

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

YMCA OF METUCHEN, EDISON, WOODBRIDGE & SOUTH AMBOY
ROSE CUSHING, PRESIDENT & CEO

November-December 2021



PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Dear Board Members:

Greetings! I am thrilled to report that we received notification that our Association received full loan forgiveness on the second Payroll Protection Program loan of \$1.6 million. This was the second round of funding created by the CARES Act that covered payroll costs and assisted with operating expenses during COVID-19. Many thanks to Mariam Lesnewski and her team, as well as John Dowd and the Finance Committee for ensuring that we met the rigorous guidelines to achieve full loan forgiveness.

As you all know, today is Giving Tuesday! By giving back, you will continue to support our programs that empower kids, families, seniors and veterans through our memberships and programs. Please take a moment to visit our [Giving](#) page and show your support today! I also invite you to view some pictures from our very first Day of Gratitude on pages 5-6 and our ASC Victory Celebration on page 9.

During this season of giving thanks, I always set aside some time to truly contemplate what I have to be grateful for in my life. This year, I realized that my list has grown much longer. When the pandemic hit, I know that we were all shaken to the core by the sheer enormity of the impact it would have not only on our personal lives, but our professional lives as well. But we came out of it bigger, better, stronger and a large part of that is due to the outstanding Board members that you are, and your total commitment to our mission, which is more important than ever. Thank you for standing beside me and our Association to provide support and guidance during this time of reinventing the wheel. And so for that, and my providence in having an incredible staff and strong community support, I am grateful, thankful and blessed. I wish each and every one of you had a peaceful and joyful Thanksgiving with your family and loved ones.

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#GIVING TUESDAY™

The holiday season is just around the corner, and we invite you to kick it off with us on Giving Tuesday!

Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving back. On the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, you'll have the chance to join people around the world and support a cause close to your heart.

This Giving Tuesday, help us give the gift of YMCA to children, families and seniors. By joining the movement, you're providing scholarships and financial assistance so that your neighbors in need have the opportunity to participate in the YMCA's programs and services. Mark your calendars, spread the word, and stay tuned for more details.

**GIVE TODAY.
BE THE DIFFERENCE.**



DONATE NOW

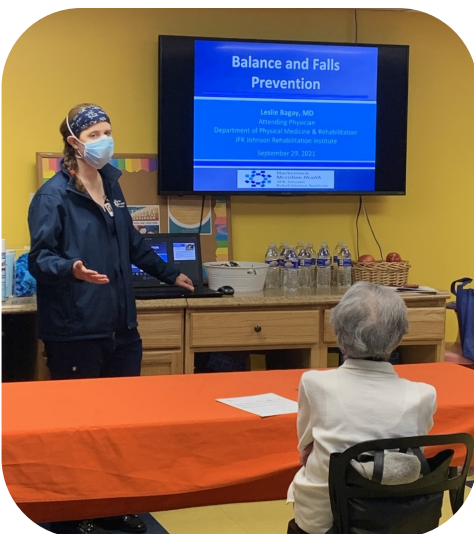
amazonsmile

Help bring joy this season
Buy your gifts at AmazonSmile
and Amazon donates



Visit smile.amazon.com and select the YMCA of Metuchen as your nonprofit of choice! Your purchase will mean a donation of 5% to our Association (at no cost to you!). Don't forget to bookmark smile.amazon.com to make it easy to return and start your shopping!

METUCHEN HOSTS WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS



The Metuchen YMCA has been hosting "Wellness Wednesdays", covering different health topics of interest to the community. Dr. Leslie Bagay from JFK Medical Center Johnson Rehab Institute (left) holds a Fall and Prevention lecture.

Other Wellness Wednesday events included:

- Flu shots provided by Bell Pharmacy
- Paint the Y Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness with University Radiology.
- Party in Pink Zumba class with host Terry Harrison, RN, Community Outreach Coordinator, to give a lecture on breast health.

-Contributed by Brenda Werneiwski

GRACE STUDENTS RECEIVE FREE ORAL CARE

Grace Early Learning Center welcomed Tender Smiles 4 Kids, a pediatric dental practice from Edison, to provide free oral care for their students, including cleaning, x-rays and a treatment plan. The children that participated did a wonderful job!

Pictured right is Grace's assistant teacher, Nicole Peralta, and her daughter, Aliyah Castillo. Aliyah attends Grace's preschool program and opened wide to make sure her teeth were clean and healthy!



-Contributed by Samantha Coté

YPCC HOSTS MEET THE MAYORS

On Thursday, October 7th, the Mayors of the Piscataway, Middlesex, South Plainfield, Dunellen, New Brunswick and Highland Park convened at the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center. This was an opportunity for key local business leaders to network and discuss topics including arts and culture, travel and tourism, sustainability/going green, economic development and more.

-Contributed by Muhammed Derti

EDISON YMCA CELEBRATES DIWALI

On November 11, the Edison Y held a Diwali Mela (Carnival)! It featured Zumba, Bollywood and Bhangra from Edison Y instructors Sakshi, Bindiya and Srividya. Members of the community also served as vendors and brought amazing products for our members to purchase. Wellness staff member Ami did Mehndi while Leaders Club members did face painting on children. The members and staff had a great time and can't wait to do it again next year!



-Contributed by Caroline Rankin

TOGETHORHOOD UPDATE

-By Paul Edgcomb



Our Y's **Togetherhood** efforts continued strong in Fall 2021, as we continued our focus on two key initiatives – support for the work of New Jersey Blood Services and support for the work of the FPC Metuchen Food Pantry.

New Jersey Blood Services – Blood Drives

We have now held five drives in 2021, with one more scheduled for the day after Christmas – Sunday, December 26, from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

So far this year, 315 individuals have presented themselves as donors at our drives and they have donated 293 units of whole blood.

In 2021, three of our drives have drawn 70 or more presenting donors and resulted in 60 or more units of whole blood collected. We're well on the way to having our most successful year since resuming blood drives at the Metuchen Branch Y in 2017.

Togetherhood volunteer support for these drives has remained strong and we have a vital core of dedicated people pitching in to recruit donors, welcome and thank donors when they come to our drives, and recognize those donors for their contributions to this very important community service effort.

Our growing base of consistently returning donors is impressive, and demonstrates true community commitment to the needs of others

FPC of Metuchen Food Pantry – Food Drives

Through November 15 we have collected and brought nearly 6,500 items of nonperishable food and \$1,800 in cash and shopper's gift cards to the food pantry.

In November we resumed holding "Street Drives" in two Metuchen neighborhoods. These resulted in the collection of 784 items, \$100 in on-line contributions to the pantry, and \$330 in shopper's gift cards. We have the potential for holding two more "Street Drives" in December. And, we hope to launch a campaign in the New Year that will lead to increasing the number and frequency of such drives throughout 2021.

Also in November, through the support of the Metuchen Farmers Market and its manager Nelson Li, we placed a Metuchen YMCA table at the market on each of its final three Saturdays. The table was used to promote awareness of food insecurity and collect items and cash donations. As well, market vendors contributed fresh fruit, vegetables, and bread, which the Y was also able to distribute to recipients in our community.

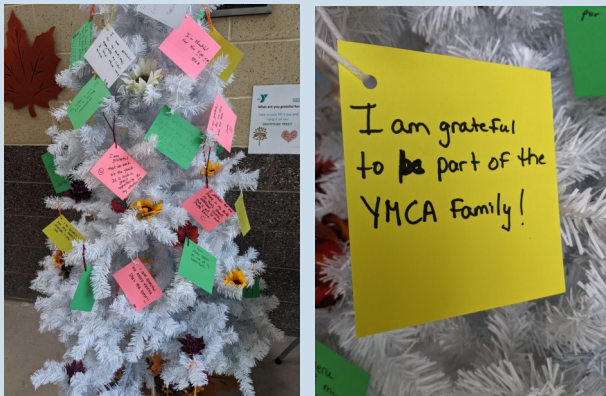
Togetherhood volunteer support has remained strong and we have a solid core of people continuing to help address the issue of food insecurity in our community.

DAY OF GRATITUDE

On Tuesday, November 9th, all branches celebrated our very first Day of Gratitude, which encourages everyone to stop and be thankful, and show and share gratitude. We were truly humbled and thankful for the outpouring of gestures, kind words and gratitude from our members, community partners and donors. Enjoy some pictures taken from all of our branches!



EDISON YMCA



SOUTH AMBOY YMCA



AVENEL EARLY LEARNING CENTER



METUCHEN YMCA

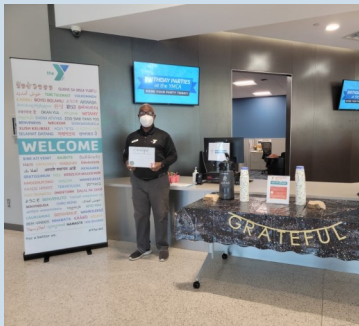
DAY OF GRATITUDE (CONT'D)



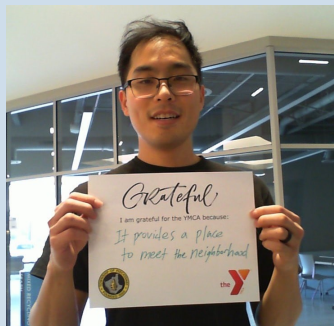
COLONIA LEARNING CENTER



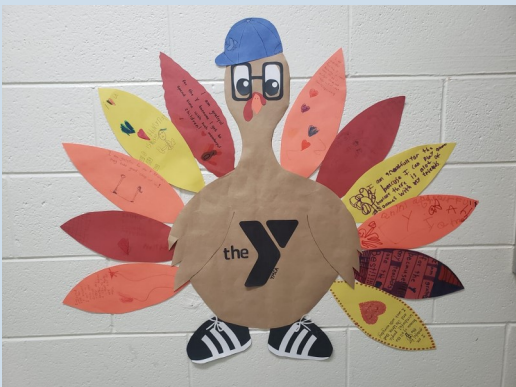
GRACE EARLY LEARNING CENTER



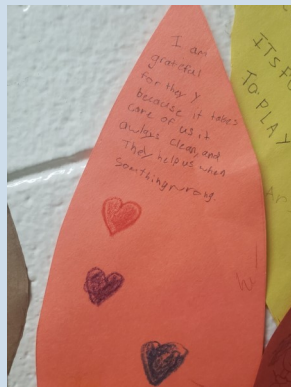
YMCA AT THE PISCATAWAY COMMUNITY CENTER



CENTENARY EARLY LEARNING CENTER



OUR SAVIOR'S LEARNING CENTER



EDGAR EARLY LEARNING CENTER

STAFFING AND VOLUNTEER NEWS

FAREWELL TO CAROL TOTH

We sadly bid a fond farewell to Carol Toth, longtime supporter and volunteer of the YMCA of MEWSA, who has resigned from the Board as of October.



Carol has served on many Boards and Committees over the years, including the Board of Directors, Chair of the Edison Branch Board, and serving on the HR, IT and Finance Committees. Of note is that she served on these Boards and Committees simultaneously! We will miss Carol's dedication to our mission, her eternal optimism, but most of all her dry wit and banter.

Carol will be moving to Virginia to be close to family members. We wish her the best of luck as she enters this exciting new chapter of her life!

REMEMBERING RALPH STEINHARDT

The YMCA and our communities are mourning the loss of Ralph Steinhardt, who passed away at the age of 89 years old on October 24th.

Ralph was a long time YMCA volunteer and Board member, serving for over 25 years. During his tenure, he served first on the Board of Volunteers and was instrumental in the expansion of the Metuchen YMCA. He then served on Steering Committees which brought into existence the Edison and South Amboy YMCA's. Ralph became a member of the Board of Directors and also served on the Edison YMCA Branch Board, continuing his altruistic mission to serve the members of the community.



We extend our deepest condolences to Ralph's family for their loss.

YMCA OF MEWSA WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBER

The YMCA of MEWSA Association Board welcomes newest member, Amie Thornton. Amie currently serves as Chief Hospital Executive at JFK University Medical Center in Edison as well as providing executive oversight to EMS services across the HMH network. Ms. Thornton has overall operational responsibility for operational divisions that include JFK University Medical Center, the nationally renowned Johnson Rehabilitation institute and the NJ Neuroscience Institute. She leads the hospital's senior management team in driving all aspects of performance excellence and strategic positioning of the medical center.



Prior to joining JFK, Ms. Thornton was Administrator of Saint Michael's Medical Center in Newark, NJ and Assistant Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, leading the Certificate of Need and Acute Care Licensing and Inspections programs.

Ms. Thornton received a Bachelor of Arts, magna cum laude, from the University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from the Wharton School of Business.

We welcome Amie and know that she will bring much expertise and knowledge to her new role at the Y.



Jingle Bell Jam



FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17TH, 5 PM TO 7 PM
LIVE SINGERS, DANCING, VISIT FROM SANTA

HOT CHOCOLATE BAR, GAMES, CRAFTS, BOUNCE HOUSE
ELECTRIC PLAYGROUND, PHOTO BOOTH, RAFFLES

METUCHEN YMCA
65 HIGH STREET, METUCHEN NJ 08840

ASC VICTORY CELEBRATION

On Tuesday, November 9th, staff and volunteers came together to celebrate the successful culmination of the 2021 Annual Support Campaign at the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center. Liz Bennett, Director of Financial Development, announced that the YMCA met and exceeded their goal, with \$359,553 in pledges received this year. Chair of the Annual Support Campaign, Katie Barnes and Co-Chair, Paul Edgcomb extended their thanks to the hard working, dedicated staff and volunteers and showed much appreciation to those who donated. Chairman of the Association Board, Mike Lackland thanked Katie and Paul, and all the campaigners in working diligently to meet the goal. If you or someone you know would like to learn more about volunteering on the Annual Support Campaign Committee, please reach out to Liz Bennet at Elizabeth.Bennett@ymcaofmews.org



Fin. Dev. Director
Liz Bennett with
Mayor Brian Wahler



YMCA Chairman
Mike Lackland



ASC Chair Katie Barnes, Board
members Jay Elliot, ASC Co-Chair
Paul Edgcomb, CEO Rose Cushing



ASC Chair Katie Barnes
and Co-Chair
Paul Edgcomb

SOUTH AMBOY Y HOSTS FILM COMPANY

The South Amboy YMCA hosted an independent film company, Big Blue Pictures, for scenes that will be featured in their upcoming film, "Prep". The film deals with preparing for a bodybuilding contest and the rigors and discipline that leads up to the competitions. The scene was filmed underwater at the South Amboy YMCA on November 9th and entailed a sequence of poses.

Pictured l. to r. are members of the film company and YMCA staff: Paula Gonzalez, Chibueze Anyasor, Gerry Gessie, Raymond Knudsen, Melina Valdez and Scott Reiners.



CHILD CARE STAFF RECEIVE TRAINING

On Saturday, 11/13, approximately 45 School Age Child Care staff members participated in a full day training on childhood trauma. They learned about the effects of toxic stress on the students in their care, how to support them through difficult times and ways to help them build resilience. This was a

beneficial training for our staff, as well as the children they care for. Special thanks to Prevent Child Abuse NJ and the Child Wellness Institute for sharing the information and resources with us.

-Contributed by Cindy Shields



METUCHEN Y PROVIDES AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMMING

Metuchen YMCA staff are settling in to their new responsibilities of providing an afterschool program at Campbell and Mildred B. Moss Elementary Schools in Metuchen. The Metuchen YMCA was awarded the contract in earlier this year and began providing afterschool programming in September. The children love all of the activities that are planned and have fun while they are learning!

-Contributed by Gabriella St. Fleur



COVID-19 SCREENING AT METUCHEN Y

The Metuchen Y, in collaboration with Praxis | Screening, is providing COVID-19 walk-up screening and testing at the Metuchen YMCA on every Monday until further notice, from 12:30pm to 2:00 pm. PCR nasal swab test results are typically available in less than 48 hours. This testing is open to the community at no cost and is for the insured and uninsured. Please bring your insurance card and a driver's license. Prefilled registration forms can be found at praxis-screening.com/consent.



-Contributed by Christine Tolley

YOUTH & GOVERNMENT PROGRAM GRANT RECEIVED

The YMCA received notification of a \$4,000 grant received from the [New Jersey State Bar Foundation](#) to support our Youth & Government Program. This will be the second year that the Youth & Government Program is being offered as well as the second time the New Jersey State Bar Foundation has supported the program through a grant., as well as providing valuable free resources for the program.



The Youth & Government Program gives high school students the opportunity to immerse themselves in civic engagement and practice democracy. Through the statewide YMCA NJYAG Program, the program culminates with a conference with teens from across the State to propose legislation and debate bills. The YAG program was a great success last year, and the students are excited that the conference will be held in-person this year.

FOOD DONATIONS BY SEWA INTERNATIONAL USA

Pictured below are members of SEWA International USA who donated 480 lbs. of food to Togetherhood this past Saturday at the Farmers Market. Also pictured are Togetherhood Volunteer Paul Edgcomb and Chrissy Tolley, Director of Operations at the Metuchen YMCA.



*-Contributed by
Christine Tolley*



GIRL SCOUTS VISIT EDGAR EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Girl Scout troops visited Edgar Early Learning Center's Kindergarten class to deliver a workshop on Mindfulness. They were taught different yoga moves and read books about how to calm their minds and body.

The children were excited to be a part of the Girl Scout Troop's Silver Award journey!

-Contributed by Jeanna Kim



LEADER'S CLUB GIVES BACK



The Metuchen Leader's Club came together at the Metuchen YMCA branch to assemble 50 sandwiches, which were then donated to St. Joseph's Social Center in Elizabeth.

Great way to give back to the community, Leader's Club!

*-Contributed by
Gabriella St. Fleur*



UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

December 15



January 26



February 23

<bits & pieces>



The YPCC lights up pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



Centenary Early Learning Center students have fun with fall leaves, but then help to clean up!



The Metuchen Y offers COVID-19 booster shots on Wellness Wednesday.



Centenary Early Learning Center's Pre-K students are ready for Thanksgiving!



Centenary holds Turkey Trot Triathlon!



Board member Paul Edcomb and his two granddaughters eating their favorite snack after a 5K.



Students pick pumpkins with their teacher, Maribel Rosa in Harborview Early Learning Center's "pumpkin patch".



Harborview students write why they love the YMCA!



Fun was had by all at Spooktacular!

CENTENARY STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO VOTE!

To learn about the election process, the students at Centenary Early Learning Center held a mock election. They read the book, "Duck for President", learning what words like election, president and ballot mean. They made posters for their favorite candidate, wrote a speech and decorated a voting booth. They then "registered" on Election Day and headed to the voting booth to fill out their ballot and put it in the box. The votes were counted and tallied and the winner was... Duck!



The book and project were a great way for children to learn about the election process while having fun!

-Contributed by Melinda Wilson

An advertisement for YMCA 360: On-Demand Videos. The background shows a woman in athletic wear performing a core exercise. Overlaid on the image is the text "YMCA 360: ON-DEMAND VIDEOS" and "Stream your favorite programs and classes for all ages, wherever you are." A starburst graphic in the top right corner says "OVER 1,000 VIDEOS!". At the bottom, there are four circular logos for "FITNESS FIRST", "BOOMERS & BEYOND", "Kids FAMILY", and "MIND & BODY".

The recent launch of YMCA360 uses cutting-edge technology to give our members a new way to experience not only fitness, but giving a child a basketball lesson, providing a STEAM class for a student, teaching a Jazz or Hip Hop class for an adult or child, and so much more. Since its inception, the library has grown to over 1,000 on demand videos that cover every topic imaginable. And it's completely free to our members!

Coming soon is "In Studio", that will provide virtual streaming of a class right in the branch. Never miss a class again!

We invite you to check out [YMCA360](#) to browse the incredible library of videos certain to please every member of the household!

IMPORTANT DATES

Giving Tuesday
November 30

Swim With Santa
December 18 (South Amboy)

COVID-19 Testing
Mondays 12:30-2:00pm (Metuchen)

Flu Shot Clinic
December 7 (Edison)

Blood Drive
December 26 (Metuchen)

Jingle Ball Jam
December 17 (Metuchen)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DECEMBER

- 2** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 3** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m.
- 8** FINANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.
- 9** DEI Committee
6:00 p.m.
- 14** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 14** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
6:30 p.m.
- 15** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
6:00 p.m.
- 17** IT COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.

JANUARY 2022

- 7** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
9:00 a.m.
- 11** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 13** DEI COMMITTEE
6:00 p.m.
- 19** FINANCE COMMITTEE
5:30 p.m.
- 21** IT COMMITTEE
8:00 a.m.
- 26** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
6:00 p.m.

MISSED AN ISSUE?

All Board newsletters can be found on the YMCA website at

<http://www.ymcaofmews.org/about-us/association-newsletter>

happy holidays

