



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and
Supporters,



Children are our future...it's a phrase often heard, and one that reminds me of our Y's important, life-changing work focused on helping children and teens to reach their full potential.

Each day, Y staff inspire kids to live healthy, meaningful, and well connected lives. We encourage kids to participate in programs and opportunities that build understanding, empathy, relationships, and emotional maturity; we inspire fundamental values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility; and we foster positive behaviors for learning, work, and life.

We hope this issue of Transforming Lives helps you to see the meaningful difference you make in kids' lives through your support of the Y's cause. Your belief in and support of the Y's mission fuels our ability to ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Together, through financial assistance and community outreach programs, we change the trajectory of countless lives and uplift our community. I am consistently amazed by the accomplishments of all the children and teens involved in Y programs.

Your generosity propels the truly good work happening inside the walls of the Y to nurture our future leaders. On behalf of everyone who benefits from your generosity, thank you.

Gratefully,

David M. Carcieri

David M. Carcieri
President/CEO

TRANSFORMING LIVES



SUMMER 2022



SUMMER SMILES Y Camp

Summer is a time to relax, recharge, and refresh. It is a season that most children anticipate with great excitement as a welcome break from school; yet, it doesn't need to be a break from learning.

During the summer months, the Y is full of discovery for kids. In our camp programs, there is an abundance of opportunities that allow children to learn experientially. Each day, our campers are immersed in activities that encourage them to unleash ingenuity, talents, and fun, all while making friends and lifelong memories.

We believe that a successful summer camp begins with the counselors. That is the reason we train our counselors in character development skills, as well as skills rooted in communication, collaboration, and creativity so they, in turn, can inspire the same among the campers.

The past two years have caused children to miss out on friendships, fun, and enriching experiences that are so important to their personal growth. However, summer at the Y allows kids to reconnect and gain the benefits of social-emotional, academic, character and physical development. It is a well-rounded approach to enriching the whole child.

Over 1,700 children benefitted from our camp programs this summer, many of whom would not have had the opportunity were it not for your generosity. On behalf of the children, thank you!





Happy campers enjoyed a summer full of fun, as well as a visit from Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman and Somerset County Commissioners.

WINGS TO FLY New Camp SOAR

Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. This summer, we were thrilled to offer even more children with that opportunity. In July, we launched a new, five-week summer program called Camp SOAR for children from under-resourced families who live in Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, Manville, and Franklin Township. Camp SOAR was a collaborative program made possible by a grant from Somerset County, hosted by Franklin Township YMCA, and held at Colonial Park in partnership with the Somerset County Parks Commission.

The camp provided a Summer of Outdoor Adventure and Recreation (SOAR) to over 130 children of families who were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and Hurricane Ida. The affordable, enriching camp included transportation, daily meals, and a versatile setting for a myriad of activities, so parents could work without worry. Daily activities revolved around STEM, Arts & Crafts, Sports & Games, Nature Walks, Mini-golf, Splash Pad, Literacy, Summer Learning Loss Prevention, Social Emotional Learning, Team Building, and Character Development. Additionally, Camp SOAR offered a Counselor in Training Program for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders, and created 40 new job opportunities.

On August 5th, Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman and Somerset County's Commissioners visited Camp SOAR. During the visit, the Congresswoman shared her gratitude, "For generations, the YMCA has been a fixture of communities in Somerset County. From providing outdoor recreation opportunities to offering extracurricular educational programs, I am so grateful for everything the Y has done for underserved youth," said Rep. Watson Coleman. "I'm committed to using my role as a member of Congress to advocate for investments in future generations. Camp SOAR will change children's lives, and I couldn't be prouder to support it."

Commissioner Doug Singleterry commented, "Congresswoman Watson Coleman is a leader who understands the importance of supporting vulnerable communities; they are the focus of this camp. When you look at the smiles on the faces of the children, you can't help but understand the life-changing impact these weeks of summer camp will have for many of the children."

Commissioner Director Shanel Robinson added, "We as a collective body of commissioners and elected officials at the county are appreciative of all the work the YMCA is doing, but more importantly that we are partnering with them to make this happen."

Our hope is that our campers and counselors gained lifelong memories, and that they've been inspired to soar to new heights.

BRIGHT FUTURES Fun Learning at Camp

Camp opens a door to new experiences for so many children, which was certainly true at Plainfield YMCA this summer. Beyond traditional activities, such as sports, games, art, and science, Plainfield campers also had the benefit of social-emotional learning, swim lessons, and other enrichment activities like archery. What was the best part of it all? To them, it was all just FUN! Thanks to the support of our donors, there were many "firsts" for our campers...the first time making friends; the first time being in a structured program as many did not have the opportunity to attend preschool; and, the first time learning to swim. Your generous support of the Y opens a door to a brighter future for the children.



Your generous support helps to strengthen community.

SAFE HAVEN Y's Foundational Experiences

This summer Congressman Tom Malinowski visited Hillsborough YMCA to eagerly learn more about the Y's reinvestment plans for the facility, which will allow the Y to deepen its mission impact.

During his visit, Mr. Malinowski enjoyed a tour of summer camp and meeting with camp counselors and campers. He was especially pleased to meet campers Maksym and Polina, who are 11 year-old twins from Kyiv, Ukraine. The twins are staying in New Jersey with their mother and relatives while their father remains in the war-torn country. Maksym and Polina shared how much they were learning at camp and, particularly, how much they enjoyed playing sports including basketball and soccer. Thanks to the support of our donors, the children are in the Y's safe, nurturing environment making friends.

Mr. Malinowski, who was born in Communist Poland during the height of the Cold War, shared with Maksym and Polina that, when he was six, he and his mother fled to the United States and he grew up in Central Jersey. He added that the YMCA played an important role in his early years that helped change the trajectory of his life. "I was thrilled to connect with camp counselors and children enjoying the last days of summer camp. They are why we do this – to provide opportunity and access to everyone in our community," said Mr. Malinowski.

Pictured is Congressman Malinowski with District VP of Operations Ben Green and CEO David Carcieri during the tour of Hillsborough YMCA's camp and facility.



THROUGH YOUR SUPPORT OF THE Y, YOU TRANSFORM LIVES EVERY DAY.



TOMORROW'S CHANGEMAKERS BOLD & GOLD Summer Experience

A significant, and highly rewarding, aspect of the Y's purpose is helping young people to discover their potential. With the support of our benefactors and partners, we open doors to resources and possibilities for local children and teens by tapping into social capital, as well as providing experiences that broaden their perspectives and their worlds.

Princeton YMCA's ACE (Accept Compete Excel) program has been successful at reducing chronic school absenteeism by building connections and supports for 8-12th grade students who are most at risk of falling behind and lowering their chances of future success. Our Princeton YMCA team consistently seeks opportunities to keep ACE students engaged and learning, which led to a partnership with YMCA of the Pines. As part of its summer camp offerings, YMCA of the Pines offers a nationwide Y-USA summer experience called BOLD & GOLD (Boys & Girls Outdoor Leadership Development).

This summer, Princeton YMCA was able to connect several of the ACE program students with the opportunity to participate in the BOLD & GOLD camp. The rigorous, outdoor leadership experience gives the teens a deeper understanding of their own lives, and inspires them to be effective, inclusive changemakers in a global society. The camp is steeped in activities that teach initiative, adaptability, communication skills, accountability, and responsibility.

"My 13 year-old daughter, Alex, is becoming a confident young woman through all of the Y's programs. I was so grateful she had the opportunity to participate in the BOLD & GOLD camp this summer through a financial assistance scholarship. She had an amazing adventure away from any electronics...camping outdoors, hiking more than 26 miles, learning to cook, looking at the stars in the night sky, and making friends. It was a supportive group of counselors and girls. They learned to make connections and to rely on each other. Through her experience, Alex gained a new perspective on life. Now, she truly values the importance of relationships, friends, and family. When she came home, she gave me a long, tight hug. What more could a mom want?" – Candida, Alex's mom



Pictured is Alex (left) with a GOLD program camp counselor.

HEAD OF THE CLASS

Summer Interns

With Youth Development as a key pillar of the Y's mission, we continually seek opportunities for children and teens to discover their full potential. For the second summer, we partnered with Greater Raritan Workforce Development to provide summer internships to teenage students who worked in our Basking Ridge, Hillsborough, Princeton, and Somerville locations. The students contributed to initiatives related to membership, operations, and finance. All of the interns appreciated the value of the experience toward their personal growth. Your advocacy of the Y's mission enhances our programs that inspire children and teens as future leaders.

"Working at the Y this summer has been a truly positive experience. I consider myself to be a shy and reserved person, but my job at the Y helped me break out of my shell. Everyone on staff was a terrific mentor to me. They were warm, genuine, welcoming, and incredibly helpful. The staff encouraged me to try new things to help me build my professional and personal skills, like developing relationships and serving customers. Now, I feel much more comfortable starting conversations. I really enjoyed helping people at the Y; I felt as if I were actually making a difference in people's days and lives. This has been the best and most fulfilling job ever; I am so motivated by the Y's mission. The Y brings everyone together and it builds connections. The Y is a light to our community." – Autumn, Bridgewater & Somerville YMCAs

"My summer internship taught me professional skills that you can't learn in school. It helped me to be more open-minded, to express my creativity, to take risks in order to learn, to adapt to different personalities, and to take on leadership roles. I was inspired by the Y employees. They are friendly, dependable, supportive, collaborative, and committed to the Y's mission and success. The Y goes above and beyond to support the community. Through my internship at the Y, I really feel that I was able to give back to my community. This job helped me to gain a new perspective on working...appreciating the work you are doing is more important than the money you are making. I know that the work I did made an impact, and that feels great." – Sanjiv, Somerset Hills YMCA

Autumn is pictured in photo above, and Sanjiv in photo below.



FOR ALL

Supporting & Celebrating Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

At GSCYMCA, we recognize that in order to be truly "for all," we need to lead with equity. That means identifying and removing barriers to help everyone to thrive and providing opportunities for individuals to access the unique support they need.

Our Y is made up of people of all ages and backgrounds working side-by-side to strengthen community. Together, we strive to ensure that everyone, regardless of ability, age, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender, gender expression, gender identity, ideology, income, national origin, race, or sexual orientation has the opportunity to reach their full potential with dignity. Our core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility guide everything we do.

To fulfill our purpose, GSCYMCA is committed to being an inclusive organization and leveraging our collective impact to address social inequities. These are a few of our ongoing commitments:

- Support and advance diversity at all levels of staffing so our Ys reflect the diversity of the communities we serve
- Build bridges among all people and create brave spaces for the safe exchange of diverse ideas and perspectives
- Make anti-racism training and resources available to Y staff and volunteers
- Uphold high standards for intentional, inclusive language to ensure that people of all Dimensions of Diversity feel welcome and included at the Y
- Encourage employee resource groups created/led by and for staff of diverse backgrounds and experiences as supportive networks for professional development, mentoring, education, increased awareness, and engagement

Our member-led Cultural Engagement Committees celebrate the uniquely diverse and vibrant communities served through our branches. We invite you to join us as we explore rich cultural traditions, holidays and festivities, as well as national awareness initiatives throughout the year, including: Diwali Festival, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Holi Festival, Lunar New Year Festival, Welcoming Week, and more.



READY. SET.
SUMMER!

You are...CAMPtastic!

You made summer smiles possible!

**Your generosity made a summer full of
fun, friendship, learning, and lifelong
memories possible.**

On behalf of our campers...

THANK YOU!



GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

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BRIDGEWATER YMCA | FRANKLIN TWP YMCA | HILLSBOROUGH YMCA | PLAINFIELD YMCA | PRINCETON YMCA | SOMERSET HILLS YMCA | SOMERVILLE YMCA

The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening the community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. At Greater Somerset County YMCA, we believe everyone, regardless of age, income or background, should have the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For information about Greater Somerset County YMCA and financial assistance, visit us at gscymca.org.