

PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2026

THE MOMENTS THAT MADE 2025 MATTER

"NO ONE HAS EVER BECOME POOR BY GIVING."

– ANNE FRANK

If that's true, then 2025 made our community incredibly rich.

This past year was one to celebrate at the YMCA. Not because of headlines or hype, but because of impact. Real people. Real needs. Real lives touched.

When temperatures dropped, our doors opened as warming centers. When the summer heat rose, we became cooling centers. When families faced empty cupboards, we helped provide more than 320,000 meals, directly and indirectly, to neighbors who needed a hand. And when the cost of participation stood in the way, we stepped forward with more than \$2.5 million in financial assistance, ensuring that no one was turned away because of an inability to pay.

Our staff and volunteers showed up every single day. More than 12,000 children learned to be safe around water, gaining skills that save lives. Hundreds of individuals living with chronic diseases like MS, Parkinson's, and cancer found strength, community, and hope through programs designed just for them.

But the true beauty of the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA isn't found only in big numbers.

It's in the thousands of small moments that happen every day. A kind word at the front desk. A swim coach who stays five extra minutes. A volunteer who listens. Sometimes the smallest act is the one thing that carries someone through their day.

That is what 2025 looked like.

On behalf of our YMCA, thank you. Thank you for trusting us. Thank you for supporting us. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of serving.

Together, we are not just running programs. We are strengthening our community, one simple act at a time.

-Tim Bartlett, CCC YMCA President & CEO



MEETING THE FREEZE WITH WARMTH AT ALPHA COMMUNITY SERVICES YMCA

Bridgeport faced a winter of record-breaking cold subzero nights, icy winds, and sidewalks buried in snow. The state activated the longest consecutive Severe Cold Weather Protocol ever: 34 days, totaling 47 days under activation since December. ACS YMCA's Cold Weather Shelter expanded like never before, offering hot meals, dry blankets, and staff who welcomed every guest with dignity. Amid historic cold, the shelter became a beacon of compassion, proving that our community leaves no one out in the storm. Together, we met the freeze with warmth, care, and unwavering support.



*Photo Credit: Shahrzad Rasekh / CT Mirror



*Photo Credit: Shahrzad Rasekh / CT Mirror



NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS: HONORING STRATFORDS VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Stratford YMCA is proud to recognize Sally Morrell as our Volunteer of the Year, celebrating her outstanding dedication and service to our community.

Sally plays a vital role in supporting the YMCA Food Pantry, helping with food deliveries, organizing donations, and ensuring that families in our community have access to essential resources when they need them most. Her steady commitment helps keep this important program running smoothly and reaching those facing food insecurity.

Through her church community, Sally also helped coordinate coat donations, ensuring that many of our youth stayed warm during the winter months.

The Stratford YMCA Community Fridge and Pantry provides more than just food—it offers dignity, stability, and hope to individuals and families throughout our community. Volunteers like Sally make this work possible every day.

Her compassion, generosity, and willingness to serve truly embody the spirit of the YMCA and remind us how powerful community support can be when neighbors come together to help one another.

Thank you, Sally, for making a difference in our community every single day.

BRIDGEPORT YMCA ADULT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Bridgeport YMCA proudly recognizes Jennifer Amon of CT Basket Brigade as our Adult Volunteer of the Year.

For many years, CT Basket Brigade has provided Thanksgiving meals to vulnerable families served by local nonprofit organizations. Jennifer has led these efforts with dedication and compassion, working closely with our Senior Child Care Director to ensure every childcare family received a turkey and groceries for the holiday.

Over the past three years alone, more than 250 families connected to the Bridgeport YMCA have received holiday gift baskets thanks to this partnership.

Jennifer's generosity, organization, and heartfelt commitment embody the YMCA's core values of caring, community, and service. Because of her efforts, hundreds of families have been able to gather around the table and celebrate the season with dignity and joy.



WELCOMING TOM SHEEHY TO THE LAKEWOOD-TRUMBULL Y

We are excited to welcome Tom Sheehy as the new Outdoor Center Program Director at the Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA.

Tom brings a strong background in youth development and education, holding a Bachelor of Science in Elementary and Special Education. He also comes with extensive YMCA experience, most recently serving as a Day Camp Unit Director at YMCA Camp Tepee, where he mentored staff, built strong partnerships with families, and created engaging, inclusive programs for youth ages 3-15.

In his new role, Tom will serve as Camp Director for Camp Tepee and lead the development of new off-season outdoor programs, helping expand year-round opportunities for children and families to learn, grow, and connect with nature.

Tom's passion for experiential learning, outdoor education, and youth development will strengthen our programs and help create meaningful outdoor experiences for our community. We are thrilled to have him join our YMCA team.

COMMUNITY IN ACTION: TOGETHERHOOD AT THE WOODRUFF FAMILY YMCA

At the Woodruff Family YMCA, our Togetherhood members are the driving force behind many of the meaningful ways we connect with and support our community.

This dedicated group brings people together by organizing social gatherings, leading donation drives, and welcoming new members into the YMCA family. Their impact reaches far beyond our building. Over the past year, they collected pajamas for Dylan's Closet at Smilow Cancer Hospital, gathered toys for Toys for Tots through the United States Marine Corps, and encouraged neighbors throughout the community to join in giving.

Togetherhood volunteers also assembled "meal-in-a-bag" kits for our Purple Pantry to help families facing food insecurity. They celebrated the incredible 109th birthday of Helen, one of our cherished members, and hosted festive Valentine's breakfasts filled with homemade treats.

Through these thoughtful acts, Togetherhood members strengthen connections within the YMCA and throughout our community—reminding us that even small acts of kindness can bring people together in powerful ways.



GROWING OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILIES AT THE VALLEY YMCA

This year marked an exciting period of growth and impact for families across the Valley community.

At the Valley YMCA's Child Care Center, we expanded access to early childhood education by adding three new Early Start CT slots to our existing 38. This expansion allows us to provide additional classroom support while continuing to enhance the high-quality care and learning experiences families rely on.

We also began our reaccreditation cycle with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), reaffirming our commitment to maintaining the highest standards in early childhood education.

Through our valued partnership with the City of Ansonia, our school-age programs also expanded to new locations this year. As a result, we are now able to serve more than 250 children across the Valley—providing safe, supportive spaces where young people can learn, grow, and thrive.

Together, these efforts ensure that more children and families have access to the programs, care, and opportunities they need to succeed.

CATHRYN COULTER HONORED WITH NORTHEAST YMCA CAMP CONFERENCE RISING STAR AWARD

This winter, Cathryn Coulter, Summer Camp Director at YMCA Camp Hi-Rock, was recognized with the 2026 Rising Star Award by the Northeast YMCA Camp Conference.

Cathryn, known to many as Cat was selected from an impressive group of YMCA professionals representing overnight and day camps across the northeastern United States. The award celebrates emerging leaders who demonstrate exceptional dedication and impact in their work with youth and camp communities.

During the award presentation, Cat was recognized for her thoughtful and intentional leadership, her fantastic sense of humor, and her unwavering commitment to supporting campers, especially those facing extraordinary challenges. Her creativity, compassion, and ability to go above and beyond for campers and staff alike have made a lasting impression on everyone around her.

Remarkably, Cat earned this prestigious recognition just one year into her YMCA director career, a testament to her talent and passion for youth development.

Congratulations to Cat on this well-deserved honor and for the incredible impact she continues to make at Camp Hi-Rock and within the YMCA community.



SOUNDVIEW FAMILY YMCA NAMED NONPROFIT OF THE YEAR

The Soundview Family YMCA is proud to share that we have been named Nonprofit of the Year by the Shoreline Chamber of Commerce, an honor that reflects the strength and spirit of our entire community.

This recognition belongs to the many people who make the YMCA what it is every day: our dedicated staff, passionate volunteers, supportive members, and valued community partners. Together, they create a welcoming place where individuals and families can grow, connect, and thrive.

At the Soundview Family YMCA, our mission is brought to life through the shared commitment of people who believe in building a stronger community for all. This award celebrates the countless moments of caring, service, and connection that happen here every day.

Thank you to everyone who continues to believe in and support the YMCA's mission and who helps live out our values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

175 YEARS

HEALTHY KIDS DAY®

APRIL 18 | 10:00AM-1:00PM

Free To The Public!

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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

HAMDEN/NORTH HAVEN YMCA & NEW HAVEN YMCA YOUTH CENTER

COLOR RUN

FAMILY RUN & 5K TRAIL RUN

MAY 9, 2026 | 10:00AM FOR FAMILY COLOR RUN
10:30AM FOR THE 5K TRAIL RUN

Pre-registration fees: \$10 for the color run \$30 for the 5K trail run
Race day registration: \$15 for the color run \$35 for the 5K trail run

CAMP MOUNTAIN LAUREL
2705 DOWNES ROAD, HAMDEN CT, 06518

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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

ALPHA COMMUNITY SERVICES YMCA
A BRANCH OF THE CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

25TH ANNUAL WALK TO END HOMELESSNESS

Saturday, May 16, 2026
8:30AM Registration | 9:00AM Walk Start

\$35 PER WALKER

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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

LAKEWOOD-TRUMBULL YMCA

45TH ANNUAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

TEES FOR TOMORROW

MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026
WHITNEY FARMS GOLF COURSE
175 Shelton Rd, Monroe, CT 06468

11:30AM Registration/Lunch
1:00PM Shotgun Start
6:00PM Reception, Dinner, Auction, Raffle, Awards

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA

FOLLOW US:



CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA
1240 Chapel Street, New Haven, CT 06511
203-777-9622 | info@cccymca.org | cccymca.org