



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

cccymca.org

FALL 2022

IT'S ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

Dear Friends:

I hope that this message finds you and your families well and looking forward to a great fall season. I have been blessed in my career to have a group of mentors who have taken the time to offer valuable perspective on my growth as a Y professional. I have often referred to these moments as a *nudge* in the right direction. One of the biggest nudges (more like a *shove!*) came from our YMCA of the USA CEO who joined me in an elevator during a meeting break and asked me how things were going. Ready with my data, I launched into a regurgitation of how well my branch was doing in managing finances, making the board happy, cleaning the building, raising money, etc. He stopped me after a few sentences and said "No, Dave, how is your *community* doing? How many kids in your school district are on free or assisted lunch programs, and what are you doing to improve academic performance and help them lead a healthier life? How many single-parent families live in your community and what kind of support do you offer them? Who are your potential partners and what have you done to work more closely with them to strengthen a collective effort to serve your community?" I had no answers, and prayed for the elevator to stop so that I could get off. That 90-second meeting took place thirty years ago, and left an impression on me that has served as an inspiration and direction to this day – it's not about the Y, it's about our community.

Attending to the health of our YMCA is important - but it is not our *purpose*. The life-changing work that the Y does must be evaluated by the *measurable impact* that our volunteers and staff have on youth, families, and adults. Here are a few examples. Through the first six months of 2022, 23,873 low-income youth have received special support designed to prevent the achievement gap (up 29% from 2021), 5,346 youth have learned to swim and be safe around the water (up 15%), the number of chronically homeless in Bridgeport has remained very low due to the work of the Y and our partners in providing supportive services and creating new homes. The news, however, is not all good. The number of our neighbors experiencing food insecurity has grown in 2022 while we have served fewer meals this year (64,110) as compared to last year (83,831). Our hearts have been lifted by the growing number of committed volunteers (180) who have joined our rapidly expanding number of Togetherhood programs (15) – a figure that has doubled since 2021!

Thank you for your incredible support that allows the purpose of the Y to come alive in the spirit, mind, and body of those we serve.

Best wishes for a safe, happy, and healthy fall season.

Dave



David Stevenson
President & CEO



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BRANCH LOCATIONS

Alpha Community Services YMCA Bridgeport
Bridgeport YMCA
Fairfield YMCA
Hamden/North Haven YMCA
Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA
New Haven YMCA Youth Center
Soundview Family YMCA Branford
Stratford YMCA
Valley YMCA Ansonia
Woodruff Family YMCA Milford
YMCA Camp Hi-Rock Mt. Washington MA
Association Office New Haven

OUR MISSION

To put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

WELCOME TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Danielle Wilken, University of Bridgeport President, has joined the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA Board of Directors. She previously held positions of leadership at Goodwin University.

As an educator and parent, Danielle will bring a wealth of knowledge and passion to our board.



COMING TOGETHER FOR COMMUNITY

Central Connecticut Coast YMCA special events are exactly that - special! They're a chance for us to come together with others in our community for a common goal - the YMCA! They provide us with an opportunity to network, meet new people, and get to know our staff team in a relaxing atmosphere.

They are also an opportunity for attendees to learn more about the Y. Through event fees, sponsorships, live and silent auctions - funds are raised to help the Y provide financial assistance to all children and families so they can participate in Y programs. You may have heard the stories from some recipients at one of our events - no worries, we didn't see any tears.

So whether you're a golfer or a walker, whether you enjoy a dinner out or a gala - please remember the YMCA when organizing your social calendar.



Alpha Community Services YMCA **Home for the Holidays**, Thursday December 15 at 5:30pm
Alpha Community Services YMCA **Walk to End Homelessness**, Saturday May 20
Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA **Golf Tournament**, Monday May 22 Whitney Farms Golf Club
Soundview Family Y **Annual Benefit** Thursday, June 22 Woodwinds
Stratford YMCA **Golf Tournament**, Monday August 7 Mill River Country Club
Soundview Family YMCA **Golf Tournament**, Monday September 11 Lyman Orchards Golf Club

Or maybe you'd like to volunteer? A new Soundview Family Y member checked golfers into the tournament while George Perham chaired the Stratford YMCA Golf Tournament - for 18 straight years. There's a job for everyone.

Special events are not the only way, you can provide support for our Annual Campaign. In the first half of 2022, the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA provided financial assistance to over 4,000 youth. Scholarships were made possible thanks to your generosity to our **ANNUAL CAMPAIGN**.



Help us support our youth, families and those who need us most, please consider a financial donation to our **ANNUAL CAMPAIGN**. Visit www.cccymca.org/makeadifference/give.

DONATE FOR A BETTER US.

GROCERIES FOR THE STRATFORD COMMUNITY

The Stratford YMCA has been partnering with the Town of Stratford Community & Senior Services and Connecticut Food Share since 2020 to help families experiencing food insecurity. This continues to be a difficult time with the cost of food. Over the past two years, Drive-Thru Food Pantry events have been held monthly, providing free produce and shelf stable food.

Food insecurity is real in our community. According to the New Haven-based non-profit DataHaven, 17% of Connecticut adults have been unable to afford food at some point in the past year. The numbers are even larger for Black communities (25%) and in Latino communities (34%).

Having access to healthy meals and snacks provides a basic need to keep adults and children healthy and strong. Stratford YMCA staff members, Y Members, Y Volunteers, Community Members, Stratford High School Softball Teammates, have been among the many who have distributed groceries by Connecticut Food Share and placed bags into over 100 car trunks each month. Some months the lines of cars are quite long.

Beginning this fall, the program will be upgraded to a market style distribution. Families and individuals can walk up and have the option to choose the items that they want, twice each month.



COMMUNITY YOUTH PROGRAMS MADE POSSIBLE

The Bridgeport YMCA Ralphola Taylor Community Center is privileged to partner with the WEL Foundation and Walter E. Lockett, Jr. to support inner-city youth in our Bridgeport Community. For over 30 years, the Foundation has invested in YMCA programming. Yearly, over 600 youth, ages 8-22 are able to participate in Y classes and events thanks to the generosity of Walter E. Lockett, Jr.

Walter has a very strong tie to the Bridgeport community. Known as an American former basketball player, Walter starred at the prep level for Kolbe High School in his hometown of Bridgeport, CT before playing at Ohio University for the Bobcats. Walter was drafted to the NBA with the Detroit Pistons during his junior year of college. Walter founded the Walter E. Lockett Foundation (WEL) Foundation in 2013, concentrating his philanthropic efforts in the Bridgeport, Greater New Haven and Waterbury communities where youth are in dire need of additional support programs.

Ralphola Taylor Community Center youth are offered numerous academic, educational, athletic and extracurricular opportunities through this special sponsorship - Leadership/Youth Development Training, Remedial Numeracy and Literacy and SAT/ACT Training (Linear Learning), STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts & math) and team sport programs. They engaged recently with CT Senator Richard Blumenthal. Youth athletes practice daily, learning basketball fundamentals. They were treated to a live professional Westchester Knicks Basketball game. And participants in our 'Little Scientists' program received everyday toiletries. Our summer day camp participants ate healthy breakfasts, lunches and snacks funded through the program.



We are thankful for the philanthropic efforts of Walter E. Lockett, Jr. and the WEL Foundation.

A SUMMER TO REMEMBER

What a joy it was to jump all the way back into camp this summer with YMCA Camp Hi-Rock cabins at full capacity, enrollment back at 2019 levels and counselors and campers back from all over the world, coming together to make new friends and reunite with old.

We are thankful to have served over 2,604 day campers at nine of our Connecticut branches, and 1,004 overnight campers at YMCA Camp Hi-Rock. That's growth of 6% and 50%, respectively, as compared to our 2021 camping season.



SEEN AROUND OUR COMMUNITY



Congressman Jim Himes visited the Bridgeport Y Summer Day Camp to see the Y in action and to be recognized for his support of the Summer Enrichment Grant.



US Senator Chris Murphy and Hamden Mayor Lauren Garrett visited YMCA Camp Mountain Laurel. We thanked the Senator for his leadership and support of the Summer Enrichment Grant.



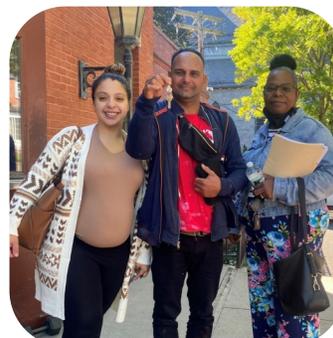
State Representative Joe Zullo and Michelle Benivegna from East Haven Mayor Joseph Carfora's Office visited YMCA Camp Hayes to observe our program, watch a gaga match and try archery.



Once upon a time, Brent and Stephanie worked at the Fairfield Y where they met, fell in love and are now married! Congrats!



Happy Birthday Woodruff Family Y Member Helen. WOW 106 years old! Here's to happiness and health.



We're excited to share that Alpha Community Services YMCA client Daniel has been provided a new home at the Y Crescent Street Building.



State Representative Robyn Porter toured YMCA Camp Mountain Laurel, visiting with our campers and staff. She even tried archery!