



TRANSFORMING LIVES

2023, ISSUE 2

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Excitement is building at the Y!



This year marks our 150th Anniversary. We look forward to celebrating at our Sesquicentennial Gala on November 3 and hope you will join us.

Over the past century and a half, we have achieved meaningful milestones, built lasting relationships, and, most importantly, transformed countless lives. Thanks to the enduring support of individuals like you, Greater Somerset County YMCA has been the bedrock of positive change in our society. Your dedication to our cause has not only allowed us to continue our vital work but also has provided us with the inspiration to reach new heights in our mission.

Our 150th anniversary is not only a time for reflection but also an opportunity to look forward to the future, as we chart the next chapter in our journey of service and growth. In today's fast-paced world, where the needs of our communities are ever-evolving, the Y plays an indispensable role in building resilient, compassionate, and thriving neighborhoods.

Beyond offering vital services; the Y is the heart and soul of the community. It strengthens the social fabric of the community by offering a sense of belonging, support, and hope that is immeasurable in value.

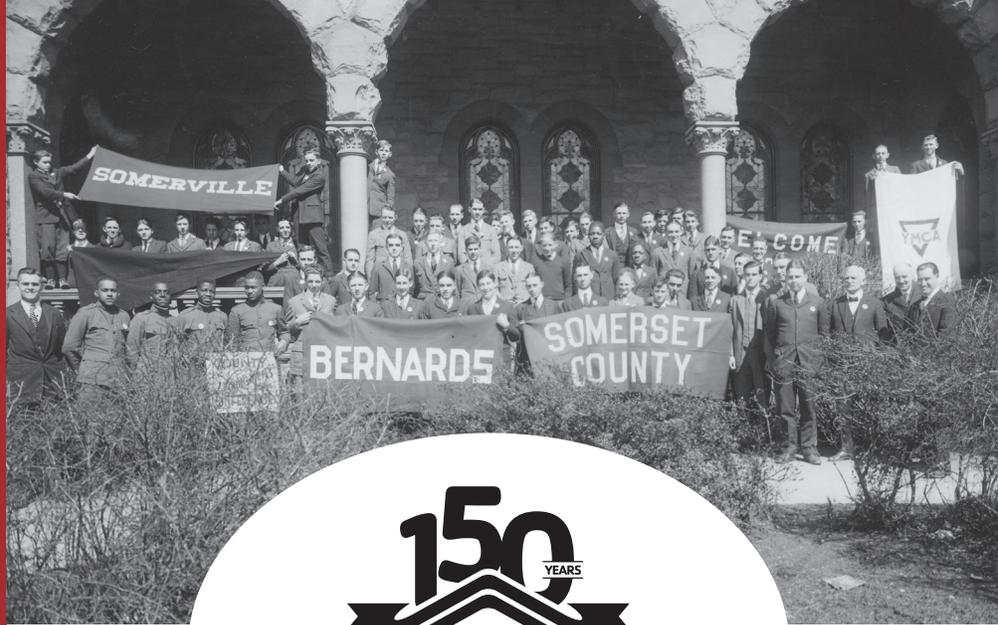
Thank you for being an essential part of our Y's history and legacy. We look forward to celebrating this momentous occasion with you and continuing our shared mission of making a positive impact on our community. We hope you will find just a few examples of community impact in this edition of Transforming Lives.

Together, we make a difference that ripples through generations.

Gratefully,

David M. Carcieri

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President/CEO



SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION 150 Years of Strengthening Community

In 1873, the first typewriter was sold, the patent for jeans was awarded to Levi Strauss, Susan B. Anthony was fined for voting for U.S. President, and our Y was founded. This year marks the 150 years of transforming lives and strengthening the community for Greater Somerset County YMCA.

Our robust history began with the YMCA of Somerville which expanded to Somerset County YMCA in 1914 to serve more communities. In 1948, Somerset County YMCA split into Somerset Hills YMCA and Somerset Valley YMCA. During 67 years of operating separately, both organizations continued to grow. Somerset Valley YMCA constructed Somerville YMCA, purchased the Bridgewater Pool that became Bridgewater YMCA, and constructed Hillsborough YMCA; while Somerset Hills YMCA built a facility in Basking Ridge and completed several expansion projects throughout the years. In 2015, the two Y organizations reunited as Somerset County YMCA following a unanimous vote by both Boards of Directors. Somerset County YMCA was awarded the Plainfield service area in 2019 and, in 2022, Princeton YMCA merged into the organization. The expanded service area precipitated a name change to Greater Somerset County YMCA to reflect all of Somerset County and parts of the surrounding counties.

On Friday, November 3, we will celebrate this milestone anniversary at our Sesquicentennial Gala. We invite you, our dedicated benefactors, to step into history with us and be part of something extraordinary. The gala will be held at The Marigold in Somerset, and we will honor 21 individuals and families who have been integral to the sustainability of Greater Somerset County YMCA's mission, including: The Bateman Family, Susan Doherty, Lois and Neil Gagnon, James Gibson, The Hockenbury Family, Patricia Hurley, Mark Irwin, Lauren Luik, The McLachlan Family, John McManus, Peter Olsen, Michael Osterman, The Perantoni Family, Leslie Quick III, Robert Raymar, The Raynes Family, Harry Smith, The Stires Family, Sylvester Sullivan (posthumous recognition), Andrea Thorne, and Tad Waldbauer.

For additional information and tickets, please visit gscymca.org/150 or contact Stephanie DiPilla at 908 630 3535 x8501. We hope to see you there!





Moments from our Juneteenth and Pride celebrations pictured above.

Y FOR ALL DEI Initiatives

The Y is a place where all people can find support, fellowship, belonging, and hope. In a spirit of standing in support of all people, the Y is committed to bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives, and generations, to ensure that everyone has access to the opportunities, relationships, and support necessary to learn, grow, and thrive.

Over the past few months, we've proudly supported initiatives that celebrate the diverse fabric of our communities.

Juneteenth was celebrated in meaningful ways across our branches. From reading books and educating children in our child care programs, to hosting celebrations with key note speakers and minority owned businesses, to participating in community parades; we were thrilled to celebrate the important holiday inside and outside of the Y.

Also in June, we celebrated Pride Month in our communities. At Princeton YMCA, we were thrilled to, once again, host the Princeton Pride Parade. It was wonderful to see the support of the community and elected officials including Princeton Mayor Mark Freda, NJ State Senator Andrew Zwicker, and U.S. Representative Andy Kim.

At Bridgewater YMCA, we hosted a fun, family-friendly Pride BBQ. The event was sponsored by our Y's LGBTQ+ Employee Resource Group, the NJ Department of Children & Families, MAEVE of Somerville, and RWJUHS Babs Siperstein Proud Center. The community came together in the spirit of love and unity, and everyone had a great time.

GROWING STRONGER Hillsborough YMCA Renovation

Our Hillsborough facility is bursting at the seams with activity and energy. As membership continues to grow, we look for new ways to help our whole community grow stronger.

Built in 1998, Hillsborough YMCA currently serves more than 2,000 members and participants. Everyone finds a place of shared purpose when they come through the doors of Hillsborough YMCA. Our programs bring people of all ages and abilities together for aquatics, fitness, health and wellness, enrichment, sports, recreation, personal training and more. And for children and families, there is daycare and early education, full-day kindergarten, school age childcare, school vacation care, summer camp, and babysitting.

With a commitment to meeting the health and wellness needs of members and the community, we are reinvesting in the facility to best serve area residents. Hillsborough YMCA's revitalization plan, currently underway, will renovate and expand the Wellness Center, upgrade the locker rooms, create a universal locker room, update ventilation and climate control, build new classrooms, and modernize the Welcome Center.

Through our "Y NOW" capital campaign, we remove barriers and create vibrant, welcoming, and inclusive spaces for healthier lifestyles. It is in thanks to our passionate supporters that we are able to continue building a healthier community through the expansions and renovations of our facilities.

If you are interested in learning more about this community strengthening opportunity, please contact Kelly Castro at kcastro@gscymca.org.



Your generous support helps to strengthen community.

MY SUMMER PLACE

Y Camp

Summer is often a time to relax, recharge, and refresh. Most children anticipate the season with great excitement as a welcome break from school. Yet, at the Y, summer is a season of personal growth.

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 immerses our campers in activities that encourage them to unleash ingenuity, talents, and fun, all while making friends and lifelong memories.

Our camp program takes a well-rounded approach to enriching the whole child through social-emotional, academic, character, and physical development. Over 1,700 children benefitted from our camp programs this summer; one in four of whom would not have had the opportunity were it not for your generosity.



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



LIFTING SPIRITS

Camp Dragonfly

This summer, we launched a new summer camp program to help children to turn their frowns upside down. Camp Dragonfly was a two-week camp for children dealing with grief, trauma, or loss that provided them with a safe, welcoming, and caring environment to help them heal and grow.

Community partners including Heartworks, Empower Somerset, and Safe & Sound helped to identify children, age 5 through 13, who would benefit from such a program. In total there were 18 children enrolled; all of whom had experienced a trauma such as the loss of a loved one, social isolation, and homelessness, to name a few.

Our skilled staff, who were trained in trauma informed care, guided the children through each camp day full of fun activities and new friendships.

One mom, whose child survived an accidental drowning, shared her gratitude.

"I want to thank you and your fine staff. My son thoroughly enjoyed his time at camp this summer. He was particularly happy in the pool, letting go of the wall, borrowing goggles, putting his face in the water, and practicing to hold his breath (HUGE MILESTONES!). We are very grateful for the opportunity for him to heal and grow."

It is in thanks to the generous support of donors, like you, that we were able to offer Camp Dragonfly at no cost to the participants to further alleviate the stress on their families. On behalf of the families, thank you!



TRI, TRI AGAIN USA Kids Triathlon

Swim. Bike. Run. These are the three events in every triathlon, and the combination is not for the faint of heart. This summer, 25 children from Camp SOAR in Franklin Township and Camp STAR in Hillsborough tested their moxie by committing to complete a Kids Triathlon. Over the summer months, USA Triathlon members, who are Y advocates, volunteered to help our campers train weekly in the three events. USA Triathlon donated new bicycles and helmets for the children.

In August, after several weeks of training, the children went to Doylestown, PA to compete in the USA Triathlon's 2023 Kids' Tri. To ensure that their families were part of the experience, transportation from NJ to PA was offered at no cost to the participants' families. Of all of the young athletes competing, Greater Somerset County YMCA campers made up 6% of all participants.

It was an incredible experience to watch our 25 first-time triathletes, with their smiling faces, push themselves outside their comfort zones. For completing the Kids' Tri, all of our young athletes were able to keep their bicycle and helmet from USA Triathlon, and they also received a lifetime USAT membership.

With a focus on removing barriers for all and inspiring children to reach their potential, we were thrilled to see how this opportunity inspired the children and their goals for the future. We are grateful to our donors and community partners for making opportunities like this possible.



FOR ALL Water Safety

Summer...it often brings thoughts of the joy of swimming. However, for many area residents swimming is a cause for concern because they don't know how. At the Y, we believe that swimming is a life skill that should be afforded to everyone. Just think how much safer our communities would be if everyone could swim.

Our Franklin Township and Plainfield summer camp programs are held at locations without pools. With that in mind, the camp staff across our branches worked together on a schedule that would allow the children in those camps to be bussed to our Y facilities for swim lessons this summer. The goal was to increase their knowledge and improve their skills in order to build their confidence and safety, in and around the water.

Thanks to your generosity, 230+ children in these communities learned critical water safety skills; Participants were taught how to get in and out of the pool on their own without the use of stairs, to float, to roll on their belly, to glide to the wall, and to perform basic swim strokes.

Your support of the community through the Y is vital in preventing accidental drownings and making our communities safer.

**We completed
our first triathlon!**
Hillsborough YMCA

**We released the
stress of trauma in
our lives through fun
& friendship!**
Somerset Hills YMCA

**We had our
first camp
experience
& had nutritious
meals every day!**
Franklin Twp YMCA

SUMMER CAMP 2023 THANKS TO YOU...

**We learned
how to swim!**
Plainfield YMCA

**We built our own
boats and sailed
across the pool!**
Princeton YMCA

**We explored our
imaginations, tried
new things, and made
lifelong memories!**
Bridgewater YMCA
Somerville YMCA

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

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BRIDGEWATER YMCA | FRANKLINTWP 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.