

# BOARD of DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER



YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy  
Office of Rose Cushing, President & CEO

## November 2017 ★ Board of Directors Update

### TOT TROT & FAMILY FUN RUN



The 2017 Tot Trot & Family Fun Run was held on October 1st at Metuchen High School. Hundreds of children and their families came out to enjoy the beautiful day and participate in the day's events.

Pre-race activities included games, crafts and face painting. Warm-up exercises helped the tots prepare for the race and then they were off! Each child who participated received a medal and they wore them very proudly!



Proceeds from the Tot Trot will help support families with scholarship assistance when they are unable to pay the full cost of child care. It also provides aid to families in crisis and allows the Y to temporarily provide tuition assistance in the event of a family emergency.



The Run was sponsored by Metuchen Savings Bank, who has sponsored the event since its inception in 2008.

See page 2 for more photos!

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that you can become a new Board member mentor? Board members who have completed two years of service are eligible to become Board mentors. The Board Governance Committee will facilitate the mentorship between you and a new Board member.

Find out more [here](#).

# TOT TROT & FAMILY FUN RUN PHOTOS



## RACE DAY!

The children enjoy the day's activities before the big race!

All the children received a medal for their hard work and determination in finishing the race!



Of course the day would not be possible without our Y volunteers!

-Photos courtesy of 2B Entertainment

## STUDENTS START TUTORING PROGRAM

Two students from St. Joseph's High School in Metuchen, Hersh Thapar and Kshaunish Soni, have started a peer-to-peer tutoring service, free of charge, that they provide to SACC students at the Edison YMCA. These entrepreneurial students recognized the need for tutoring in their community and took the initiative to create their own business, Total Tutoring, when they realized that there were no organizations in this area that provided this type of service.



They provide tutoring a small group sessions with approximately 10-15 students in the group. When they leave for college next year, they plan on passing the business along to trustworthy and dependable high school volunteers to keep the service going.

Read the full article that appeared in the Home News Tribune about the students [here](#) or check out their website [here](#)

*-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill*

## CELTIC FAIRE AND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL

The South Amboy YMCA participated in the townships' first ever Celtic Faire and Seafood Festival on October 14th at the Raritan Bay Waterfront Park in South Amboy to promote membership and child care programs. The event was hosted [iRun New Jersey](#). The day started off with a parade of bag pipers from several different groups playing traditional Celtic tunes. The festivities continued with a day filled of fun, where attendees could walk around and visit vendors from around the area to see what they had to offer, see authentic crafts, enjoy games and sample food.

*-Contributed by Matt Kaefer*



by

*Matt Kaefer, Membership Director  
South Amboy YMCA*

## DIG INITIATIVE

Diversity, inclusion, and global engagement (DIG) strategies are designed to advance the Y's relevance, viability, and impact as a cause-driven organization. They help to ensure that everyone can access and thrive at the Y. At its most basic, a DIG approach puts into action our core belief that, in a diverse world, we are stronger when we are inclusive and our doors are open to all.

**Diversity:** The presence of differences that make each person unique and that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another.

**Inclusion:** The full engagement and development of all YMCA stakeholders (participants, members, staff, policy volunteers, program volunteers, partners, local communities, vendors, etc.).

**Global engagement:** An intentional effort to bring a global perspective to guide and inform our interactions with individuals and organizations at home and abroad.

In an environment like we have now in our country where there is so much divisiveness, this work becomes all the more important. You can find some resources to familiarize yourself with the new DIG initiative on the [DIG Y Exchange page](#).

# FIRST TEEN LEADERSHIP RETREAT!



The very first Teen Leadership Retreat was held from October 13-15th at Camp Mason for teens ages 12-18. Six Y staff members from all three branches and 24 teens came together in a positive environment to engage in safe and age-appropriate activities that aim to foster new relationships, build self-confidence and teach new skills. Teens were also introduced to the Leader's Club Program, organized for the purpose of developing youth as leaders and fostering a culture of service. The retreat was free of charge for teens who are members of the Y and who showed a true interest and passion in growing, learning and thriving.



The first night, the teens and staff engaged in activities to learn each other's names and interests. The next day, the group completed team building activities and low ropes courses that encouraged the group to

communicate and listen effectively and trust each other. On the last day, the group completed two high ropes courses: the Vertical Playpen and Zip Line. The teens were able to overcome some fears and challenges that they had regarding these activities with the encouragement and support of the group.



The feedback from the teens was very positive and the retreat was highly successful. All of the teens are looking forward to becoming part of the new Leader's Club at all three branches of the Y!

*-Contributed by Dean Seda*

# SACC TRAINING

On Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup> the School Age Child Care staff held its annual training at the Colonia Learning Center. There were 62 attendees which was the largest group ever hosted and the feedback from the staff was very positive. Attendees earned five training hours and topics covered Resiliency, Healthy Eating Physical Activity (HEPA), Parent Communication and Games.

Three SACC staff members were also recognized with their YMCA anniversary pins including Kelly Slobodien from the Metuchen Branch and Andrea Machetti from the Edison Branch who received their 5-year pins, and Zachary Davis from the Edison Branch who received his 15 year pin. Congratulations to these staff members!



Enthusiastic Metuchen staff decided to dress alike for the event

This training is a great way for the staff to share stories, plan new activities and bond over all things SACC!

*-Contributed by Chrissy Tolley*

## UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

DECEMBER 20 (HOLIDAY PARTY)



JANUARY 24



MARCH 28

# METUCHEN-EDISON MANTA RAYS



**GIRL'S TEAM**

*P.M. Styler*



**BOY'S TEAM**

*P.M. Styler*

The Metuchen-Edison YMCA's competitive swim team, the Manta Rays, are pictured above in front of the Metuchen YMCA. The teams are comprised of 185 swimmers ranging in age from 6-18. They are coached by Ryan Carlucci, Jim Petrozziello, Brooke Sweeney and Billy LaPorta. They participate in the NJ YMCA Swim League with several dual meet teams, as well as in the USA Swimming meets.

As members of the MEY Swim Team, swimmers establish long-lasting friendships, develop self-esteem, and a sense of responsibility through goal setting. We are very proud of them!

*-Contributed by Marie Patterson*

# HALLOWEEN AT THE Y!

All three branches hosted Halloween parties on October 27th which was open to the public. Staff dressed up for the occasion and planned activities for the children including games, crafts, tattoos, obstacle courses and Bounce House. There were Mad Science projects and Make Your Own Monster Snack Mix. Each child received a drink, a bag of popcorn and prizes, plus a night of spooky fun!



# JCPENNEY "PAIR UP" CAMPAIGN

The YMCA of MEWSA was the recipient of a Back to School product donation from JCPenney in the form of clothing items including boys and girls socks and underwear for children who may be feeling the negative effects of going without these basics. The Y received 1,080 pairs of boys and girls underwear and 3,240 pairs of socks in assorted sizes.



The shipment was delivered in October and the socks and underwear were sent to the child care centers for distribution to families in need. Pictured to the left is one-third of the actual order that the Y received.

We thank JCPenney for their outstanding support of our communities and our Y families!

## NJ STATE ALLIANCE YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD

The New Jersey YMCA State Alliance held their Recognition Dinner on October 19th at the Forsgate Country Club. Each year, the Alliance recognizes youth volunteers that have been nominated by their local YMCA for their altruistic volunteer work. These unsung heroes were celebrated for bringing the core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility to life through their dedication and energy. Helping young people understand the importance of service to the community has always been a YMCA core mission.

This year, the honor goes to Simie Zhu, a volunteer at the Metuchen Branch YMCA. Simie Zhu attends Metuchen High School and is a very active student and volunteer. She has combined her passion for dance and love of children to be a volunteer Assistant Ballet Teacher for the Metuchen Y Ballet Program. Simie volunteers 3 hours every Saturday morning as well as 2 other weekdays to share her talents and knowledge of dance with these children. Because of the expertise that Simie brings, they were able to expand the class from 3 levels to 4 levels. This fall, Simie will be taking on a volunteer teaching role in the class. While Simie's first love is dance, she also volunteers as a basketball assistant and is a member of her high school band and swim team. She is an inspiration and role model for teens everywhere. Congratulations, Simie!



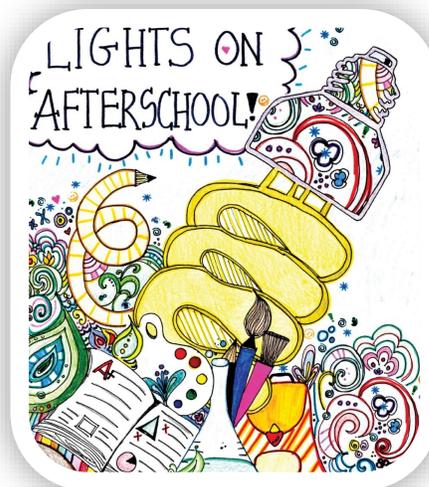
Simie with David Carcieri, President/CEO of Somerset County Y and President of NJ State Alliance

See the full article that was printed in the Home News Tribune on the event [here](#).

## LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL



Launched in 2000 by the Afterschool Alliance, Lights On Afterschool is a nationwide event celebrating afterschool programs and their important role in the lives of children, families and communities. It draws attention to the many ways afterschool programs support students by offering them opportunities to learn new things—such as science, community service, robotics, Tae Kwon Do and poetry—and discover new skills. The event sends a powerful message that millions more kids need quality afterschool programs.



The branches celebrated Lights On Afterschool as part of Annual Healthy U Day on October 26, designed to promote healthy behavior changes to prevent child obesity through nutrition education, increased physical activity and family involvement. They organized many activities this year including an Open House, physical activities from the C.A.T.C.H. curriculum along with special STEM activities, and coloring pages of light bulbs to be hung up in the branches. Parents were invited to come in for a snack and enjoy the activities with their children as well. The children overall were very excited and enjoyed the day.

*-Contributed by Ashley Turner*

## LIVESTRONG BREAKFAST

Past and present LiveSTRONG® participants, staff, and members of the Garbolino Family gathered to celebrate the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual LiveSTRONG® at the YMCA Breakfast on Saturday, November 11. The event took place at the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen Social Center and there were approximately 50 attendees.

Speakers from each of the branches shared their survivorship story and how the LiveSTRONG® at the YMCA program impacted their lives. Speakers included Jeanine Sieber—a survivor from South Amboy, Bob Smith—an instructor from Metuchen and the husband of a survivor and former LiveSTRONG® participant and Judy Rosenstein—a survivor from Edison.

Jim Walsh, representing the Edison Firefighters Association, spoke and presented a \$3,000 check to benefit LiveSTRONG® at the YMCA that was raised by the firefighters through t-shirt sales and other fundraisers.

Renee Eells, a social worker from West Chester, PA, (and former college roommate of Marie Patterson), traveled quite a distance so that she could give the keynote speech to the group about gratitude and self-appreciation, quoting the poem "Love after Love" by Derek Walcott.



### LIVESTRONG

The first group that finished the LiveSTRONG at the Y Program.

Top row left to right: Donna Baginski, Patricia Yong-Tse, Maria Kantilierakis, Bob Smith, Diane Smith (not related to Bob), Ann Behrens, Tom Zimmerman

Bottom row left to right: Pam Barnes, Hannah Thomas, Wendy Ericksen-Bobko

*-Contributed by Hannah Thomas*

## 2017 TRI-STATE CONFERENCE

Several YMCA staff attended the Tri-State on October 3<sup>rd</sup> in Mahwah, New Jersey including Rose Cushing, Katie McAdoo, Paul Casey, Marie Patterson, Cindy O'Neill, Erin Siemers, Beth Helsby and Veronica Vargas. This conference is targeted for CEO's, branch executives, fund development, marketing, communications and senior program staff. Multiple sessions focused on regional and national campaigns and opportunities to enhance our Y's involvement in the Tri-State collaboration.

The morning keynote presentation was given by Valerie Barker Waller, Senior Vice President & Chief Marketing Officer, Y-USA and the afternoon keynote presentation was given by Lynne Wester, Founder & Principal, Donor Relations Guru® speaking on fundraising success. Both presentations were insightful and inspirational.

The day was full of information-packed workshops, including topics on fundraising, innovative campaign strategies, and increasing donor patronage.

## SOUTH AMBOY HEALTH FAIR



Friday, November 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 a.m.—2:00 p.m., the South Amboy Wellness Department held a Health Fair at the branch. The Woodbridge Medical Group provided health screenings on, hearing, vision, bone density ultrasound for osteoporosis, circulation testing and more. Blood pressure, height, weight and BMI calculations were also available.

Lectures were given by the Monmouth Rehab Physical Therapy and United Integrity Group for all participants.

*-Contributed by Sue Chanese*



## UNITY RALLY AGAINST RACISM

In light of the recent racist mailers that were sent to Edison residents targeting two individuals that were running for seats on the Township of Edison Public School Board, the YMCA of MEWSA, JCC, Metuchen-Edison Area Interfaith Clergy Association, the Jewish Federation in the Heart of New Jersey, the Indian Business Association and a host of other local community organizations held a Unity Rally at the JCC/YMCA Community Campus on November 6<sup>th</sup> to express solidarity and promote tolerance at our Y and in our communities.

As an organization that promotes inclusion and diversity, we along with our neighbors, felt it was important to stand up against this type of action and promote unity rather than divisiveness, tolerance rather than racism, love rather than hate.

As reported in the October newsletter, three staff members recently attended the Emerging Multicultural Leaders Experience which teaches the DIG initiative (Diversity, Inclusion and Global Engagement). DIG strategies are designed to advance the Y's relevance, viability and impact as a cause-driven organization. They help ensure that everyone can access and thrive at the Y. At its most basic, a DIG approach puts into action our core belief that, in a diverse world, we are stronger when we are inclusive and our doors are open to all.



The rally was covered by the press. See full article [here](#).

Post Script: We are happy to report that the two targeted individuals of the mailers, Jerry Shi and Falguni Patel, both won and will fill two of the three seats for the Township of Edison Public School Board. Congratulations Jerry and Falguni!!!

## EDISON Y HOLDS FOOD DRIVE

The Edison Branch is sponsoring a “Nourish Our Community” Food Drive that will run through November 21<sup>st</sup>. All food donations and proceeds will be donated to the First Presbyterian Church of Metuchen Food Pantry that serves over 68 families on a regular basis.

This year a new feature was added, called “We’ll Do the Shopping For You” where cash donations and checks will be accepted to purchase perishable items, such as turkeys and fresh ingredients.

The Edison Y sincerely thanks the community for always filling the YMCA Food Pantry Table so that others in their community can fill their own family tables with nourishment, family warmth and holiday thankfulness! Together, we all make a better US.

*-Contributed by Cindy O’Neill*



## VETERAN’S DISCOUNT AT THE EDISON Y

Honoring those that have served...

Veterans Day is November 11<sup>th</sup> and the Edison YMCA is honoring those that have served our country! The association supports the Hidden Heroes Campaign with a 25% reduction in membership for those enrolled in the Hidden Heroes initiative, which supports the caregivers for our military that served our country. Hidden Heroes is supported and founded by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Senator Dole. Edison Township and the Y are in collaboration with Hidden Heroes and support this mission.



Also on our veterans table we have information about the Veteran Administration’s Caregiver Support Program. Their mission offers recognition of each caregiver’s kind heart and tireless support. Members of the VA Caregiver Support program are deeply valued as VA’s partner in providing the very best care for our Nations heroes. The VA Caregiver Support thanks everyone for your dedication to this cause.

Together we make a better us!

*-Contributed by Cindy O’Neill*



## ESL WALK AND TALK

# ESL

Walk and Talk is a new initiative offered at the Metuchen Y and taught by ESL volunteers. Participants enjoy an hour of walking and communicating with people in their community. Conversations revolve around practical English learning, while exploring the Middlesex County Greenway. As the colder weather moves in, participants will visit places in the community including local historic sites to learn about the rich history of our community as well as public facilities such as the library, police station, fire station, post office and department stores to help them become more confident with performing routine tasks while honing speech skills.



Special thanks go to Claudia Asmuth for her ideas and interest in further developing ESL and to Robin Guensch and Angelica Causing for promoting this wonderful program!

*-Contributed by Marie Patterson*

## EDISON VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Yuthi Raaj, cherished volunteer at the Edison Y, has just completed two and a half years of volunteering at the Aquatics Department at the Edison Y! She started as a volunteer while in her sophomore year at John P. Stevens High School and is still volunteering as she approaches her final year in high school! Yuthi is also on the John P. Stevens Hawks Swimming team.

As Yuthi gears up for college, she is being presented with a Y gift bag, including a sporty Y drawstring bag, a matching Y wallet, a handy notepad, and a latex swimming cap.

Yuthi will continue volunteering through her senior year and will hopefully also be an active participant in Y community during college!

This just one way to show appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Edison Community who give us their time to not only promote health and wellness, but also

actively participate in teaching life saving skills!

Good work, Yuthi! You are a wonderful role model for teens everywhere!



Nimit Shah, Aquatics Coordinator at the Edison YMCA, presents Yuthi with a gift bag in appreciation for all of her volunteer work.

*-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill*

# UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

## NOVEMBER

16

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—6:30 p.m.

## DECEMBER

1

### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—9:00 a.m.

6

### BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—5:30 p.m.

7

### CHILD CARE COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—6:00 p.m.

12

### FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—5:00 p.m.

20

### BOARD HOLIDAY PARTY

Villa Gennaro's  
75 Route 27, Edison  
6:00-8:00 p.m.

## JANUARY

3

### BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—5:30 p.m.

5

### PROPERTY COMMITTEE

AO Conference Room—9:00 a.m.

10

### EDISON BRANCH BOARD OF MANAGERS

Edison Branch—6:00 p.m.

17

### METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD OF MANAGERS

Metuchen Branch—8:00 a.m.

24

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Wernik Room  
Fellowship—5:30 p.m. Board Meeting—6:00 p.m.

Association



Edison



Metuchen



South Amboy

