Partner Award. Also of note was the appointment of John Dowd as Chairman of the Board of Directors, and the appointment of four new Board members: Amie Thornton, Falguni N. Patel, Rachael Masturzo and Karen Alexander. The <u>Malinowski Rising Star</u> winners were also honored, including Andrea Febres, Metuchen Y; Jennifer Cruz, Child Care Services; Alyssa Waldron, Edison Y and Brandon Wizda, Piscataway Y. The Malinowski Rising Star Award is presented to outstanding youth employees of the YMCA of MEWSA. The event raised more than \$40,000 with over \$25,000 in sponsorship support which will ensure that everyone has access to life-changing programs at the Y. Please visit our <u>website</u> to see our sponsors.



## CHILD CARE BRANCH HOLDS BEER TASTING FUNDRAISER

John Holl, Y Child Care parent hosted an evening of fun and interesting conversation exploring the history of beer, local breweries, styles and more. He took participants on a tasty tour of six breweries to sample several different styles of beer, as well as suggested food pairings. This event was held as a fundraiser towards the Annual Support Campaign.



-Contributed by Cindy Shields

#### **GRACE ELC HOSTS FUNDRAISER**



Grace Early Learning Center hosted a "Dinner To Go" fundraising event to raise money for the Annual Support Campaign, catered by La Parrilla D'Eri. They sold 53 dinners, consisting of rice and beans, chicken, salad, pasta and sweet plantains. The restaurant, owned by a current YMCA family, graciously donated all the meals, stating that they truly believed in our mission and wanted to help out in this tasty way. Many families ended the night with their hearts happy and their bellies full!

-Contributed by Samantha Coté

#### LEADER'S CLUB WELCOMES HEROES & COOL KIDS PROGRAM



The Teen Leaders Club has once again collaborated with the <u>Heroes and Cools Kids</u> program sponsored by the Metuchen Alliance. The organization is unique in that it consists of former professional athletes and potential teen leaders who mentor middle school students.

The teens participated in the "Sidekick Program", which trains 8th grade student leaders to mentor 4th graders. The focus is on important life skills that lead to good choices including goal setting, anti-bullying, cyber-safety, and anti-drugs and alcohol.



Program Leader Michael Spence talks to the teens about self-esteem, confidence building, and personal growth. Not shown, Program Leader Harrison Moran Fernandez.

-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur

#### HARBORVIEW CHILDREN BUTTERFLY PROJECT



Harborview children and their teacher, Ms. Amanda, delighted in their latest Butterfly project. The children fed the caterpillars for about a week before they climbed to the top of the jar and created a chrysalid. The chrysalids were moved to a special habitat and emerged in about a week. The teacher provided orange slices for them to eat and the children enjoyed them in their habitats for a couple of days. They then went outside and each child had an opportunity to let a butterfly walk on their hand before they released them out of the habitat. The children were very excited and enjoyed the unique experience!

-Contributed by Rita MacNeill

## **STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER NEWS**

#### WELCOME BACK ARA MCKAY!

Ara's journey with the Metuchen YMCA started in 2015 as a member of the Wellness staff, and transitioning to Personal Trainer shortly after. In 2017, she accepted the role of Wellness Coordinator, but left as a result of the



COVID pandemic to take care of her family of four children, ranging in age from 14 to five months old. She lives with her husband and children in Metuchen, and is currently attending Kean University where she is working towards her bachelor's degree in Business Management. She has found great success at Kean University and was inducted to the Sigma Beta Delta Honors Society for Management in April of this year. In May, Ara accepted the offer of Membership & Marketing Director at the Metuchen YMCA. We are thrilled to welcome her back into the fold!

#### SEEMA PANDE APPOINTED TO HARVARD REVIEW ADVISORY COUNCIL

Congratulations to Board member Seema Pande, who has been appointed to the Harvard Review Advisory Council, an opt-in research community of business professionals! As an advisor, Seema will provide insight to shape the content



developed and enrich their understanding based on her perspective on ideas from HBR and the wider world of management and leadership.

#### **MISSED AN ISSUE?**

All Board newsletters can be found on the YMCA website at

<u>http://www.ymcaofmewsa.org/</u> <u>about-us/assocation-newsletter</u>

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

The YMCA of MEWSA Board of Directors welcomes three new members!

Falguni N. Patel is an accomplished attorney representing clients in the health care industry. She currently practices as an Associate Attorney at Rodio & Brown, Ltd., representing health care clients in a variety of employment and family-based immigration matters. She is a former Board



Falguni Patel

Member and Vice President of the Edison Board of Education and currently serves as a Committee member in the Middlesex County Democratic organization. She received her bachelor of arts in Political Science and Psychology from Rutgers University, and her Juris Doctor from Western New England University. She currently resides in Edison.

Karen Alexander has more than thirty years of experience planning and implementing accessible public transit, human service transportation and aging in place programs. She is a certified assisted living



Karen Alexander

administrator in New Jersey, and serves as the Vice Chair of New Jersey's State

Rehabilitation Council. Karen holds a bachelor's degree in Communications from UCLA, a master's degree in Public Administration from Columbia University, and a postgraduate Certificate in Aging from Hunter College. Her local civic engagement includes serving on the Metuchen Library Board, Board of Directors of Neve Shalom Synagogue and the Metuchen YMCA Branch Board for over a decade. She currently resides in Metuchen with her husband.

Rachael Masturzo has a long history of working in a variety of nonprofit sectors and brings with her over 18 years of development and alumni relations experience. She is currently a Vice President at Graham-Pelton, a fundraising consulting



Rachael Masturzo

firm, empowering nonprofits with the knowledge, expertise, and resources necessary to elevate their philanthropy. Rachael is a graduate of Felician University, where she received her B.A. in physiology and a minor in business. She currently resides in Metuchen with her husband Matthew and their two children Nicholas and Sophia.

YMCA Board members are responsible for establishing policy and strategic direction for the Y, as well as creating opportunities and establishing relationships that advance the YMCA's mission and cause.

# **UPCOMING EVENTS**



## TOGETHORHOOD UPDATE

-By Richard Husar and Katherine Liss

#### Food Drives

Through April 2022, 1,890 items were collected and brought to the food pantry. This includes 225 food items collected from street drives as well as 145 cans of soup donated through the "SOUP-er Bowl" program spearheaded by Brenda Werneiwskei, and run at the time of The Super Bowl.

1,665 food items were dropped off in the lobby, a vast improvement over the 901 items collected last year. However, there have been only 225 items collected from street drives, compared to 1,130 items last year. Overall, there is a deficit of 141 food items less than last year.

It is significant to note that last year we had 1,000 drop-offs in the lobby during April and May. This year April generated 230 items, and May is even slower. We have sent message blasts to remind members that we are still in the food collection business – hopefully that will help.

It may be that higher food costs are taking a toll, but we remain optimistic in our fraternal mission of helping those that are food insecure.

#### Blood Drives

New Jersey Blood Services (NJBS) tells us that every pint of blood can save up to three lives. The first two drives at the Metuchen YMCA in 2022 brought in 138 potential donors, which resulted in 113 units of blood being collected. Those numbers tell us that many, many people have been helped by the Y/Togetherhood drives.

Of course, donors are the heroes behind these efforts. On average, over 60% of those who present to give blood are repeat donors at the Y, many who show up at every drive. There are also a core of a dozen individuals who volunteer consistently. Over the last few years, a good synergy has developed between the donors and the Togetherhood volunteers. We believe that it's that feeling of knowing you are helping others that keeps both donors and volunteers coming back.

Summer blood drives will be held on Sunday, June 26 and Sunday, August 28. Both will have shortened hours (8:00 AM to 12:30 PM) because of the chance that excessive heat might cause a drive to shut down, as it did last year. We are hopeful that these next two drives will help overcome the deficits that the summer months and the ongoing pandemic have historically had on the supply of blood.



## **CHILD CARE INITIATIVES IN APRIL**

April is a busy month for the many child care initiatives held to celebrate, educate and protect our children.

#### WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

Week of the Young Child, a <u>National/New Jersey Association for the</u> <u>Education of Young Children (NAEYC)</u> event, is held every year in April to celebrate early learning, young children, their teachers, families and communities. The children celebrated Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday and Family Friday.

#### **FIVE DAYS OF ACTION**

Five Days of Action, a week-long social media awareness campaign to raise awareness and inspire adults to take action to protect children from sexual abuse, is a joint initiative between Y-USA and the <u>Darkness to Light</u> <u>Foundation</u>. During the Five Days of Action, the Y engaged in critical steps of prevention—Know, See, Respond—that will help adults better protect children. For more information about preventing child sexual abuse, visit <u>www.fivedaysofaction.org</u>.

#### **PREVENT CHILD ABUSE MONTH**

Sponsored by <u>Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey</u>, the "Pinwheels for Prevention" campaign is held every April in observance of Child Abuse Prevention Month. The pinwheel logo was chosen as a national symbol of prevention because it is fun and joyful and evokes childlike notions, exemplifying the "great childhoods" we desire for all children. The children made a pinwheel gardens to remind everyone that keeping children safe is important.

#### **HEALTHY KIDS DAY**

Sponsored by Y–USA, Healthy Kids Day celebrates children's mental and physical health, while teaching healthy habits for children and families, encouraging active play, and inspiring a lifetime love of physical activity. The children had fun enjoying activities, playing games and creating art, while enjoying visits from vendors such as Kinder Pediatrics and Hackensack Meridian Health.



## **RYAN PATTERSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP**

The YMCA of MEWSA is now accepting applications for the Ryan Patterson Memorial Scholarship. Teen youth members of the communities that we serve who are pursuing a higher education in the fall of 2022 are eligible.

The recipient must strive for excellence in academics, sports or the arts. In addition, they must demonstrate that they have made an impact in their community through volunteer work, a service project or other means, live by the golden rule, have influenced others in a positive way and advocated for others who are less fortunate.

Applications are due June 30, 2022.



## EDISON CHILD CARE PROGRAM HOLDS ART SHOW FUNDRAISER

The Edison Y's child care program held an art show to raise funds for the Annual Support Campaign. Teachers worked with the students for weeks to prepare and parents had the chance to support the local artists their children! The kids loved seeing their work on display and the parents enjoyed getting a peek into how the Y uses the Creative Curriculum to promote art.



-Contributed by Caroline Rankin

#### SOUTH AMBOY RESUMES SAFETY AROUND WATER PROGRAM



The South Amboy YMCA, in collaboration with South Amboy Township and the Board of Education, are once again offering Safety Around Water swim lessons for all second grade students in the district. Given that the Township is a waterfront community, Council President Mickey Gross felt that it was imperative that children learned how to swim and the collaboration with the South Amboy YMCA made that happen. The program ran in 2019, but was put on hold due to COVID

-19. The program will

serve over 80 students, who were very excited about the program.

Pictured left are: SAY lifeguard Jim Ronan, Dr. Martin Gurczeski, Acting Superintendent of South Amboy Public Schools, Council President Mickey Gross, Rose Cushing, President & CEO, YMCA of MEWSA, South Amboy Mayor Fred Henry, SAY Board Member Zusette Dato, SAY Branch Board Chair Anthony Conrad, SAY Board Member Patrick Walsh, SAY Aquatic Coordinator Dave Diez.



-Contributed by Gerry Gessie

#### **EDISON Y HOLDS HOLI EVENT**

On April 9th, the Edison Y held their first Holi event since 2019! The rainy weather couldn't keep the members away from attending the event. DJ Dean Seda provided the music while Aanchal, Sakshi and Srividya led Zumba and Bollywood routines for the guests. Sakshi's Bollywood Choreography class also performed and premiered what they had been working on for the past 8 weeks! Everyone had an amazing time playing with the colors of spring and are looking forward to next year.

#### -Contributed by Caroline Rankin



#### **PISCATAWAY Y HOLDS SENIOR FITNESS DAY**

On May 25, the YPCC and the Piscataway Senior Center teamed up and hosted Senior Fitness Day. Seniors walked on the indoor track, blood pressure checks were taken, a Fit for Life Fitness Class was held, and

insurance eligibility was checked for insurance groups. There was also a Q&A session on YMCA membership programs. All participants were encouraged to wear red, white and blue!

-Contributed by Meghan Doriety



#### HAILEY'S BEER TASTING EVENT



On Wednesday, May 4th, the Metuchen YMCA held a beer tasting fundraiser at Hailey's Parlor in Metuchen. Attendees enjoyed sampling different beers in the 100th Anniversary commemorative beer glass that they received. \$1,000 was raised which will go towards the Annual

Support Campaign. A special thanks to Hailey's owner Moshe Atzbi (fondly known to everyone as Moe) for his continuing support , Hailey's staff member Nicole Perez, and Board

Member Joseph Cascio for organizing the event. A good time was had by all while raising money for a good cause!

-Contributed by Liz Bennett



## EDISON Y HOLDS EASTER EGG HUNT AT OAKCREST

April 16<sup>th</sup> marked the beginning of a new tradition at Oakcrest! The Edison Y held their first ever Spring Egg Hunt and had over 1,000 guests throughout the day! In addition to the Egg Hunt, participants met the Easter Bunny between getting their faces painted and playing with different games that were set up. They are already counting down to next year's event!



-Contributed by Caroline Rankin

#### **ROSE CUSHING SPEAKS ON WITHUM'S PODCAST**



Rose Cushing, President & CEO, appeared on Withum's podcast, <u>"Civic</u> <u>Warriors"</u>, to talk about YMCA of MEWSA's programs and services and how the Y has adapted and continued to serve families in need during the pandemic and some of the challenges that we continue to face.

Withum's <u>podcast</u> was created to share relatable stories that motivate and build consensus in the nonprofit community.



Civic Warriors Episode 36: Celebrating

#### **YOUTH & GOVERNMENT WRAPS UP**



The 2022 Youth and Government Program is wrapping up yet another successful year! The teens attended the Conference from April 8–10th virtually and presented their bills, including Driver Safety, Climate Change, Education and Sugar Taxing. They look forward to attending the program again next year! During the summer, the teens are planning a field trip to the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia.

This program was made possible through a grant from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. This is their second year of funding this program.



UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

-Contributed by Gabriella St. Fleur

B

June 22

Summer Break

eak

CB

September 28

#### EDISON VISITED BY AUTHOR

Author Lisa Jacovsky visited the Edison Y Pre-K classroom to read a book from her Let's Talk series. The series focuses on the importance of autism awareness and acceptance. The students loved the book and learned the importance of treating everyone with kindness!

-Contributed by Caroline Rankin



## SOUTH AMBOY BEGINS LiveSTRONG CLASS



Certified instructor Tom Zimmerman leads a LiveSTRONG® class, a program that helps cancer survivors transition from cancer treatment to feeling physically and emotionally strong enough to return to their "new" normal. The program is conducted outside of medical facilities to emphasize that LiveSTRONG at the YMCA is about health, not disease.

-Contributed by Hannah Thomas



#### THANK YOU TO OUR TEACHERS

Families show gratitude on Teacher's Appreciation Week to all of the child care teachers for all of their hard work and for taking such great care for their children each and every day!

## **CHILD CARE HOSTS FUNDRAISER**

Good Vibes Café, located on Lafayette Ave. in Fords, hosted a fundraiser to support the 2022 Annual Support Campaign on Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>. 20% of all proceeds were donated back to the YMCA to support child care scholarships.

We would like to thank Good Vibes Nutrition Co. for their generosity!

-Contributed by Cindy Shields





## **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.
South Amboy Elks Lodge	\$3,000	To support our Safety Around Water program.
Manasquan Bank	\$5,000	General Operating support.

# <bits & pieces>



Wellness Wednesdays Welcomes HOC Drip Infusion talking about IV Therapy and its benefits at Metuchen.



Tender Smiles 4 Kids Mobile Dentistry visits Harborview Early Learning Center to examine, clean and x-ray the preschooler's teeth.



Metuchen's Pop Up Baby Pantry is collecting much needed diapers, baby formula and wipes for the Jersey Central Diaper Bank.



Grace Early Learning Center gives out "tacos" for Tasty Tuesday during the Week of the Young Child, giving families an easy meal idea to do together!



Oakcrest Community Pool is open for business!



Students from Our Savior's Learning Center created cards for their moms for Mother's Day.



Metuchen YMCA celebrates National Senior Day on May 25 to share a day of good health, health screenings, fitness classes and vendors.



Teen Leader's Club raises \$134 for the Annual Support Campaign by holding a basketball tournament!



Centenary Early Learning Center has fun celebrating Alumni Day "Under the Big Top".

## **ANNUAL SUPPORT CAMPAIGN UPDATE**

The 2022 Annual Support Campaign kicked into high gear in March and April. With the combined effort of more than 125 volunteer campaigners, including all Association Board Members, Branch Board Members and Committee Members, we have raised more than \$300,000 on our way to our goal of \$370,000. Campaigners are the heart of our success, many putting in hours to reach out to donors for support. Some of the ways our staff and volunteers have creatively campaigned include:

- Art Shows at Edgar Early Learning Center and Edison Branch YMCA
- Phone-a-Thons at South Amboy Branch and Metuchen Branch
- Coin Drives at Harborview and Metuchen Branch
- "Camp-aign" Kickoff at Edison Branch
- Restaurant Tours and Give Back Days from restaurants like La Rosa Pizza, Panera, Chuck E. Cheese, Costa Verde, Gem Bagels, Mulberry Street, D'Italia Restaurant, Jersey Pizza Boys, Good Vibes and more. Some are still to come.
- Shopping days at Kendra Scott
- Meals To Go from Grace Early Learning Center and Spring Festival at Our Savior's
- Bake Sales by our Teen Leaders Group
- A Craft Beer Tasting at the Parlor at Hailey's
- A Virtual Beer Tasting hosted by the Child Care Branch

There are so many more ways that our wonderful supporters are volunteering their time and energy to make sure that no one is turned away from the YMCA due to inability to pay for services. Every neighbor, child, senior and family will be able to take part in the services they need thanks to these efforts.

Thank you to all the staff and volunteers who have been instrumental in getting us to our campaign goal. If you would like to join in the fun, please call Elizabeth Bennett at 732–516–2087 or email Elizabeth.Bennett@ymcaofmewsa.orq to get involved.

-Contributed by Liz Bennett

#### **KELLER WILLIAMS STAFF VOLUNTEER FOR OAKCREST CLEANUP**

Led by Angela Sielski from Keller Williams Elite Realtors in Metuchen, Oakcrest received some major upgrades! As a part of the company's volunteer day, Keller Williams staff worked hard all day to paint, plant and decorate the

Community Pool. Everything came out amazing and we know our members will enjoy the beautiful pool and grounds this summer!

-Contributed by Caroline Rankin





## **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

## JUNE

- **3 PROPERTY COMMITTEE** 9:00 a.m.
- 14 FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 6:00 p.m.
- 15 FINANCE COMMITTEE 5:30 p.m.
- **17** IT COMMITTEE 8:00 A.M.
- 21 SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD 6:30 P.M.
- **22** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING 6:00 p.m.

## JULY

- 8 PROPERTY COMMITTEE 9:00 a.m.
- 13 EDISON BRANCH BOARD 5:30 p.m.
- 20 METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD 8:00 a.m.



#### YMCA Day Camps

**Camp Munsee** (Grades K-6) 65 High Street, Metuchen Camp Munsee, Jr. (Ages 3-5) Director, Gabriella St. Fleur 732.548.2044

#### Camp Oak Tree

1775 Oak Tree Road, Edison Director, Jennifer Guthlein 732.494.3232

#### Camp Oakcrest

970 Inman Avenue, Edison Director, Bradford Lindsey 908.756.9853

#### Camp SAY

200 John T. O'Leary Blvd., South Amboy Director, Lori Fragoso 732.553.9622

#### Camp Lenape

520 Hoes Lane, Piscataway Director, Meghan Doriety 732.562.2302

#### Y Learning Center Day Camps

**Centenary Early Learning Center** 200 Hillside Avenue, Metuchen Director, Melinda Wilson 732.548.5468

#### Our Savior's Learning Center

50 Calvert Avenue E., Edison Director, Shyby Joy 732.548.0523

#### Ken Shirk Learning Center

445 Old Post Road, Edison Director, Cindy Shields 732.287.1131

#### **Colonia Learning Center**

400 Inman Avenue, Colonia Director, Heidi Robbins 732.340.9622

#### **Avenel Learning Center**

238 Avenel Street, Avenel Director, Heidi Robbins 732.636.1100