

BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

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

February 2021



PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE

Dear Board Members:

As I greet 2021, I look forward to new beginnings. I am excited to see members coming back into the branches, knowing that they feel safe within our walls to achieve their wellness goals, I am excited to see a rebirth of our commitment to inclusivity and equality through our newly "re-formed" Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and I am excited to kick off our second centennial in serving our communities.

They say that out of every tragedy comes new strength. We have learned, through our ordeal with COVID-19, how to improve the way we connect with our members, how to use previously unknown methods of communication to offer our programs and services virtually, how to continue our mission with basically our hands tied behind our backs, and even how to have our staff work remotely from home. Thinking outside the box has become our new norm. All these things have made us bigger, better, stronger!

I am thrilled to announce that we have received the second PPP loan in the amount of \$1.6 million. Congratulations to Mariam Lesniewski and her team for their hard work in preparing the application!

We are also gearing up for Camp season! We will be offering camp this summer at eight locations, including our Metuchen, Edison, South Amboy and Piscataway branches, as well as Oakcrest Camp and three of our child care branches including Centenary, Ken Shirk and Colonia. Registration opens up on February 1st!

The 2021 Annual Support Campaign is underway, with our consultant, Donor by Design, working on a fund development plan. We have several fundraising events in the pipeline with some ideas including a virtual Wine Tasting and a virtual Escape Room. The idea is to have fun while raising money! Board member Joe Cascio is also working on a possible golf outing in the fall of 2021!

As you know, 2021 marks our 100th year of serving our communities! While we intend to truly celebrate in 2022 with a formal gala, we will begin commemorating the celebration with a newly designed logo and tag line which you will begin to see in our email signatures and on our correspondence. It is definitely an exciting year for us and I am glad that you are a part of it!

Rose Cushing

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 PRESIDENT & CEO UPDATE
- 2 YPCC IN LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES MAG
- 2 YMCA RECEIVED SWIM GRANT
- 2 BIKE DONATIONS BY INSTITUTE OF TEXAS
- 2 GRANT AND DONOR RECOGNITION
- 3 CENTENARY ELC CELEBRATES A WEDDING!
- 3 EDISON PRE-K ENJOY A READER
- 3 Y OFFERS EXTREME COUPONING CLASS
- 4 TOGETHERHOOD UPDATE
- 5 STAFFING NEWS
- 6 AMAZON VOLUNTEERS HELP WITH FOOD DRIVE
- 6 EDISON FIREFIGHTERS HOLD FUNDRAISER
- 6 EDGAR STUDENTS RECEIVE HOMEMADE HATS
- 7 BITS 'N PIECES
- 8 UPCOMING MEETINGS



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YPCC IN NJ LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES MAGAZINE

The YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center was highlighted in January's New Jersey League of Municipalities (NJLM). Click on the image to see the article!



YMCA RECEIVES Y-USA SWIM GRANT

The YMCA was notified of a grant award in the amount of \$6,772 which will go towards at least 100 swim scholarships for children from low-income families within



our communities. These scholarships will be used this summer during camp season, and through the collaboration of the Townships in the communities that we serve, we will be able to identify the children who needs these swimming lessons the most. Team leaders for this grant are Aquatics Directors Alexis Brown from the Metuchen Y and Danica Lindsay from the South Amoy Y.

BIKE DONATIONS BY LEADERS INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Staff, remote learners and the Teen Leaders Club at the Metuchen Y have partnered once again with the Leaders Institute out of Texas to build children's bikes, which the Y then donates to families in need. The bike-build is a teambuilding exercise that typically involves companies coming together to work out a series of clues, in turn earning them parts of the bike for correct answers. This year, due to COVID-19, the bikes have been dropped off to the Metuchen Y and, via Zoom, the staff and children have teamed up to build the bikes on site for those answering the clues. The Metuchen Y has given out 27 bikes so far.



-Contributed by Christine Tolley

GRANT AND DONOR RECOGNITION

TARGET	\$1,000	Soccer Program
EDISON FIREFIGHTER'S ASSN	\$4,025	Supporting the LiveSTRONG® Program
Y-USA	\$6,772	Swim scholarships for children from low-income families
KIDSGARDENING.ORG	\$750	Garden supplies for Grace Early Learning Center

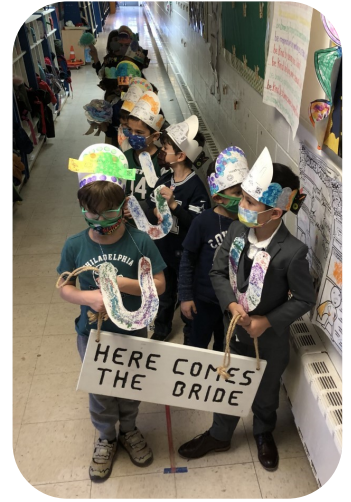
Visit <https://www.ymcaofmewsa.org/about-us/annual-report> to view the Annual Report and see a full listing of our 2020 donors.

CENTENARY ELC CELEBRATES A WEDDING!



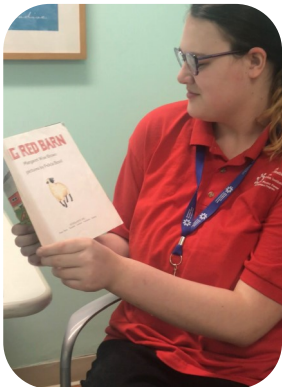
January 6 was a big day for the Kindergarten class at Centenary Early Learning Center! They celebrated the wedding of the letters Q and U! The children came to school dressed as queens, quarterbacks and wedding guests and took part in the ceremony followed by dancing. They will always remember that u follows q in words!

-Contributed by Melinda Wilson and Linda Rutter



EDISON PRE-K CLASS ENJOY SPECIAL GUEST READER!

Kaylee Kuczynski is an 18 year old student in the JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute's Career Development Program in Edison, NJ. She grew up in Rahway and was initially referred



by Rahway High School. She is currently attending through the Scotch-Plains Fanwood Public School District. Kaylee participated in a mentorship at the JFK Keith Wold Day



Care Center where she was a classroom assistant for a year. Because of the COVID restrictions, she is not able to volunteer in that position and the YMCA was kind enough to collaborate with JFK

CDP to provide her a Zoom opportunity to read books to the Pre-K class once a week. We called it Kaylee's Storytime...she is practicing her reading and interaction skills with the students and the student's love that they have a special guest from the hospital every week!

-Contributed by Jennifer Guthlein

Y OFFERS EXTREME COUPONING CLASS!

During a time when we've had to really think outside the box, one of our Child Care Directors, Samantha Coté, offered to run an Extreme Couponing Class! Being an avid couponer herself, Samantha has not only perfected the art of couponing, but has also contributed many of her finds to our local food pantries.

Samantha had twenty registrants for the class, which was divided into two events, one to learn how to extreme coupon, and the next to report back to see how successful they were. Samantha reports that she was thrilled to get positive feedback from the participants, showing their receipts and pictures of their hauls!



The class was offered free to YMCA members, including members on hold.

TOGETHERHOOD UPDATE

Blood Drives

The Metuchen Branch Y resumed holding blood drives on December 27. Working with New Jersey Blood Services for only the second time in 2020, Y staff and **Togetherhood** volunteers organized and helped NJBS collect 62 units of Whole Blood during a shortened 4.5-hour drive.

Special thanks go to:

Y staff member **Dave Andrews** for ensuring that our High Street building was ready to host the drive.

Branch Board member and volunteer **Kathy Liss** for planning and publicizing the drive. A near-record 71 individuals preregistered and a record 57 (80%) came and gave.

Volunteer **John Sayers** — **Togetherhood's** first and longest-tenured member—for his on-site work orchestrating the flow of donors in and out of the drive, and ensuring that everyone observed mask, distancing, and other safety precautions.

The Metuchen Y's next drive – the first of six scheduled to be held in 2021 – will be on Sunday, February 28, from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Food Drives

We are continuing to collect food brought to the Y and dropped off in the lobby by members. And, we are continuing to offer an outdoor "drop off" option for donors who prefer not to enter the building, and a "contactless pickup" option – for donors who prefer having food picked up at their homes.

In addition, we will be introducing one-week "Street" or "Neighborhood" drives. Presently, several members of the Metuchen Branch Board are planning drives on their streets or in their neighborhoods and more board members are expected to join in. Target date for the first "Street Drives" in Metuchen are from Friday, March 19 through Thursday, March 25.

All food items and cash collected will be given to the FPCM Food Pantry.

Contact Paul Edgcomb for more information at pedgcomb@optonline.net or at 732-887-6633 about "Street Drives" or Y efforts to help address food insecurity in our community.

-Contributed by Paul Edgcomb

TOGETHERHOOD™
JOIN US AS WE GIVE BACK



Have an article or item of interest for the newsletter?
Please submit to Veronica Vargas at
veronica.vargas@ymcaofmews.org.

STAFFING NEWS

BOBBY KLEINAU WELCOMES LATEST MET FAN!

We are happy to announce that on December 15th Bobby and Crystal Kleinau welcomed their new baby girl (and perhaps the biggest Met fan yet), Shay Roberta Rose! (and the answer to your question is "YES"!)

Shay was welcomed into the world in a very unconventional way, with her Dad delivering her in the back seat of their Honda Pilot! In a great rush to greet the world, Shay was too eager to wait until Crystal was admitted into the hospital. Bobby was forced to divert to another hospital after Crystal threw him a curve ball, insisting that the baby was ready to make it's debut, pulling into Newark Hospital which was fortunately close by. Without even having the chance to get a gurney to the car, Daddy acted quickly and Shay was delivered at 8:20 p.m. right in the back seat! Shay weighs in at 8 lbs., 1 oz. is 20" long. Congratulations to Bobby, Crystal and big brother Noah! You've hit it out of the park!!



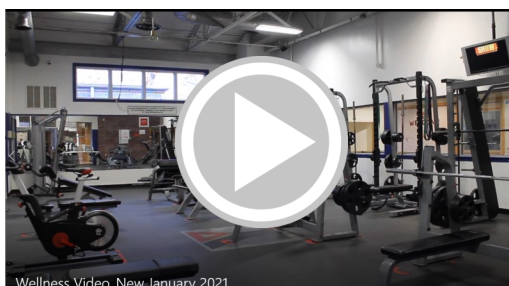
CONGRATULATIONS GABBY!



Congratulations to Gabby St. Fleur, Metuchen Y's School Age Child Care Director, for being selected as NAA's Next Generation of Afterschool Leaders! The NAA made its selections based on emerging leaders who are making contributions that influence programs and organizations and have the potential for long-term and broad impact on the afterschool field—who are active in the broader afterschool community, demonstrate NAA Core Competencies and possess passion for the profession and for their work as an emerging leader, have a clear purpose in their efforts to support others and show determination to grow as a leader in the field of afterschool. She also appeared in the [NAA newsletter](#)! We are so proud of you, Gabby!

EDISON STAFF MEMBER MAKES WELLNESS VIDEO

Edison YMCA staff member Pete Buckley has done it again! View his latest wellness video! Thanks Pete, for capturing all of the amazing things our Y is doing during a very difficult time and engaging our members to return to our branches!



BIDDING FAREWELL TO A COLLEAGUE

We are very saddened to report the passing of a friend and colleague, Christopher Mazauskas, on December 29th, due to COVID-19 complications. Chris was the grant writer for Edison and South Amboy Township's and collaborated on many grant applications with Veronica Vargas and Rose Cushing over the last five years. He was a close and cherished co-worker to Board member Jay Elliot. We extend our deepest and heartfelt condolences to the family, friends and colleagues he leaves behind.



AMAZON VOLUNTEERS HELP WITH YMCA FOOD DRIVE



During Thanksgiving week, volunteers from Amazon in Edison, along with Christine Tolley, Director of Operations in Metuchen, gave of their time at the First Presbyterian Church Food Pantry. Volunteers sorted, organized, bagged and distributed



Thanksgiving dinners to 65 families. The Metuchen Y continues to collect nonperishable items for the pantry as part of their commitment to support food insecurities.

-Contributed by Christine Tolley

EDISON FIREFIGHTERS ASSN. HOLDS FUNDRAISER



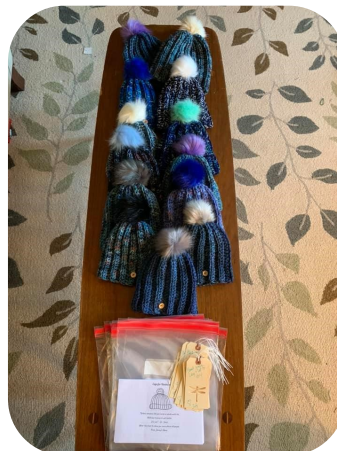
For the 6th year in a row, the Edison Firefighters Association has held a fundraiser to support the Metuchen YMCA's LiveSTRONG® Program, in honor of Metuchen Wellness

Director Janice Garbolino, who passed away from breast cancer in 2002. Each year the firefighters design a new t-shirt supporting cancer awareness. This year's theme was "Fighting to Extinguish Cancer". \$4,025 was raised from the fundraiser and the donation was presented to Rose Cushing at the Metuchen Branch. A huge thank you to the Edison Firefighter's Association for the continued support!

-Contributed by Christine Tolley

EDGAR ELC STUDENTS RECEIVE HOMEMADE WINTER HATS

"Hats Off!" to "Nana" as the children at Edgar Early Learning Center fondly call Lois Griffin, a former employee of the YMCA, who graciously knit and donated these wonderful hats for the Kindergarteners and their teachers as part of the group's Caps for Kindness initiative, to remind us all to be kind to one another. The children were thrilled to receive such a special gift handmade with love and have been drawing pictures of themselves wearing their hats. Ms. Griffin is a former employee of the Woodbridge and South Amboy Ys. She is also a grandmother to two of the students at Edgar. Ms. Griffin has supported the Y in other ways, including making face masks in the early days of COVID-19 for Emergency Child Care. Thank you "Nana"!



UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

March 24



April 28



May 26

<bits & pieces>



A full house at the Metuchen Blood Drive



Board member Sharon List has become a "Snow Bird" this winter, hibernating in sunny Florida! She shared this picture of her children and their cousins making the YMCA sign on evening on the beach!



Children enjoying the festivities at Metuchen's Jingle Bell Jam!



The newly formed Youth & Government group are meeting on a regular basis to begin writing bills that they will present at the NJ State YMCA YAG Conference in March!



Congratulations to Alka Aneja's volunteer group, Humbled By Your Service, who received their 501(c)(3) nonprofit status!



Piscataway Mayor Wahler and Council members Gabrielle Cahill, Chanelle McCullum and Kapil Shah take their oaths for their new four-year terms in front of the YMCA at the Piscataway Community Center.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

FEBRUARY

- 3** BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 4** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.
- 5** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—9:00 a.m.
- 9** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.
- 9** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—6:30 P.M.
- 11** D&I COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—6:00 p.m.
- 17** FINANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 24** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
ZOOM CALL—6:00 P.M.

MARCH

- 5** PROPERTY COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—9:00 a.m.
- 9** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT
Zoom Call—6:00 p.m.
- 9** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD
Zoom Call—6:30 p.m.
- 11** D&I Committee
Zoom Call—6:00 p.m.
- 15** EDISON BRANCH BOARD
Zoom Call—8:30 a.m.
- 17** METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD
ZOOM CALL—8:00 A.M.
- 17** FINANCE COMMITTEE
ZOOM CALL—5:30 P.M.
- 24** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING
ZOOM CALL—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>

