

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER



MAY 2025



STRATFORD YMCA

SMALL ACTS. BIG IMPACTS.

Ever hold the door open for someone and feel a little proud of yourself? Now imagine that feeling times ten—like you just saved the day. That's what volunteering feels like. At the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, **we've got opportunities that don't just make a difference—they make you feel great doing it.**

From providing boxes of groceries in Stratford or stocking our food pantry shelves in New Haven, to reading to preschoolers, to teaching kids how to swim—we offer real ways to help real people. And while you're doing good, you're also doing good for yourself. Studies show **volunteering boosts happiness, lowers stress**, and can even help you live longer. It's basically a life hack for your heart.

When people volunteer, communities grow stronger. Kids feel supported. Families feel seen. And folks who might be struggling get a little lift from someone who cares. You don't need a cape—just a little time and a big heart.

Winston Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." He probably wasn't handing out carrots at a food pantry or helping a five-year-old float, but the point stands.

So if you've got an hour, a morning, or even just a few minutes—jump in. Help out. Read a book to a kid. Cheer someone on in the pool. Join a YMCA board. **Because when you show up, everyone wins.**

—Tim Bartlett,
CCC YMCA President & CEO

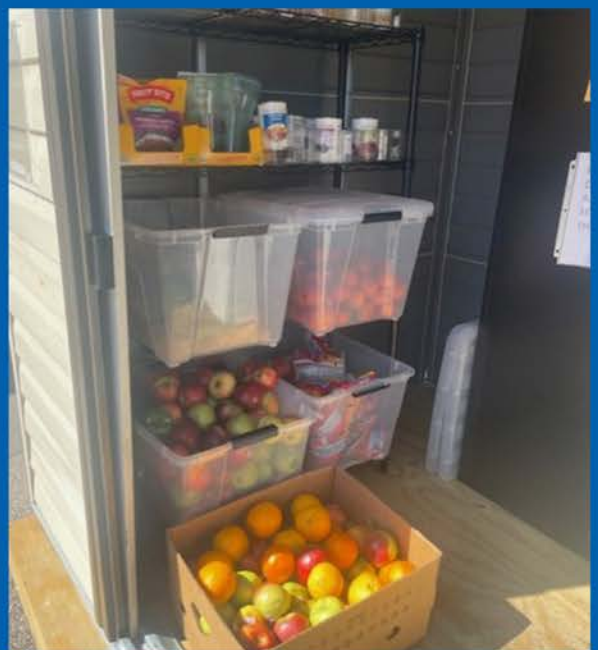
OPEN FRIDGE, OPEN HEARTS: HOW STRATFORD YMCA IS FEEDING HOPE

In January 2025 the **Stratford YMCA opened its Community Fridge and Pantry**. The "Pantry Shed" is located on the YMCA property along the side of our building. Our shed has a refrigerator, large cabinet and shelving with totes. It is open to the community daily during YMCA operating hours. It is designed as a "take what you need, leave what you can" program.

Our Pantry was **made possible by generous support from Stratford Rotary Club and the YUSA Hunger Relief Grant.**

Since opening we have partnered with Food Rescue US, which helps coordinate donations from local restaurants, ShopRite in Milford and Stratford, and Bridgeport University. We also receive bread donations twice a week from Harvest Haven in Orange. Wade's Dairy and a local church organization have also been generous with donations. On April 26, we held "Stuff our YMCA Bus" and accepted donations of non-perishable items, diapers and personal hygiene items.

Our Community Fridge and Pantry is active all day long with community members and our own YMCA members. **Our goal is to reduce food insecurity by providing free, direct access to nutritious food** made possible by community partnerships, local food stores, restaurants and those who come and make donations.



SWIM SAFE, SWIM STRONG: SOUNDVIEW 2ND GRADERS TAKE THE PLUNGE

For the third year, the Soundview Family YMCA, in partnership with Branford Public Schools, offers the “Every Second Grader Learns to Swim” program, providing all Branford **second graders the chance to learn essential water safety and swimming skills.**

This year, 60 students participated and gained confidence in the water while having a great time. **The program was supported by dedicated volunteers from the SCSU swim team**, who assisted in teaching the children in the pool, along with additional help from Guilford High School students.

Thanks to this collaboration, all the children are now more comfortable in the water and better prepared for safe swimming.



BUILDING A SAFER COMMUNITY: FIVE DAYS OF ACTION AT WOODRUFF

From April 21–25, the Woodruff Family YMCA led the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA branches, in the **Five Days of Action**—a nationwide campaign focused on raising awareness and empowering adults to prevent child sexual abuse.

Throughout the week, we introduced the three key habits of prevention: Know. See. Respond. These simple but powerful actions help create safer spaces where children can learn, grow, and thrive.

- **Know:** Understanding the facts about child sexual abuse helps us recognize risks and take proactive steps. For instance, did you know that 1 in 10 children in the U.S. will experience sexual abuse before the age of 18? Education is the first line of defense.
- **See:** Recognizing warning signs gives us the ability to intervene when something doesn't seem right. Staying alert and observant can protect a child in need.
- **Respond:** Knowing how—and when—to respond is essential. Being prepared ensures concerns are addressed swiftly, safely, and in accordance with reporting laws.

During this important week, we shared helpful resources, hosted awareness activities, and encouraged community members to take the pledge to protect children. These efforts underscore our unwavering commitment to a culture of safety, prevention, and accountability at the Y.

Thank you to all who participated and stood with us in this vital initiative. Together, we are building a stronger, safer community for every child. To learn more about preventing child sexual abuse, visit www.fivedaysofaction.org.

HEALTHY KIDS DAY SUCCESS: THANKS TO VALLEY PARTNERSHIPS

The Valley YMCA, a branch of the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA, is a **YMCA without walls**—serving the communities of Ansonia, Derby, Shelton, Seymour, Oxford, and Beacon Falls.

This year's Healthy Kids Day was a great success! Despite rainy weather in the forecast, the team quickly adapted with the help of dedicated partners and volunteers. Thanks to our strong relationship with the City of Ansonia, we were able to relocate the event to the city-owned Armory. The city not only provided the space, but also showed up in force—with volunteers, community support, and even Mayor Dave Cassetti in attendance.

Mayor Cassetti's presence was a wonderful show of support for youth and family wellness in the Valley. His engagement throughout the day truly reflected the spirit of partnership we value so deeply.

Over 100 participants joined in a day filled with camp games, arts and crafts, face painting, and more. The energy and enthusiasm on display were a testament to the power of community collaboration.

We're incredibly grateful to everyone who helped make the day special. Events like these, show just how **impactful our partnerships and volunteers** are in delivering meaningful programs to the Valley.



HOPE IN MOTION: ROCK STEADY BOXING AT LAKEWOOD-TRUMBULL

Since launching on September 30, 2024, the Rock Steady Boxing program at the Lakewood-Trumbull Y has grown rapidly, now averaging 15 participants per class.

We're proud to have two passionate volunteers supporting the program regularly. Thanks to the generosity of our donors and the success of our "Have a Heart for a Cause" Gala, this life-changing program is **offered free of charge to our community**.

Rock Steady Boxing is a global, evidence-based initiative proven to **improve the lives of those living with Parkinson's Disease**. We're honored to be part of this powerful movement.

A LEGACY OF SERVICE: HONORING CHRIS GALLO AND 30 YEARS OF COMMUNITY IMPACT

On April 10th, we gathered for our YMCA Annual Meeting, celebrating 30 years of community service as the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA.

Since merging the Greater Bridgeport and Greater New Haven YMCAs, to formulate the CCC YMCA in June 1994, there have been three decades of great accomplishments and celebratory impact in 26 Connecticut towns and cities. There has also been great transition, but one thing has remained steady throughout it all, and that is the **servant leadership from Christopher Gallo**.

Chris was honored at our Annual Meeting with a 35-year service pin for his unwavering support of our cause and mission. A faithful leader, Mr. Gallo's experience as a Certified Public Accountant has successfully advised our work and financial health. During his tenure with the Y, he has served in all capacities, and was a 2015 Brew award winner, the highest honor bestowed upon a volunteer.

Chris lives in Shelton, with his wife Deb and is the father of three children, Jessica, Jen and Chris and the grandfather of Leo and George. Thank you, Chris, for being part of our Y family, and for the reminder **"no money, no mission"**.



WAYS TO SUPPORT: UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Monday May 12th | 11:30AM

Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA

Tees for Tomorrow

Whitney Farms Golf Club, Monroe, CT

<https://bit.ly/cccygolf2025>

Saturday May 17th | 9:30AM

Alpha Community Services YMCA

Walk to End Homelessness

Captain's Cove, Bridgeport, CT

<https://bit.ly/alphawalk2025>

Saturday, May 17th | 10:00AM

Hamden/North Haven/New Haven Youth Center YMCA

Family Color Run 5K/Trail Run

Camp Mountain Laurel

2705 Downes Road, Hamden, CT 06518

<https://givebutter.com/jWtOE3>

Saturday, June 7th

ALL BRANCHES

Sweat for a Cause

<https://bit.ly/3RcHftg>

Birdies for Charity

Now - June 22nd

<https://bit.ly/cccyymbirdiesforcharity>

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