

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER



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

## March 2018 ★ Board of Directors Update

### MEET OUR ASC STAFF CHAMPIONS



Each year, the YMCA launches the Annual Support Campaign with the Employee and Board Giving portion. The Board led the way by doubling their donations from last year! We would also like to recognize our Staff “Champions”, those behind the scenes who spearhead the efforts within the Association Office, Branches and

Child Care Centers. Remarkably, this year staff have pledged \$33,000 to this campaign, \$7,000 more than last year! The number of Hourly Club members has more than doubled—from 24 members last year to 50 members this year!

This major accomplishment would not have been possible without our Staff Champions, so we would like to give a special shout out to those who made the success of the Staff Giving Campaign possible!



Nicole Alaimo  
Centenary Learning Center



Jill Schwear  
Avenel Learning Center



Samantha Brannigan  
Colonia Child Care Center



Linda Socratous  
Woodbridge Before School Care



Crystal Diaz  
Grace Early Learning Center



Michael Tivey  
Our Saviors Learning Center



Duriya Ismael  
Edison YMCA



Veronica Vargas  
Association Office



Julisa Mugica  
Harborview Early Learning Center



Najeemah Drayton  
Ken Shirk Learning Center



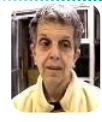
Gio Spatoro  
South Amboy YMCA



Pamela Cohen  
Metuchen YMCA



Deborah Wider  
Edison YMCA



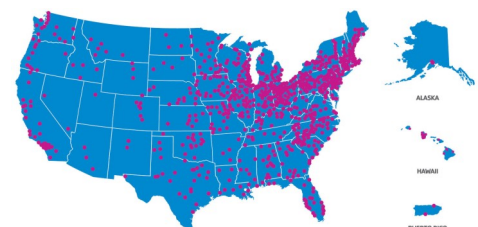
Rita Weiss  
Edgar Early Learning Center

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that 80% of American households are located within five miles of a YMCA?



## THE Y CELEBRATES THE LUNAR NEW YEAR!

The YMCA branches celebrated the Lunar New Year by decorating the lobby and classrooms and teaching the children about Eastern Asian culture. The children learned that this is the Year of the Dog, and that one of the symbols on the decorations meant "Spring".



Metuchen SACC children celebrate the Lunar New Year!



Edison tied the celebration into the Annual Support Campaign by selling fortune cookies for \$1.00 which will go towards the ASC. Left, Welcome Staff member Mary Luke sells a fortune cookie to a member. This is the second year the fortune cookie fundraiser has been held and it is very fun and popular!

*-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill and Marie Patterson*

## EDISON CLASSES BURSTING AT THE SEAMS!



**Oh yes they did!** The Edison Y had to open the wall between MPR1 and MPR2 to accommodate all of the members who take Sakshi's Bollywood/Zumba class on Thursday mornings at 9:50 a.m. The class became so popular that they removed the partition to ensure that everyone who was interested in taking the class would be able to participate.

By removing the partition, the Edison Y was able to add more classes including two more Bollywood/Zumba classes on Tuesdays at 10:35

a.m. and Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. with Sakshi, and a Zumba class on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. with Rachel. Join them for a Bollywood class that draws its inspiration from the music and dance of India or Zumba that features exotic rhythms set to high energy Latin and international beats!

*-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill*

## REDWOODS GRANT RECEIVED!

The YMCA received notification of a grant award in the amount of \$500 from Redwoods Group Foundation for a safety railing at the South Amboy branch. The railing will be installed in the Fitness Center located on the second level, where the existing 42" high railing overlooks the lobby, posing a potentially dangerous situation. The funding will be used to install a railing extension, providing an additional measure of safety and security to members and staff.

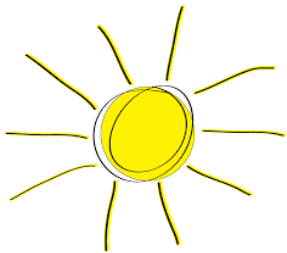
The Y will also continue to seek funding to install window guards for the four second level window ledges as well.

## MAYOR BUSCH VISITS THE METUCHEN Y!



The Metuchen Y's Kindergarten Extended Day class had a visit from newly appointed Mayor of Metuchen, Jonathan Busch, on February 15th. The children were very excited to meet him!

To welcome him, the class created a banner and sang him a song. They also had a lot of questions about being Mayor, which he was happy to answer!



## SUMMER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

IN PREPARATION FOR SUMMER, ALL THREE BRANCHES HELD CAMP OPEN HOUSES ON FEBRUARY 24TH!



## BC/BS DONATES RUTGERS BASKETBALL TICKETS



Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield donated tickets for two Rutgers basketball games for staff and members of the South Amboy YMCA. Fans crowded into the RAC in New Brunswick to watch the Rutgers vs. Purdue Men's basketball game on Saturday, February 3rd and the Rutgers vs. Michigan Women's basketball game on Sunday, February 4th.

The outing was a great time for all that attended as they got to watch two riveting games of basketball, full of excitement!

Thank you to Horizon for the tickets and a great experience!

*-Contributed by  
Matt Kaefer*



Horizon



## SOUTH AMBOY CYCLONES GEAR UP FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS!

The South Amboy Cyclones celebrated the end of practice season and the start of championship season with a pizza party on February 9th.

The Cyclones had ten swimmers compete in the eight and under championships at Raritan Valley Community College on February 3rd with five swimmers receiving ribbons and medals for placing. The South Amboy Y had thirty-two swimmers qualify for Bronze, with fourteen swimmers placing in events. On February 17-18, six swimmers from SAY qualified in the Silvers Championship in Sewell, N.J. The team will have one swimmer represent them at 12 and under states on February 24-25 at the Ocean County YMCA.



Coach Moehl, Taylor Friedman, Jacob Fritz and Coach LaCerra

*-Contributed by Susan Chanese*

## OUR OTHER SWIMMING CHAMPIONS!

*The* South Amboy YMCA teamed up with the South Amboy Middle School to bring their Life Skills class to the branch for some pool time—not only to

learn to be safe around water, but to have some fun while learning! The children have all been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) so were able to be part of the Autism Swims program. The class visits the Y on Fridays from 9:30-10:30 a.m. to swim,

interact with each other, and learn confidence in the water. The participants had a blast jumping into the pool from the diving blocks, seeing who could make the biggest splash from the side of the pool, and

racing each other down to the end!



This collaboration began with the South Amboy school district in January 2018. Beth reports that they created a Life Skills class at the middle school to help teach the students with ASD not only how to swim, but how to do laundry and cook as well. Because of the funding the Y received from Autism Speaks, we are able to offer the swimming class free of charge to the students.

*-Contributed by Beth Helsby and Sue Chanese*

On January 29<sup>th</sup> the South Amboy Y community was forced to deal with a devastating accident in front of the YMCA. We are so thankful for the incredible response from all first responders on the scene that night and for the volunteers and staff who made sure that everyone in the building was safe. South Amboy Branch Board Chair, Anthony Conrad said at a recent meeting, "The staff at the South Amboy Y handled the situation in an extremely professional manner and are to be commended for their work." The Y is fortunate to have such an amazing staff and we are thankful and proud of the resiliency and strength they showed during this difficult time. Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected by this tragic incident.

## THE “HOMEWORK ROOM” AT SAY

The South Amboy Y’s new School Age Child Care Director, Tara Francis, has been revamping the SACC program since she started in January. One of her first accomplishments was to institute a “homework room”—a quiet space for the children to do their homework with the assistance of our counselors. Tara has also set up two computers for the children to access so that they can do their assignments online. It’s been a hit with both the parents and the children!

*-Contributed by Beth Helsby*

### BLOOD DRIVE A SUCCESS!

Togetherhood held another Blood Drive on Sunday, February 25th at the Metuchen Y and it was very successful! Fifty-five people donated blood and they collected 51 pints of blood. **Great job!**



A student receives homework assistance from Counselor Luis Siqueira

### UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

MARCH 28



APRIL 25



JUNE 27

## MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

As a follow-up to the article in the February newsletter, we are thrilled to report that the new swimming program for children and adults in Haiti is underway! Haitian native Nestor Destil visited the Metuchen YMCA for 11 days in February to learn the lifesaving skill of swimming under the tutelage of Danica Lindsey, Aquatics Director and Robin Bolton, volunteer with The Good Samaritan Foundation of Haiti. Nestor was able to bring the



skills he learned back to Haiti to become a swim instructor at the Good Samaritan

School in the village of La Hatte, Ile a Vache.



Projects such as this show how all YMCAs can play a key role in the growth and strengthening of our global neighbors by partnering with organizations around the world to address critical social issues.

Robin Bolton, a volunteer with The Good Samaritan Foundation of Haiti, who coordinated the trip for Nestor, will be giving the Mission Moment at the March Board of Directors meeting to give the Board a full report!

*-Contributed by Marie Patterson*

## EDISON HOSTS PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

The Edison Y hosted a Parent's Night Out with a ValenTIME theme. The event was coordinated by Dean Seda, Health and Wellness Director at the Edison Y, and the Leader's Club (left).



From left to right: Dean Seda with the Edison Y Leader's Club members Nayonika Karia, Shreya Shah, Sana Borkar, Rhea Telidevara who organized the event.



Nine children attended the event and made Valentine's Day cards, did face painting and then enjoyed the movie, "Meet the Robinsons" while eating pizza. The children enjoyed the event very much and the Edison Y Leader's Club participants were very excited to kick off their first event that they had organized themselves.

*-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill*

## NATURE & STEAM TRAINING BY NJ AUDUBON SOCIETY

*The* YMCA of MEWSA has received word that they have been selected as a participant in the New Jersey Audubon Society's "New Jersey Audubon On Call: Connecting Children to Nature & STEAM" as part of their Afterschool Professional Learning Community. This four month program for afterschool providers will help staff increase teaching skills, content knowledge and comfort level with teaching STEAM and using the outdoors for meaningful, place-based education. A workshop will be held at the Association Office on Thursday, March 29th for Directors and Front Line staff who will then continue to work with the New Jersey Audubon Society from March through June 2018, which will include at least two guided outdoor experiences.



**NEW JERSEY  
AUDUBON**  
[www.njaudubon.org](http://www.njaudubon.org)

*-Contributed by Chrissy Tolley*



**TEE OFF  
FOR KIDS**  
**2018 RICHARD HALE MEMORIAL  
YMCA GOLF OUTING**

**SUPPORTING THE  
SEND A KID TO CAMP  
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

**Tuesday, June 5, 2018  
METUCHEN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB  
244 Plainfield Road, Edison, NJ 08820**

# HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT AT EDISON YMCA

## HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

A free substance abuse prevention awareness program

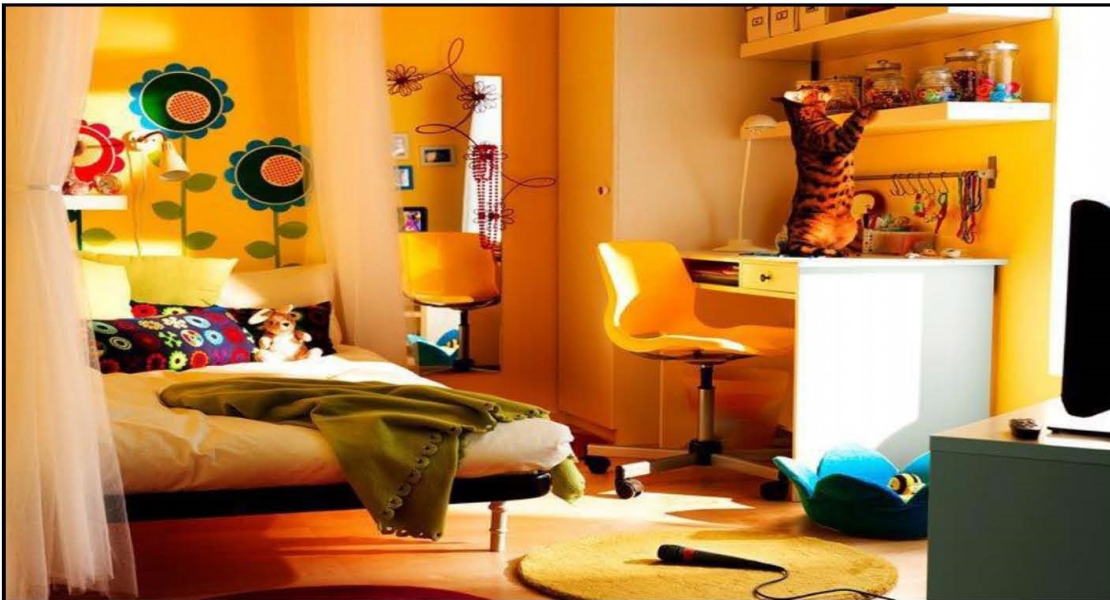
**Thursday, April 12, 2018**

**Edison YMCA, 1775 Oak Tree Rd. Edison, NJ 08820**

**6:30 PM – Light Dinner and Refreshments**

**7:30-8:30 PM - Presentation**

The **Edison Municipal Alliance** invites you to a parent workshop that will increase your awareness with an interactive tour to see what could be hidden in a child's bedroom.

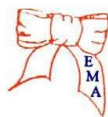


**Hidden in Plain Sight** is a hands-on interactive learning opportunity presented by **Special Agent Timothy P McMahon**, Public Information Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, NJ Division, Newark. Using an actual bedroom that you can walk through, Tim will highlight signs and symptoms of alcohol/drug abuse and teach skills for proactive parenting. This presentation will give you tools to address possible problems.

For ALL parents, caregivers, adults over 21, community members, educators and adults working with youth. **No one under 21 will be permitted to attend.**

For more information contact Harpreet Uppal or Candy Varroney (732) 248-7361.

Sponsored by the  
**Edison Municipal Alliance**  
through funding received by  
the **Middlesex County Office of  
Human Services**  
and the **NJ Governor's Council  
on Alcoholism and Drug  
Abuse.**



**MIDDLESEX**  
COUNTY • NJ

**GCADA**  
Governor's Council on  
ALCOHOLISM & DRUG ABUSE

For more information, contact Cindy O'Neill at [cindy.oneill@ymcaofmewsaj.org](mailto:cindy.oneill@ymcaofmewsaj.org).

## UNITED HEALTHCARE HEALTHBEE!

On Thursday, April 19th at 6:00 p.m., United Healthcare will once again be hosting a Health Bee at Woodrow Wilson Middle School in Edison. Students from Edgar Middle School, Herbert Hoover, John Adams and Woodrow Wilson will be participating.

2018 marks United Healthcare's 9th year hosting Health Bee competitions in partnership with New Jersey YMCA's. The purpose of the Health Bee is to educate students in a fun and engaging way about their health and how to live a healthy lifestyle. The winning team will receive \$1,000 to be used to support health and fitness programs at their school, the second place prize will be \$500 and the school showing the most enthusiasm will win a Spirit Award of \$250.

If you would like to find out more or volunteer for the event, please contact [Chrissy Tolley](#).

*-Contributed by Christine Tolley*



## MEWSA RECEIVES TPY EXCELLENCE AWARD!

Katie McAdoo, New Jersey Training Partner YMCA Director, celebrated the results of the 2017 YMCA of the USA Training Partner YMCA Satisfaction Survey completed by 21 of New Jersey YMCA CEO's. Our very own New Jersey Training Partner YMCA earned a record 95% Satisfaction Rating, with 0% YMCA's reporting dissatisfaction with TPY services! The survey helps to measure the effectiveness of the TPY system and helps to set goals to better deliver regional training events and support needed to develop cause-driven leaders across the Movement.

The Metuchen YMCA received this award for Excellence at the 2018 Annual Y-USA Training Partner YMCA meeting in Chicago which Katie attended on February 6. Great job, Katie!



## FLICK 'N FLOAT MOVIE NIGHT AT METUCHEN



Members of the Metuchen Y Teen Leader's Club are excited to "make a difference"

The Metuchen Y hosted its first ever "Flick 'n Float Movie Night" on February 23rd, "redesigning" the basketball court as an ocean. This was the first event that the newly formed Metuchen Y Leader's Club coordinated on their own, under the supervision of Barbara Verikas, Danica Lindsey and Bradford Lindsey. The children enjoyed an evening of fun activities, games, arts and crafts, face painting and then enjoyed watching the movie "Moana". There were also giveaways for the children. Refreshments were sold to raise money for the Annual Support Campaign. Families had a wonderful time interacting with the staff, volunteers and each other!



*-Contributed by Barbara Verikas*

# TOGETHERHOOD PROGRAM UPDATE

For the past three years, YMCA Togetherhood volunteers have been actively serving our community. The Togetherhood Program is in the process of recruiting volunteers and seeking individuals who are willing to lead and organize projects. Through Togetherhood, you can help identify and meet community needs, be of service, be more engaged in your community, and be out and among many others doing the same.

A partial list of the 2018 Togetherhood projects are:

## **March**

Service Committee Meeting, March 14  
Food Drive, Metuchen and Edison Branches, March 10 – March 31

## **April**

Rummage Sale, Presbyterian Church, April 17 and April 18  
Blood Drive, Metuchen Branch, April 22  
Edison Earth Day Park Cleanup, April 22

## **May**

Service Committee Meeting, May 9  
Memorial Day Parade, May 28

## **June**

National Trails Day Greenway Cleanup, June 2

## **July**

Service Committee Meeting, July 11  
Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation summer Food Drive, July 1 – July 31  
Blood Drive, Metuchen Branch, July 2

## **August**

Hunger Doesn't Take a Vacation summer Food Drive, August 1 – August 31

## **September**

9/11 National Day of Service, September 11  
Service Committee Meeting, Metuchen Branch, September 13  
Rummage Sale, Presbyterian Church (TBD)  
Blood Drive, Metuchen Branch, September 16

## **October**

TBD

## **November**

Food Drive, Edison Branch, November 1 – November 21  
Service Committee Meeting, November 7

## **December**

Food Drive, Metuchen Branch, November 23 – December 20  
Blood Drive, Metuchen Branch, December 2

If you are interested in volunteering for any of these projects, please contact Paul Edgcomb at [phedgcomb@gmail.com](mailto:phedgcomb@gmail.com).

**TOGETHERHOOD™**  
**JOIN US IN GIVING BACK**

## MEWSA STAFF ATTEND MEMBERSHIP & PROGRAM EXPO

**YMCA** staff recently attended the YMCA Membership & Program Expo at the Colorado Convention Center in Denver from February 27–March 1.

Attendees include Rose Cushing, President & CEO, Barbara Verikas, Youth & Teen Program Director, Kristine Rosko, Edison Membership and Marketing Director, Danica Lindsey, Metuchen Aquatics Director and Sue Chanese, South Amboy Aquatics Director.



Inspirational speaker Alex Sheen (center), who coined the phrase, “because I said I would” with (l. to r.) Danica Lindsey, Sue Chanese, Barbara Verikas and Kristine Rosko.

movement to solve critical social issues facing our communities. The Expo offered inspirational keynote speakers, hands-on experience blocks, program showcases and a vendor exhibition.

It empowered attendees to return to work with renewed energy, inspired to innovate, grow and be the change necessary to impact society for the better. Staff noted that it was very inspiring to be surrounded by YMCA family from all around the country and are returning with many new ideas that they are excited to get off the ground!



Staff enjoy an outing at Estes Park at the base of Rocky Mountain National Park.

The theme for the Expo was “Be The Change”. Staff from across the country came together to celebrate success, develop new skills and grow solid networks to become one powerful



## BRAVING THE ELEMENTS!

Our President & CEO is very hands-on and isn't afraid of a little snow! After our last winter snowstorm, when the plow didn't show up early

enough to clear the parking lot, Rose Cushing took matters into her own hands! She shoveled and salted the parking lot in no time flat, clearing a path for staff to get out of their cars and into the building.

Thanks, Rose, for always being a great role model for staying fit (and keeping your staff safe)!

*Let it Snow!*



# UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

## MARCH

- 21 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—6:30 p.m.
- 28 **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Wernik Room  
5:30 p.m. Fellowship/6:00 p.m. Meeting

## APRIL

- 4 **BOARD GOVERNANCE**  
AO Conference Room—5:30 p.m.
- 6 **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—9:00 a.m.
- 11 **FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—12:00 p.m.
- 13 **INVESTMENT COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—8:00 a.m.
- 18 **FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—6:30 p.m.
- 19 **AUDIT COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—8:00 a.m.
- 19 **HEALTH BEE**  
Woodrow Wilson School, Edison—6:00 p.m.
- 20 **IT COMMITTEE**  
AO Conference Room—8:00 a.m.
- 21 **HEALTHY KIDS DAY**  
All Branches
- 25 **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
Wernik Room—5:30 Fellowship/6:00 p.m. Meeting

Association

Edison

Metuchen

South Amboy

