



GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA



2022 ANNUAL
CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION &
**VOLUNTEER
SPIRIT AWARDS**

MARCH 30, 2022

Inspire. Empower. Uplift.



**"EVERYBODY CAN BE
GREAT. BECAUSE ANYBODY
CAN SERVE. YOU ONLY NEED
A HEART FULL OF GRACE. A
SOUL GENERATED BY LOVE."**

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.




GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA 2022 VOLUNTEER SPIRIT AWARDS

We, at Greater Somerset County YMCA, are honored to celebrate the selfless spirit of our volunteers of all ages, who give their time and effort to make a difference at the Y and in the community. We are tremendously grateful to all of our volunteers who, through their contributions, help to advance the Y's mission, which is to strengthen community.

The Volunteer Spirit Awards aptly honor Y volunteers whose generous spirit helps the Y to provide the support and resources needed for everyone to thrive.

We are proud to recognize this year's
award recipients.





YOUTH AWARD TEEN ADVOCATES

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA

Sami Bender, Mia Capizzi, Hanne deBie, Brian Gannon, Tessa Garner, Sophia Kaiser, Jenna Langer, and Andy Moss are all part of a hardworking group of passionate, articulate, and creative high school volunteers who contribute to Somerset Hills YMCA's Branch Board. Throughout the pandemic, they have brought positive energy, different perspectives, and useful ideas to support the Y's work. These teens are tireless advocates of the Y's mission and display caring, sensitivity, inclusiveness, and kindness in all that they do.

"We give back to the Y because it has given us so much throughout our childhood. The Y is a place where everyone is accepted and given the same opportunities to be the best person they can be. Volunteering means so much to us because, at the Y, you can genuinely see the difference you are making in other people's lives."



ADULT AWARD

ERWIN HERNANDEZ & NEAL BITUIN

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

During the pandemic, Greater Somerset County YMCA's STORM swim team was limited to virtual swim meets with no spectators. Erwin volunteered to livestream the events on YouTube and Neal offered to help. They established the best livestream channel in NJ Swimming. With each meet, Erwin and Neal expanded their format with new enhancements. This creativity allowed parents and other spectators to cheer on their swimmers from home just as if they were watching ESPN. It also provided college recruitment opportunities. It has been a successful endeavor.

"The Y is an important resource to the community. The staff and swim team coaches invest in the health and well-being of our children and everyone. We've been thankful for the opportunity to livestream swim meets for everyone to cheer on the team during the pandemic."



FAMILY AWARD

CAROL MILLS & FAMILY

PRINCETON YMCA

For years, Carol and her family have served as champions of the annual holiday Giving Tree that benefits 50–100 children and teens in Princeton Young Achievers, Preschool, and ACE programs. Each year, they design and create beautiful decorations for the tree to inspire members to participate in the gift giving initiative. Carol and her family ensure the program runs seamlessly through their vision, creativity, generosity, and devotion.



ACTIVE OLDER ADULT AWARD

ARTIE SANDERS

PRINCETON YMCA

Artie is often called the “Mayor” of Princeton YMCA. He stops by the Y on a daily basis to greet staff and members. Pre-pandemic, Artie helped us to launch volunteer initiatives that support the community, and lends a helping hand whenever he can. He has had a tremendous influence on our organization by lifting spirits through his great energy.

“Thank you for this honor, but it’s the Y that should be rewarded! Y staff and programs are outstanding in helping to maintain good health. It’s a wonderful social environment for everyone, including seniors like me. The Y is the BEST!”



GROUP AWARD

RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL VOCATIONAL STUDIES TEAM

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA

As a safe space for all, the Y provides a welcoming environment for inclusive programs that encourage everyone to reach their full potential. For over 12 years, Somerset Hills YMCA has partnered with the Ridge High School Vocational Studies Program for students to learn job sampling and life skills at the Y. Weekly, students in this program engage in property maintenance tasks for the building and grounds. What began as one job coach and one student has grown to be several job coaches and numerous students who volunteer over 2,000 hours annually to keep the Y in top condition. This year, we are thrilled to honor the following Ridge High School students: Sarah Altonji, Spencer Doborowski, Jess Johnson, Erin Laffey, Tim Ryan, Jordan Selvin, Anish Vasu, Bryan Volpi, Jessica Walpow, and Vincent Xie.



GROUP AWARD

STORM SWIM TEAM PARENT LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

When Somerset Hills and Somerset Valley Swim Teams merged to create a unified Greater Somerset County YMCA STORM Swim Team, in 2021, Rachelle Senzon, Rich Ruffer, Kim Lamont, and Lauren Barnicle stepped forward to volunteer on the Parent Leadership Committee. These four volunteers led the merged team through the pandemic and a coaching leadership change, which allowed the team to practice safely and as often as possible. Their endless hours resulted in establishing 10 subcommittees to focus on specific support functions, as well as new processes, strategic initiatives, and goals to build a strong foundation for future team success.

"Greater Somerset County YMCA's competitive swim program has provided enriching experiences for families in and out of the pool. We volunteer to give back to an organization that has strengthened our children's lives and the community at large."



LEADERSHIP AWARD

BILL GRIPPO

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP YMCA

Bill's experiences at the Y during his youth have fueled his passion for the Y; he knows firsthand the impact the Y has on the community. As a longtime resident, respected school principal, and fierce advocate for Franklin Township, Bill has always envisioned a YMCA in the community and set his sights on working toward that vision. Over the past three years, Bill has been leading a task force of passionate, engaged Franklin Township volunteers who, together, have advanced relationships and opportunities to deepen the Y's impact in the community and establish a foundation of support. Bill's selfless spirit is limitless.

"I am deeply honored and humbled with this award. It is my dream to see a YMCA facility become a reality in our wonderful, diverse community of Franklin Township. Our task force is pursuing this opportunity with great energy because we know that so many families and individuals will benefit from the Y's programs and services. I thank all of the volunteers and Y staff for the ongoing commitment to this vision and the Y's mission."



LIVING OUR CAUSE AWARD

JULIA ZAUNER

BRIDGEWATER YMCA & SOMERVILLE YMCA

For the past two years, Julia has led the Annual Campaign for Bridgewater and Somerville YMCAs. Organized and determined, Julia is an amazing partner to branch leadership and her fellow board members in working toward the success of the campaign. She is creative in her advocacy and readily shares ideas to further promote the Y's reach; her positive outlook is infectious.

"At a young age, I learned the importance of sharing one's talent and time for the common good from my mother and grandmother. I have many fond memories of my experiences at the Y, it has always been a part of my life. The Y is an outstanding, top-tier nonprofit that has a positive impact on so many lives. I am honored to serve on the branch board and value the relationships I have built with fellow volunteers."



RAY OF LIGHT

STEPHANIE MOORE

HILLSBOROUGH YMCA

Stephanie has been a Y member for over 4 years and is an avid swimmer on the Masters Swim Team. In addition to sharing her time and talent with the Togetherhood® Volunteer Committee, last summer, she volunteered in the Rise Up program to help at-risk 2nd grade students with literacy and reading. Her efforts helped to ensure the children were prepared for the next academic year, following a year of virtual learning. As a member and a volunteer, Stephanie brings her positive energy each time she walks through the Y's door.

"My commitment to volunteering at the Y stems from believing in the Y's mission to strengthen community and empower people to reach their full potential. I volunteer because the world needs more kindness and it can start with my one helping hand."



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

STAR FISH FOOD PANTRY

PLAINFIELD YMCA

Pat Bixel and the Star Fish Food Pantry team have consistently supported the Y's food security program in Plainfield. Each week, they provide 65 meal bags for under-resourced neighbors who walk to the food distribution site to receive assistance. Star Fish volunteers greet clients with dignity and a warm welcome, as well as assist with meal drop-off and deliveries. Through the strong partnership with Star Fish Food Pantry, the Y is able to serve over 200 households weekly.

"Star Fish believes in Plainfield YMCA because we trust that the Y continuously works to benefit neighbors. Our partnership has a meaningful impact on children and adults in Plainfield who experience food insecurity. Particularly, over the past two years, we formed a strong alliance with Plainfield YMCA Food Security Project, which continues today. We are grateful to work with the Y to support the community of Plainfield."



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD PEOPLECARE CENTER FOR NONPROFITS

BRIDGEWATER YMCA & SOMERVILLE YMCA

Strong partnerships make the community stronger, particularly in the face of crisis, and that is true of the partnership between PeopleCare Center and Somerville YMCA. These are just a few of the many ways PeopleCare Center has supported the Y's mission over the past two years: meal & gift card donations to the Y's Thanksgiving and Christmas food distribution events; food drives to support food distribution and the Little Free Pantry; 100 meals provided for under-resourced families in the Y's Spring Break food support initiative; and, financial support of the Y's child care families. Additionally, in the wake of Hurricane Ida when Somerville YMCA was flooded, PeopleCare Center offered the Y use of its space for in-person group exercise classes, as well as volunteers to support the Y's community focused initiatives.

"Partnering with the Y allows PeopleCare Center to have a direct impact on our community and the individuals that reside within our community. The impact is immediate, and the difference made is visible."



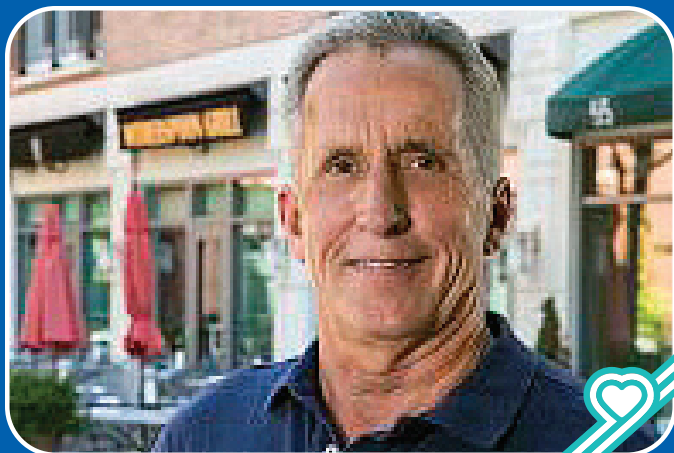
BOARD LEADERSHIP AWARD

KIERAN ANDERSON

PLAINFIELD YMCA

Kieran has fond memories of growing up at Plainfield Area YMCA's summer camp and, as an adult, he's been thrilled to have the opportunity to give back to the Y that has given him so much. From 2008 to 2017, Kieran was a member of Plainfield Area YMCA's Board of Directors and became board chair. When Plainfield Area YMCA experienced financial hardship in 2017, Kieran was a key stakeholder in developing a relationship with Greater Somerset County YMCA that ultimately resulted in Greater Somerset County YMCA applying for and being awarded the Plainfield service area. In 2020, a branch board was commissioned for Plainfield YMCA, a branch of Greater Somerset County YMCA. Kieran became Chair of the branch board and has been deeply engaged in board development and recruitment. Kieran is a passionate, cause-driven leader and fundraiser. He consistently contributes his leadership, ingenuity, and dedication to strengthen our organization, to deepen the Y's community impact, and to transform the lives of neighbors.

"As a child who grew up at the Y, I am thrilled my life has led me to a place where I can now give back to my community and the Y mission, like so many before me. I am so proud to be a part of Greater Somerset County YMCA. I believe that partnerships and philanthropy will help to strengthen the impact that we make in Plainfield, the town that I love."



PHILANTHROPY AWARD

JACK MORRISON

PRINCETON YMCA

A well-known and respected restaurateur and business leader in Princeton, Jack generously offered to underwrite a Harvest Moon benefit event for the Y last fall. Jack, who is a former board member, wanted to give back to the community and, after a long period of isolation due to the pandemic, bring everyone together for a good cause. Jack planned, coordinated, and covered all of the expenses associated with the outdoor party under the stars, which was attended by 230 people and netted more than \$45,000 for the Y's mission.

"The YMCA is a 'boots on the ground' organization. In my forty years of being in Princeton, I've seen firsthand the positive impact of the Y on the families in our community. Supporting the YMCA is clearly a great investment in the development and future of our children."



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

JAY PERANTONI

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

As an architect and urban systems planner, Jay has more than 30 years of professional design experience, primarily in the public sector of educational environments, community centers, and planning services for non-profit organizations. Jay has served on Greater Somerset County YMCA's Board of Directors since 2015 and, prior to that, was a longtime volunteer for Somerset Valley YMCA. In all, Jay has served in a leadership capacity for 22 years. In his role as Chair of the Property Development Committee, Jay has strengthened the committee to achieve its objectives that include the Facility Development Strategy. His leadership has contributed to significant reinvestment projects including the renovation of Somerville YMCA's wellness center and locker rooms, as well as the 14,000 square foot expansion of Somerset Hills YMCA's wellness center and multipurpose studios. Additionally, as a true champion of the Y's mission, Jay is actively engaged in the Annual Campaign.

"My wife, Janet, and I volunteer because we are blessed with opportunities that resonate with us. Beyond a path to health and fitness, the Y has afforded us access to help in our home branch, the Y association, and among our neighbors. We enjoy our lifetime through the Y."

CAMPAIGNER RECOGNITION

THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN STORYTELLERS

Anthony Alu
Pam Ambrose
Kavita Amesur
Kieran Anderson
Danielle Annuzzi
Joseph Antico
Kate Bech
Keshon Bennett
Paul Biondi
Diane Blackburn
Elizabeth Bolen
Michelle Bouwman
Matt Boyd
Robyn Burke
Gary Burke
Margret Butler
Peter Caputo
David Carciari
Jason Carter
John Cassimatis
Kelly Castro
Nazesh Cattelona
Neeraj Chander
Stephen Clarke
Hailey Clinton
Jenn Colodney
Debra Conover
Rachel Covert
Charles Craig, III
Brian Crouthamel
Kendra de Zutter
Ashley Devivio
Bobby Dobra
Fred Dour
Will Dove
Mary Beth Drake
Gaston Duhart
David Eilbacher
Christian Esola
Marilyn Esposito
Ely Fall
Bob Fiocco
Kate Fleschler

Brooke Formica
Matthew Freedman
David Gannaway
Peripedes Gondim
Bruce Goodman
John Gorman
Sarah Graham
Ben Green
Marc Greenberger
Douglas Grierson
Michael Grippo
Chris Harris
Christopher Hayevy
Barbara Henderson
Rachel Horowitz
Mark Irwin
PJ Jayachandran
Richard Jones
Cindy Kay
Heidi Kelleher
Margo Langer
Megeen Laska
Susan Lattmann
Lisa LaVecchia
Gabriela Lazarte
Judith Lee
Karyn B. Lightcap
Lamar Mackson
Cameron Manning
Andrea Marumoto
John Masi
Jill Matassa
Veronica Mayes
Ana McCarthy
Dan McCauley
Jesse McCrea
Sean McKenna
John McManus
Eric Meshirer
Donna Meucc Nejad
Stephen Miller, JD
Michael Moshier
Jon Munzer

Adam Murrison
Christopher Nassan
Edward Norgard
Deborah Nungester
Stephen Oliver
Melissa O'Neill Walczak
Michael Osterman
Shilpa Pai, MD
Jonathan Palma
Lisa Pensabene
Jay Perantoni
Virgen Perez
Louis Petto
John Radice
Arthur Raynes
Alexandra Rebay
Colleen Reh Sweeney
Tony Rogers
Gregory Romano
Michael Roseborough
Sally Roser
Marilyn Rovira
Kathleen Russo
Jim Ryan
Peter Sharpless
Jeffrey Steinhorn
Kelly Stoffers
Kristen Sudol
Anju Thomas
Greg Toombs
Luis Vaello Silva
Nate Vaughn
Sylvia Velez
Manny Vidal
Alex Voitovich
Lisa Wax
Carolyn Wellington
Mana Winters
Ruth Ann Wisnewski
Julia Zauner
Paul Zeger
Leigh Zink
Paul Zoidis

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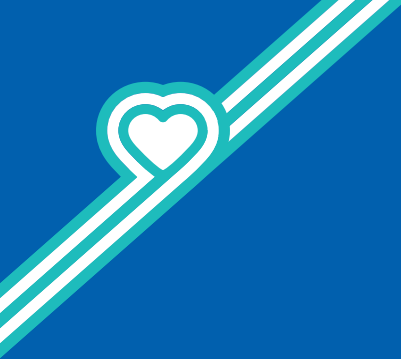
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|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Kieran Anderson, Chair | Natasha Hemmings | Anju Thomas |
| Kate Fleischer | Lamar Mackson | Nate Vaughn |
| David Gannaway | Sean McKenna | Carolyn Wellington |
| Marc Greenberger | Tony Rogers | Paul Zoitis |

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| Will Dove | Shilpa Pai, MD | |

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GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

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Greater Somerset County YMCA is a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose and each other. The Y empowers everyone – no matter who they are or where they're from – by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. For information about Greater Somerset County YMCA and financial assistance, visit us at [www.gscymca.org](#).