# BOARD OF the DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

YMCA OF METUCHEN, EDISON, WOODBRIDGE & SOUTH AMBOY YMCA AT THE PISCATAWAY COMMUNITY CENTER

**ROSE CUSHING, PRESIDENT & CEO** 

November 2022



### **PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE**

#### Dear Board Members:

What a hectic two months it has been! Three of our biggest events: our 5K Run/Walk, Golf Outing and Tot Trot & Family Festival were great successes! Please see the stories inside for more information. A big thank you to our Director of Fund Development, Liz Bennett and Hannah Thomas, who were able to double the registrants and revenue for our 5K and our golfers numbered 105, the most we've ever had! We also had a great relaunch of our Tot Trot, with over 100 children! I am so thankful to our staff and Board members volunteered their time to make these events successful! More pictures from these events are included in the newsletter.

As we look forward to 2023, I have several projects on the horizon and I need the Board's support to see them come to fruition. My biggest goal is to expand our footprint in Middlesex County to provide programs and services to more families and those who need us most. Our growing partnership with the Raritan Bay YMCA has been instrumental towards this mission and I ask that you continue to participate in the many strategic planning meetings that are upcoming.

We have some great fall events coming up, including Diwali Mela at our Edison branch. This was also the first year that our Edison Y participated in the Edison Township Diwali event, with hundreds of residents coming out for the event. Of note is that we will be celebrating the 20 year anniversary of our unique partnership with the JCC with a cocktail reception on Thursday, December 15th from 7-9pm at the Community Campus. I invite you all to attend! We continue to have blood drives scheduled every other month at the Metuchen YMCA and these critical drives help us to save lives. We will also be celebrating Gratitude Week at all the branches during the week of November 21st. Not only during this week, but for the entire year, I would like to say that I am truly grateful to have such a committed Board and I thank you for all that you do for the organization.

#### **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

1	President & CEO Update				
2	CVS Provides Flu Shots				
-	SOUTH AMBOY Y RECOGNIZED				
	5K Highlighted on Channel 12 News				
3	3 YAG TEENS GO ON FIELD TRIP				
4	Staffing & Volunteer News				
5	REMEMBERING JAMES FLORIO				
5	5 CONGRATULATIONS TO RMP RECIPIENT				
	6 UPCOMING EVENTS				
7	TOGETHERHOOD UPDATE				
	END OF YEAR GIVING SUMMARY				
8	HALLOWEEN FUN AT THE BRANCHES				
8	8 CHILD CARE STAFF RECEIVE TRAINING				
9	9 LIGHTS ON AFTER SCHOOL				
9	9 EDISON YMCA DIWALI CELEBRATION				
9	9 26TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC				
	Bits 'n Pieces				
11	26TH ANNUAL 5K RUN/WALK				
11	TOT TROT & FALL FESTIVAL				
12	New Before/After School Offerings				
12	Edison Y Offers Recreation Programs				
12	METUCHEN PROVIDES YOGA TO SENIORS				
13	LEADER'S CLUB KICKS OFF NEW YEAR				
13	CINDY SHIELDS SERVES ON NJAEYC PANEL				

METUCHEN CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE

**UPCOMING MEETINGS** 

**13** 

# CVS PROVIDES FLU SHOTS TO METUCHEN MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY

Thank you to CVS for coming to the Metuchen branch to give flu shots to their members and the community to help keep everyone healthy and safe.

-Contributed by Brenda Werneiwskei





# SOUTH AMBOY Y RECEIVES RECOGNITION FOR ASSISTANCE

The South Amboy YMCA as well as the American Red Cross were recognized by Perth Amboy Township as well as the Fire Department for providing assistance to 40 residents within 37 units who were displaced due to an electrical fire for a five-day period. Over the course of five days, they were mobilized and offered shower facilities, for which the residents were extremely



grateful. The City of Perth Amboy was also very grateful for their help as they acted quickly and provided care to their residents. Of note is that it had an even greater impact on the community since the Raritan Bay YMCA was closed and undergoing renovations at the time, so residents were unable to use that building at that time.

The South Amboy Y received a Special Resolution from the Perth Amboy Municipal Council commending them for providing aid to the fire victims and thanking Gerry Gessie, Director of Operations at the South Amboy Y, for offering the use of the Y. He also accepted a Mayoral Citation presented to the branch for their outstanding service in a time of need.



-Contributed by Gerry Gessie

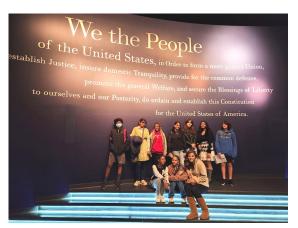
### **UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS**

### YMCA 5K RUN/WALK HIGHLIGHTED **ON CHANNEL 12 NEWS**

News 12 New Jersey's Anchorwoman Della Crews interviewed Liz Benett, Director of Financial Development, on the Y's 26th Annual 5K Run/Walk which was held on September 25th. This event is in memory of Janice Garbolino, former Metuchen Wellness Director who lost her battle with breast cancer in 2002. This event supports the Y's LiveSTRONG Program, a free program for cancer survivors, which helps them regain their health after treatment. Watch the clip for more information!



### **YOUTH & GOVERNMENT TEENS** VISIT NATIONAL LIBERTY MUSEUM



Teen members of the Youth & Government Program were able to wind up their latest YAG program session by visiting the National Liberty Museum as well as the Constitutional Center. The students were able to explore and learn about U.S. history, learn about



our judicial system, how America became a free nation and also got to walk the historic streets of Philadelphia!

Youth & Government, a national YMCA program, prepares teens for moral and political leadership by immersing themselves in experiential civic engagement, debating issues

and proposing mock legislation. The program culminates with teens serving as delegates at the YMCA State conference, debating bills on the floor of the legislature. The next session begins in December. All Board newsletters can be

For more information, please contact Gabrielle

St. Fleur at gabrielle.stfleur@ymcaofmewsa.org.

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

found on the YMCA website at

**MISSED AN ISSUE?** 

This program was made possible through a grant from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation.



### STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER NEWS

#### **WELCOME ALEXIS KORSAK!**

Welcome Alexis Korsak, new School Age Program/Camp Director at the South Amboy YMCA! Alexis comes to us with an extensive background in Educational Leadership, Sports Administration, Health and Physical Education as well as Organizational



Leadership fields. Alexis has served as the Assistant Principal at Roxbury High School, Director of Athletics/Supervisor of Health and Physical Education for the School District of the Chathams as well as enjoying a long history of achievements with various State Athletic Associations and Athletic Coaching Associations. Alexis grew up in Cherry Hill and is a lifelong Phillies and Eagles fan. In her spare time, she loves all racket sports including tennis and pickleball. She enjoys the outdoors, especially the beach and is married with two fur babies named Mistletoe (ToeE) and Maeve.

#### **WELCOME CHRISTINE JAFFE!**

Welcome Christine Jaffe, new Wellness Director at the Edison Y! She comes with a strong group exercise background, working in a wide variety of locations as an instructor including Redbank Y, where she worked for 8 years prior to



coming to us. Christine grew her passion for fitness and healthy living, first as a competing gymnast and then as a modern dancer and professional ballerina. She also worked as Director of Artist Relations and Touring for the rock band, Bon Jovi. She has a strong administrative background working in and leading a board of directors for a private school for many years.

In her free time, Christine is a foodie who loves trying different cuisines, healthy cooking, listening to live music, attending theater and dance performances, but is happiest spending time with her husband and two sons as well as her two Old English Sheepdogs, Harry and Bowie.

#### **WELCOME ALEX REISIG!**



Welcome Alex Reisig, new Membership Engagement Director at the Metuchen YMCA! Alex has a history as a YMCA staff member, with his career starting five years ago at YMCA Camp Zehnder, a branch of the YMCA of Greater Monmouth County, as a Camp Counselor. He has a lot of experience working with children ages 3-17. At the YMCA of Greater Monmouth County he wrote curriculum for the SACC programs and was the Office Manager for the camps while also being a Member Services Representative. In his personal life, Alex enjoys going to Broadway shows,

painting, cooking and sewing. He is beyond excited to begin working as the Membership Engagement Director and serving the Metuchen community!

### YMCA OF MEWSA FEATURED ON MYCENTRAL JERSEY!



We are so excited to be featured on <a href="MyCentralJersey">MyCentralJersey</a>! The article discusses how we served the community during the pandemic and continue to do so as we recover. Check it out and share it with your friends!

Check out the story **HERE!** 

### REMEMBERING JAMES FLORIO

responsibility.

We are very sad to report that James Florio, long-time friend and supporter of the YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy, passed away peacefully at the age of 85, surrounded by family. James supported the YMCA of MEWSA for many years, as well as his wife, Lucinda, who served on our Board of Directors for many years, serving as Board Chair from 2012 to 2014. In 2017, James received the YMCA's Peter J. Barnes, Jr. Community Champion Award, given to an individual who has a legacy of community service, is response to and interested in the work of the YMCA, serves as an example for others in leadership, integrity and the core values of the YMCA: caring, honesty, respect and



James left an indelible mark not only on our organization, but on the State of New Jersey. He served as 49th Governor from 1990-1994 and served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1975-1990. He also served in the N.J. Assembly from 1969-1975. He was best known as the author of the Superfund legislation, to clean up the most polluted sites in the country, considered to be one of the most important pieces of federal environmental legislation in the last two decades. He was responsible for redistributing hundreds of millions of dollars of school aid to urban and rural districts as part of the Quality Education

hundreds of millions of dollars of school aid to urban and rural districts as part of the Quality Education Act. In 1990, under his leadership, New Jersey passed the strictest gun control law in the nation, banning the sale and severely restricting the possession of assault weapons in the State. He received the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award in 1993 and was inducted into the N.J. Hall of Fame in 2014.

His legacy and the path he paved for a better New Jersey will be remembered by all.

# CONGRATULATIONS MEGAN CORBY RMP SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



L. to r.: Board member George Trapp, Megan Corby, Rose Cushing, President & CEO, Gerry Gessie, Director of Operations-South Amboy YMCA.

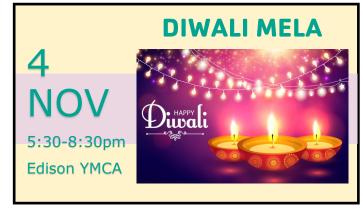
Congratulations to Megan Corby, 2022 recipient of the Ryan Patterson Memorial Scholarship. Megan attended Sayreville War Memorial high school, where she was very active in several club and societies including Student Council, Students Against Destructive Decisions, International Society, Light Crew, Sound Crew, FBLA, National Honor Society and National Hispanic, Math, English, Science and Art Honor Societies. She also served as president of their SADD club for two years and vice president of the Student Council. During her time outside of school, Megan identified a lack of athletic programs for special needs children in her town. To address this, she created a program for special

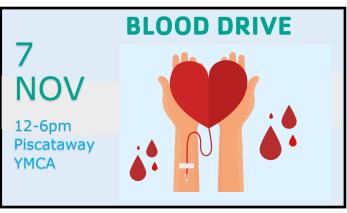
town. To address this, she created a program for special needs children in their local little league called the Challenger Division, where she served as President for four years.

"Watching the smiles on the athlete's faces when they hit the ball off the tee or heard the cheers from their friends gives me an indescribable feeling of joy", Megan said. "I feel blessed to be able to witness their accomplishments whenever they step foot on the field." She is also a member of the Girl Scouts where she earned her Religious, Silver and Gold Awards. Megan is currently attending Monmouth University, where she is studying Education and Speech Pathology. To find out more about the scholarship, click <a href="here">here</a>.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

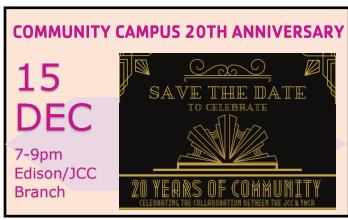
















# TOGETHORHOOD UPDATE







-By Richard Husar

#### **Food Drives**

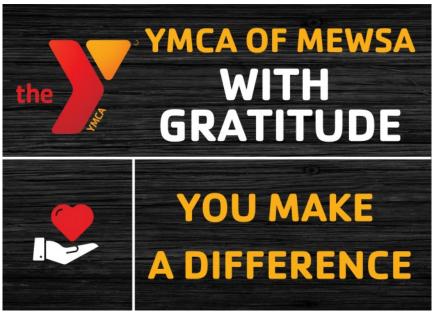
As of August 2022, our members dropped off 2,522 food items in the lobby. This is a significant number that has helped many families in need, but it is also almost 17% less than the 3,032 items from last year. This year we also benefited from the food donation contests run by Gabriella St Fleur at the Y's summer camp. Well over 200 items were contributed through this effort. It was a great idea and run very well.

Cash donations have dropped from \$957 last year to \$119 in 2022. There are a couple of big issues impacting our donations. Inflation has made food more expensive. This makes the need greater, but also impacts member's ability to donate. Also, compared to pre-COVID, parking in the Y's lot has become easy. The more members we get back into the Y, the greater the potential donation pool. We remain optimistic in our mission of helping those with food insecurities.

#### **Blood Drives**

The blood drive held on August 28th was extremely successful. We are happy to report that from 70 registered donors 52 whole blood donations were received as well as 7 (14) double red cell donations. These donations translate to a total of  $\underline{66}$  life-saving donations.

The next blood drive is scheduled for <u>Tuesday</u>, <u>December 27</u>, <u>2022</u>, <u>2-6:30pm</u> in the first floor gymnasium of the Metuchen YMCA. The appointment link is <u>Donor Portal - New York Blood Center</u> (nybc.org). Use sponsor code 15750. Please make your appointment today and save a life!



Together we can achieve so much. With a combined effort from our communities, the YMCA of MEWSA collected \$500,000 to provide financial assistance and scholarship support at the YMCA. That's a combination of more than 1,500 gifts from more than 1,100 people throughout New Jersey and beyond. Volunteer Campaigners (a total of 123) reached out to spread the word about our mission to friends, family members, community members and colleagues. We welcomed 330 new donors to the campaign this year. That's a lot of people, coming together for a common cause to help more than 525 families right here in Middlesex

County. Families that are facing hardships concerning health-related matters like high blood pressure or mobility issues, mental health struggles, securing safe child care so adults can return to work and children can socialize, grow and learn and so much more. Whether you made a donation yourself and/or asked others to support with you, we thank you! You are making a difference!

# CHILD CARE STAFF RECEIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING



The Child Care branch's annual child care "Shut Down Week" was the week of August 29 – September 2. Besides deep cleaning and re-arranging their classrooms for September, over 100 early childhood staff from the child care centers and branches participated in two days of professional development on 8/31 & 9/1. Presenters from several organizations, including Community Child Care Solutions, Teaching Strategies, LLC, and some Y seasoned staff offered 12 hours of professional development on topics ranging from child growth and development and curriculum to self-care.

The Early Childhood staff and Directors look forward to this week every year as a way to regroup and reset, and get a fresh start for the Back-To School fun in September.

-Contributed by Cindy Shields

### HALLOWEEN FUN AT THE BRANCHES

The Piscataway Y instructors got in the Halloween spirit this year with Spooky Cycling all month long! Instructors



L. to r. Candice Ying, Elizabeth Austin, Lisa Fox.

Amanda Fox and Elizabeth Austin incorporated Halloween music into their routines. The month was capped off with Halloween-themed Zumba Toning and Cycling going on simultaneously. Lisa and Candice co-taught the Zumba class while Elizabeth led the Cycling class. They featured a montage of Halloween movie clips behind Elizabeth as the class cycled along. Elizabeth also

jumped in with the Zumba instructors after Cycling was over. *-Contributed by Hannah Thomas* 



Gabby St. Fleur and Bradford Lindsey join in the Edison Town Square Trunk or Treat event!



The South Amboy YMCA held a "Spooktacular" Halloween Festival for the children and the community. Everyone had a great time!



Metuchen Y preschoolers had fun on Halloween, dressing up in their favorite costume and participating in many activities including trick-ortreating and enjoying a Halloween-themed lunch!



# COLONIA LEARNING CENTER CELEBRATES LIGHTS ON AFTER SCHOOL

The children from the Colonia Learning Center held a fall festival which included enrichment classes, catch games and healthy kid's club make-and-take snacks. All of the parents were able to see what the children did in the afternoon.

Lights on After School is a nationwide event celebrating after school programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities.

-Contributed by Diane Belanchik



# EDISON YMCA JOINS EDISON TOWNSHIP TO CELEBRATE DIWALI



The Edison Y joined in the Township of Edison's first ever Diwali Celebration in Papaianni Park. They brought fun activities for children to an event filled with speakers, performances, fireworks and more. The event was a huge success reaching hundreds of Edison residents. The Y was proud to be a part of it and can't wait for next year's celebration!

-Contributed by Erin Siemers

### 26TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC SUPPORTS SEND A KID TO CAMP

The Annual YMCA Richard Hale Memorial Golf Classic was a huge success. The event raised more than \$73,000 in support of our Send a Kid to Camp Fund, helping families and children have access to quality, safe, educational summer care regardless of their financial situation. We had a record breaking 114 golfers register for this year's Classic and celebrated into the evening with an Oktoberfest Dinner. Thank you to our sponsors, golfers and all who attended and we hope to see you all there next year.

-Contributed by Liz Bennett



L. to r. John Dowd, Board Chair, George Trapp, Board Member, Rose Cushing, President & CEO, George Dailey, Board Member

# <br/>bits & pieces>



Metuchen members put a star sticker on their country of origin in celebration of Welcoming Week and our diversity at the Y.



South Amboy staff enjoy a day of fun at the annual Art Fest.







The Metuchen Y decorates in pink and instructors and members wear pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



Piscataway Y staff members Ida Jones and Meghan Doherty enjoy Rutgers home opener game with other staff. Tickets were given compliments of Rutgers University.



Edison Pre-K class makes art that can float!



Metuchen students show off their masterpieces created in Art class!



The Edison YMCA wears pink to honor Breast Cancer Awareness month.

Edison runs brand new baking and decorating class.

# THE 26TH ANNUAL 5K RUN/WALK A SUCCESS!



SEWA International USA volunteers were a huge help!

This year's 5K Run/Walk was very successful! \$26,000 was raised which will support the YMCA's LiveSTRONG Program for cancer survivors.

This year we had 24 teams join us, some as large as 35 members! Teams were encouraged for fundraiser prizes and other incentives. At the end of the race, everyone enjoyed an ice cream sandwich courtesy of *What's the Scoop* in Metuchen, thanks to owner Michelle Schutz, our newest Metuchen Branch Board Member.

-Contributed by Liz Bennett



Team Y Warriors—top fundraising team!



Thank you to Board Member Alka Aneja and volunteers from her nonprofit, Humbled By Your Service.

# CHILDREN ENJOY THE TOT TROT & FALL FESTIVAL!

The Annual Tot Trot & Fall Festival made a grand return on Sunday, October 9. Over 100 children and their families came out to enjoy races, games, arts & crafts projects. A record number of vendors and sponsors participated in the event, including JFK Medical Center, Manasquan Bank, What's the Scoop, Elcha's Eats and more! The event was supported by volunteers from the child care centers and child care committee, as well as the communities we serve.

Proceeds from the event go to support child care scholarships for families in need.

-Contributed by Cindy Shields









# KEN SHIRK, OUR SAVIORS AND EDISON OFFERING BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE!

We are excited to announce that Ken Shirk and Our Saviors Learning Centers are now re-opened for before and after school care! Ken Shirk LC is located at 445 Old Post Road in Edison and provides transportation to and from Lincoln and Washington and Lindeneau Elementary Schools. For more information, contact Karae Johnson at karae.johnson@ymcaofmewsa.org.

Our Savior's Learning Center is located at 50 Calvert Avenue East in Edison and provides services for students at Menlo Park Elementary School. The Edison YMCA Learning Center, located at the Community Campus, has also re-opened for before and after school care, providing transportation to and from James Madison Primary and James Madison Intermediate Schools. For more information, contact Shyby Joy at <a href="mailto:shyby.joy@ymcaofmewsa.org">shyby.joy@ymcaofmewsa.org</a>.

Activities include homework help, STEAM activities, outdoor activities and more. Financial assistance and subsidy options available.

For the first time since the pandemic, before and after school care has also returned to Edison YMCA. After a much longer break than originally expected, Edison Y has finally found a bus to transport children to and from James Madison Primary and Intermediate Schools in Edison. The timing wasn't as optimal as they couldn't secure the bus until the third week of school. However, they are working hard to restart and rebuild a program that has helped the community of Edison for many years.

For more information, contact Jennifer Guthlein at <a href="mailto:jennifer.guthlein@ymcaofmewsa.org">jennifer.guthlein@ymcaofmewsa.org</a>.





This fall the Edison Y has reinvented their recreation programs to include new, exciting offerings for children and adults such as public speaking, table tennis, baking and decorating, archery and Lego robotics. And with fun

names like Loud & Proud, From Art to Finish, and Sight & Write, these programs are the talk of the Y. Check them out today!

-Contributed by Erin





### METUCHEN YMCA PROVIDES YOGA TO SENIORS

The Metuchen Y does community outreach by providing yoga lessons twice a month to residents at the Edison Brighton Gardens Assisted Living Center.

The seniors look forward to the classes and it helps to keep them healthy.

-Contributed by Brenda Werneiwskei



### LEADER'S CLUB KICKS OFF ANOTHER SCHOOL YEAR!

The Leader's Club is back for another school year! The students kicked off the 2022-2023 school year on Thursday, September 22nd. They are excited to plan events, volunteer and learn about leadership.

For more information on the Leader's Club, contact <a href="mailto:gabrielle.stfleur@ymcaofmewsa.org">gabrielle.stfleur@ymcaofmewsa.org</a>.

-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur



### CINDY SHIELDS SERVES ON NJAEYC PANEL

Cindy Shields, Senior Child Care Director, (shown below, far right) had the opportunity to participate in a panel discussion with several colleagues from various areas of New Jersey, and led by Michelle Kang, CEO of NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) at the annual NJAEYC (New Jersey Association for the Education of Young Children, state affiliate of NAEYC) on October 7<sup>th</sup> at the Meadowlands Hilton. The discussion focused on the state of early childhood/child care post-pandemic, advocacy and the challenges that children and their families are facing in today's society.



# METUCHEN YMCA CELEBRATES HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

On October 15th, the Metuchen Y and Human Relations Commission (HRC) celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month on the Plaza, providing a free Zumba demo class.



Staff and volunteers help out at the YMCA table at the event. Inset: Zumba class held at the Plaza.

### **GRANT AND DONOR RECOGNITION**

**PNC Foundation** \$5,000 To support Post-Pandemic Professional

**Development Training** 

**Investors Foundation** \$500 To support our Robotics Program

**NJ State Bar Foundation** \$5,000 To support our Youth & Government Program

#### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### Chair

John Dowd

#### **Board Members**

Karen Alexander Alka Aneja Katie Barnes Sampson Brown Joseph Cascio Anthony Conrad Letitia Coughlin George Dailey Kenneth Drinkard Paul Edgcomb Jay Elliot Joseph Gaffney, M.D. Jay Galeota Glenn Gawronski John Hogarty Kathleen Kovach Michael Lackland Larry Lavender Rachael Masturzo Joan Mistrough Seema Pande Falguni Patel Bruce Peragallo Brian Porter Shelley Telson Amie Thornton

#### SENIOR LEADERSHIP

#### President & CEO

Rose Cushing

George Trapp

#### Controller

Mariam Lesnewski

#### Director, Human Resources

Kathy Minaeff

### Director, Financial Development

Elizabeth Bennett

#### Director, IT

Craig Levine

#### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

### **November 2022**

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
	1	2 5:30-Board Governance Committee	3	4 9-Property Committee
7	8 6-Financial Development Committee	9 5:30-Edison Branch Board	10 6-Ending Homelessness Dinner	11
14	15 6:30-South Amboy Branch Board	16 8-Metuchen Branch Board	17	18
21	22	23	24 Happy Thanksgiving!	25
28	29	30		

### **December 2022**

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
			1	2 9-Property Committee
5	6	7 6-Child Care Committee	8	9
12	13 6-Financial Development Committee	14 6-Finance Committee	15	16
19	20 6:30-South Amboy Branch Board	21 6-Board Meeting (5:30 Fellowship)	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

#### **Branches**

Association Office, 483 Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen 08840
Metuchen Branch, 65 High Street, Metuchen 08840
Edison Branch, 1775 Oak Tree Road, Edison 08820
South Amboy Branch, 200 John T. O'Leary Blvd., South Amboy 08879
Piscataway Branch, 520 Hoes Lane, Piscataway 08854 <a href="mailto:ymcaofmewsa.org">ymcaofmewsa.org</a>