



TRANSFORMING LIVES

2025, ISSUE 3

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,



At the Y, every life tells a story. It's the joy on a child's face when they master a new skill. It's the relief of a parent who knows their family has a safe, welcoming place to grow together. It's the renewed strength of an adult finding balance, the laughter of seniors discovering friendship, and the resilience of veterans embraced by community. These moments remind us that the Y is not just a place to go — it is a place to belong.

This spirit of belonging is what makes our community stronger. The Y connects generations, cultures, and neighbors in ways that truly matter. Every day, we see how compassion, encouragement, and opportunity can change lives — and those transformations are possible because of you.

Your support ensures that children have the chance to learn, families share experiences that bring them closer together, adults have the tools to live healthier lives, and seniors and veterans have a circle of care and connection. You make the Y accessible to all, and that is a gift beyond measure.

Thank you for believing in this mission and for standing with us. Together, we are building not only a healthier community, but also a more hopeful and connected one — for every child, every family, and every neighbor.

Thank you for being a vital part of this mission, for inspiring young minds, and for giving your best to the Y, and to our community. Together, we make a difference, one person at a time.

Gratefully,

David M. Carcieri

David M. Carcieri
President/CEO



HEALTHY HEROES

Program Spotlight: Veterans Wellness

We are proud to share that we have launched a new Veterans Wellness Program, designed to support those who have served our country with opportunities to improve their health, find community, and strengthen their well-being.

Thanks to your generosity, this 12-week program is offered at no cost to veterans and their families to inspire overall wellness through exercise, nutrition, and mental health. Military families connect with others who understand their journey, engage in fitness and wellness activities, and find renewed purpose and support in a welcoming environment.

To date, there have been 31 participants in the program, and we plan to expand the program beyond Somerset Hills YMCA to additional branches. We are encouraged by the feedback of participants. One veteran commented, "I used to be very active but, recently, I had a minor stroke and valve replacement surgery. I needed a swift kick to get me moving again! I made a commitment to this program; it was just what I needed and gave me the momentum to register for additional strength and yoga classes. I am grateful to feel healthier."

Your gift makes it possible to honor and care for those who have given so much — and to ensure they always have a place at the Y.





FUTURE LEADERS Youth and Government

This fall, with your generous support, we will proudly launch a Youth and Government (YAG) program to nurture civic engagement among teens within Somerset, Union, and Mercer counties. The program intends to expose high school students to the law and legal systems associated with government to inspire our next generation of future leaders.

The YAG program involves a mock justice system in which participants represent senators, assembly people, justices, lawyers and media members, and it culminates in a regional conference attended by delegations from various NJ communities and schools. The program supports participating students through scholarships, transportation, program materials, conference registration fees, and purchase of appropriate student attire.

We encourage interested students, to contact Lindsey Williams, Senior Director of Youth Development at lwilliams@gscymca.org.

Thank you for making this enriching program possible!



FOUNDATION FOR GROWTH Summer Camp

This summer, YMCA Day Camp was filled with more than games and laughter — it was filled with moments that mattered. From the first day, campers stepped into a place where they felt safe, included, and encouraged to be themselves. Each day brought opportunities to try something new, make a friend, and discover just how capable they are.

Day camp is more than a summer pastime — it's a foundation for growth. In the care of nurturing counselors and surrounded by peers, children practiced responsibility, built confidence, and learned the values of kindness and teamwork. For many, camp became the place where they felt they truly belonged.

This summer, more than 1,900 children experienced the joy and growth of YMCA Day Camp — and, thanks to your generosity, we were able to provide nearly \$420,000 in camp scholarships, which are awarded based on financial need to ensure every child can access Y programs. Every child had the chance to go home each day a little braver, a little stronger, and a little more ready to shine.

Your generous support helps to strengthen community.

MEET REBECCA

Camp Dragonfly



On Mother's Day 2024, Rebecca's husband passed away. In an instant, their world turned upside down for her and her two young children; it was traumatic and frightening.

A school counselor told Rebecca about the Y's Camp Dragonfly, a free summer program for children who have experienced loss. With uncertainty and hesitation, she enrolled her two children, ages 13 and 11. Drop off on the first day of camp was incredibly hard and filled with anxiety; but, at pick up, Rebecca was relieved to be greeted with smiles on her children's faces. At camp, the children felt understood and reassured that they were not alone in their grief. It was a safe space where they didn't feel so alone.

As the one-year anniversary of their loss approached, overwhelming grief hit their family again. That is when Rebecca received a call from the Y inviting the children back to Camp Dragonfly; she couldn't believe the Y was offering help without her even needing to ask. She enrolled her children again and noticed a significant shift. Each day, her children were eager to share stories of the fun they had. She knew they felt safe, cared for, and accepted. They no longer felt isolated instead, they felt seen and valued. Camp Dragonfly even deepened the relationship between the siblings and brought them closer together.

"Camp Dragonfly has been an amazing experience for my kids. It's wonderful to see my children this happy. I'm so grateful to the counselors, they truly care and are making a difference. My children's outlook has positively shifted, and I credit the Y for that. Simply put, my children are flourishing.

Grief has hit us so hard, and our lives have felt so heavy at times, but the Y brought lightness and laughter back into our lives. To me, the Y is about community and heart. So much of life is transactional, but we never feel that way at the Y. We aren't just a family passing through, we truly matter. That has made an incredible difference. We are so grateful to the Y and feel hopeful for our future."

We are so grateful for your generous support. Camp Dragonfly is made possible at no cost to the participants to further alleviate the stress on their families – thanks to you. On behalf of the families, thank you!



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



LIFE SAVER Water Safety

This summer, YMCA of the USA launched a powerful safety campaign, "Phones Down, Eyes Up" to remind us all how quickly a moment of distraction around water can turn tragic. The reality is staggering — 88% of children who drown do so while at least one adult is present.



At the Y, we believe swimming is more than recreation — it's a life-saving skill. Imagine how much safer our communities would be if every child had the confidence and knowledge to be safe around water. That vision drives our commitment to expanding access to swim lessons, especially in communities where opportunities are limited.

Since the beginning of the year, we have been providing Safety Around Water classes — offered completely free of charge thanks to your generosity — for children in the communities of Warren, Manville, Franklin, and Plainfield. Through this program, 402 children learned critical skills like floating, gliding to the pool's edge, rolling to their belly, and even performing basic strokes — tools that could one day save their lives.

Your support doesn't just teach children how to swim — it helps prevent accidental drownings, empowers families, and makes our communities safer for everyone.



THE MAGIC OF CAMP – MADE POSSIBLE BY YOU Summer Camp 2025

There is something truly magical about Y Camp. It's in the sparkle of a child's eyes as they dive into the pool for the first time. It's in the laughter echoing from a group of campers who just finished a team challenge. It's in the quiet pride of a child who discovers they are braver and stronger than they ever imagined.

This is the magic of camp — where children build friendships, grow in confidence, and create memories that will last a lifetime. And it's your generosity that makes it all possible. Because of you, every child, regardless of background, had the chance to feel the joy, wonder, and life-changing impact of Y Camp this summer.

Thank you for giving children the gift of camp — a gift filled with growth, belonging, and magic that they will carry long beyond the summer.



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.