

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWSLETTER

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

September 2019



## CAMP, CAMP, CAMP!

**The Y's** 2019 summer camp season was a huge success!! The summer was filled with many different experiences for the children to enjoy, including field trips every week. They also experienced enrichment programs, sports, swimming and so much more! Due to a S.T.E.A.M. grant received from the Provident Foundation, twenty campers were able to enjoy a Robotics program at Oakcrest for free! See page five for more information on this grant and pictures of the children enjoying the program!

This year there was a total of 1,148 campers who made lifelong memories at our eleven camp sites, thanks to our capable team of 150 camp staff members. The YMCA also provided financial assistance in the amount of \$143,000 so that children from low-income families could enjoy the experience of camp!



L. to r.: Cindy O'Neill, Rose Cushing, Mayor Thomas Lankey, Joyce Ship-Freeman, Shelley Telson, Denise Zimmer, Kathleen Kovach, Jay Elliot, Bobby Kleinau

The 5th Annual Day of Camps was held on July 16th at Oakcrest Camp and it was a blast! On this day, the children from all of the Y camps come together for fun and sun. Activities included contests, events and lots of swimming! Mayor Lankey, several of our Board members and YMCA staff (pictured left) were on hand to kick off the event!

See camp photos on page 2 and more details on the children's experiences inside this issue!



South Amboy YMCA Campers and Staff

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# MOMENTS FROM THIS SUMMER'S CAMP SEASON



READY. SET. **SUMMER!**



**BEST SUMMER EVER!**



# EDISON CAMPERS ENJOY GALAXY FAR AWAY THEME

Week 3 for Edison Y campers offered a Galaxy Far Away theme for Oak Tree S.T.E.A.M. campers, a Star Wars™ Lego® theme for Oak Tree campers, and a Space Force theme week for Oakcrest campers.

The campers participated in activities related to outer space and their favorite space movies. Campers made light sabers and created their own solar system display. There were visits by Darth Vader and his storm troopers and a visit from the 501st Legion, a local Star Wars group. A light saber duel was also held between Oakcrest and Oak Tree Jedi counselors!

Enrichment campers worked with Bricks 4 Kidz and learned about Star Wars Legos. They then made galaxy slime that lit up in a jar.

The week ended with a visit from the Grand Falloons who taught the campers about the importance of recycling and taking care of the environment.

A fun and educational week for all!

*-Submitted by Caroline Rankin*



## MY Y STORY-MEET ROBERT

My relationship with the YMCA began in 1999, when our six year old (now 25) wanted to play basketball on a team—and where better to go than at our local Y where he was joined by all of his buddies? He played, I coached and that was the beginning of my family's long-term, wonderful relationship with the Edison Y. When the kids became ages 10, 14 and 17, we joined as a family and have many great memories of being at the Y as a family unit. My wife Carrie and I managed to get there once or twice per week to work out, on and off through the years, continually taking advantage of personal training, and various classes while all of our kids attended Oakcrest Camp in the summer. In fact, our eldest became a lifeguard at the pool there.

During one visit, I noticed a flyer for a start-up program called "LiveSTRONG", a free, 12-week program designed for cancer survivors who were looking to regain their fitness and have a place to talk and mingle with other survivors...what a great concept!! Just a few months before, in December of 2005, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. I was one of the lucky ones that was able to leave the care of Sloan Kettering in NY and resume a normal life. While it was a group I was not happy to join, I realized I was eligible to become a member of this oh-so-important-to-us-all, unique club. I was a member and graduate of the first LiveSTRONG class, a fact of which I still remain proud! Being able to talk about cancer among peers served us well since in everyday life, this was out of our comfort zones. For me, LiveSTRONG was the only place for me and my "club mates" to be at that time. I regained my strength and confidence and was allowed to feel scared without feeling weird. I am happy to know that this program still continues today.

As my kids went on to other things, Carrie and I continued on as members. Thanks to cancer meds and treatments, about three years ago, I saw that I inherited something I never had before—a gut! My 6 foot, 208 lb. frame was now approaching 230 lbs! I enlisted the help of a personal trainer at the Y and now I am between 216 and 220 lbs.

I retired in late 2016 after decades of working all hours and enjoyed "staying at home" and managing the household duties. But about a year into it, I saw that it was time to do something more. I realized that I could get a part time job while still maintaining the household. Thanks to Edison YMCA staff, I earned a position at the Welcome Desk and I now have three shifts, one of them being in the Strength Room. I have fantastic colleagues and supervisors and working for the Y has reminded me that it's fun to be nice. And I mean that. In fact, I'll always remember the words of a former boss: "Do well, but also do good".

Having a position at a local non-profit organization is a refreshing change for me and I hope to keep this job until I retire again!

*-Robert Gennuso*



# METUCHEN CHILD CARE RECEIVES 4-STAR RATING!

The Y recently received the exciting news that the Metuchen YMCA's Child Care program were rated as a 4-star program under the Grow NJ Kids program! Pamela Cohen, Director and her teachers have been a part of this rating process for some time, and are very proud of receiving the next to highest rating given by this organization.

Grow NJ Kids is New Jersey's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), the program offers child care and early learning programs access to training, professional development, staff scholarships for continuing education and targeted technical assistance. Professional raters visit the program to review quality standards and then program participants receive ratings—up to five stars—by meeting an extensive list of quality benchmarks.

Congratulations to Pam and her teaching staff whose hard work and dedication raised the bar on quality at our Y!

*-Contributed by Chrissy Tolley*



# EDISON PARTICIPATES IN INDIA PARADE

The Indian Business Association (IBA) held it's 15th annual New Jersey India Day Parade on August 11th which is a celebration of India's Independence Day. A record-breaking 45,000 Indian Americans from across New Jersey attended the event! Edison YMCA staff Cindy O'Neill and Jillieanna Peguero were there to represent the Edison YMCA and to promote membership and programs. Governor Phil Murphy attended the event, as well as many other local dignitaries including Woodbridge Mayor John McCormac, Congressman Frank Pallone, Senator Samuel Thompson and Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak. *-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill*



Cindy O'Neill with Rekha Sarathy, Edison Board Member



Cindy O'Neill and Membership and Marketing Director, Jillieanna Peguero



Edison Mayor Tom Lankey with Cindy O'Neill

# DOUBLES ANYONE?

The Y partnered with the South Amboy and Sayreville Rotary to offer a Parent Child Tennis Doubles Fun Night Out on August 30th at the 6th Street Courts. This fundraising event supports the many charitable activities that they provide to the community.

*-Contributed by Karen Robson*



# SAY HOLDS BLOOD DRIVE

On August 4th, the South Amboy YMCA hosted a blood drive with the Worldwide Blood Drive in partnership with the International We <3 You Foundation. Their goal of donors was exceeded with 112 donors to help with supply shortages!

*-Contributed by Elizabeth Moreira*



# YMCA BOARD MEMBER RECEIVES AWARD

We are proud to announce that one of our Board members, George Dailey, is going to be honored with the Pop Curry award at the 2019 Team Walker Evening of Dreams! Team Walker, founded by Jerry and Jasper Walker, is an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in Jersey City. Team Walker continues the legacy of youth programs started by their grandfather, James "Pop" Curry, whose youth programs provided a foundation of dedication, determination and discipline for Jersey City youth. The program provides positive role models, such as George, to encourage students to realize their capabilities, enjoy a sense of accomplishment and provide an opportunity to increase their quality of life for years to come.

George was born and raised in Jersey City, as well as earning his bachelors and masters degrees from St. Peter's University. The event is going to be held at the Liberty House in Jersey City on October 10, 2019. Congratulations, George!



# HOURLY CLUB APPRECIATION EVENT

**Staff** who are members of the Hourly Club were treated to a fun night of food, arcade games and good company at Hailey's Harpcade on Thursday, August 15th. Organized by Denise Zimmer, Director of Financial Development and her Assistant, Cathy Haugh, the night was planned as a thank you for all of the staff who participate in the Hourly Club, meaning that they generously donate back one hour of their bi-weekly pay back to the Annual Support Campaign.

The Hourly Club has grown since its inception in 2017 and is now at 56 members. This year, \$28,005 was donated back to the Annual Support



Campaign from Hourly Club members! While giving back may not always be within their budget, their continuing support exemplifies that our YMCA family is committed to our mission and our impact of annual giving.

Thank you for being great role models for the YMCA!

# BUILDING SAFER COMMUNITIES



The South Amboy YMCA recently completed a collaboration with the South Amboy School District to offer Safety Around Water swim lessons for all 2<sup>nd</sup> graders. Local leaders pledging to be Water Watchers as the South Amboy waterfront community develops included: Principal Dunphy, Superintendent Diaz, Councilwoman Zusette Dato, YMCA CEO Rose Cushing, Mayor Fred Henry, South Amboy Board of Education President Anthony Conrad, and Mary Taylor, the Y's Annual Support Campaign Chair.

*-Contributed by Karen Robson*

# SUMMER CAMP FIELD TRIPS!

A big part of summer camp is...field trips!! The children get so excited when they get to plan a day doing something different and fun!! Here are some of the field trips our innovative staff took the children on this year!



Crayola Factory



Turtle Back Zoo



Yogi Berra Museum



Adventure Aquarium



iPlay America



Bowling



Dinosaurs Rock!



Liberty Science Center



Six Flags Great Adventure



Funplex



Princeton Art Museum



The Highline



## KUDOS TO DANICA LINDSEY!

It is always gratifying when we receive great feedback on one of our staff members. Their commitment and passion for their job which results in the recipient feeling the need to share their story is deserving and should not go unnoticed. Therefore, we share with you a letter that was received by Eric Meshirer, Oakcrest Camp Director about Danica Lindsey, Metuchen Y Aquatics Director:

"I want to take the time to acknowledge and thank Ms. Danica Lindsey. My family and I were here visiting family in New Jersey and we were able to visit the Oakcrest Family Swim Club in Edison on Saturday, July 20, 2019. We live in Alabama and my son is a member of the YMCA there so we are familiar with the swim test. This swim test had some additional things to complete that our YMCA did not have. I have an 18-year-old autistic son, Jady Miller, who needs you to explain things to him completely. My son knows how to swim but did not know how to tread water—but now he does, thanks to Danica Lindsey. With the help of a local member, Danica stepped in to teach Jady how to tread water, back float and gave him the swim test. I can tell Danica loves what she does and has compassion for everyone. Although people have been trained to [work with] people with disabilities, many people often don't show compassion for people with disabilities. I can truly say Danica showed knowledge in her job and compassion.

I wanted [the] YMCA to know that they have a valued employee and wanted to thank Danica Lindsey once again." -Chenique Jeffress



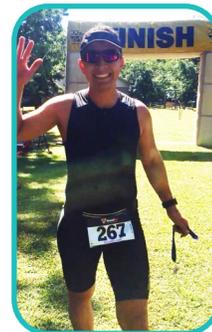
## YMCA OF MEWSA WELCOMES NEW SENIOR AQUATICS DIRECTOR, ANDRES GALLEGO!



Meet the most recent addition to our staff—Andres Gallego! Andres was hired as the Association's Senior Aquatics Director and will be responsible for overseeing aquatics at all branches, as well as implementation of safety measures, program development and swim team.

Andres' involvement in aquatics spans over 15 years. Andres received his bachelor's degree in Physical Education and his masters degree in Business Administration. His past experience includes roles with the Boys & Girls Club of Union, Gateway Family YMCA, the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA and other nonprofits. His experiences provided him the space to become a more impactful leader and expand his knowledge in coaching, programming and managing staff.

When not working, Andres enjoying participating in triathlons, marathons and off-road bicycle competitions. In fact, Andres just competed in the Brookville Olympic Triathlon where he placed third in his age group with a time of 2:45:00! Great job, Andres and welcome aboard!



## MEET NEW CHILD CARE SITE DIRECTOR, DEANNA SMITH!

Please welcome Avenel Learning Center's new Site Director, Deanna Smith! Deanna received her bachelor's degree in Social Work with a concentration in Community Mental Health from Ramapo College. She previously worked for the YMCA of MEWSA as a School Age Child Care lead teacher, as well as assisting in the pre-school in Avenel. Deanna also has experience working as a Substitute Teacher and has worked at the Greenway Family Success Center. As luck would have it, Deanna has decided to come back to the team as the Site Director at the Avenel Learning Center. She brings with her a wealth of connections and experiences related to work with families, connecting them to community resources and building and strengthening relationships. She is going to make a great addition to the Child Care Leadership team! Welcome, Deanna!



## METUCHEN Y WELCOMES NEW ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF AQUATICS, ANDREW PALMER!



Meet Andrew Palmer, new Assistant Director of Aquatics at the Metuchen Branch. Andrew has worked in the aquatics field for seven years. The experience Andrew brings to the Y includes water safety instructor, lifeguard and lifeguard instructor. He enjoys teaching and wishes to continue to advance the Aquatics program at the YMCA with the help of his co-workers.

Outside of his time on the pool deck, Andrew enjoys going for walks with his dog, kicking or throwing a ball around, and playing and coaching soccer. We know that he will make a great addition to our team!

## DEVELOPING LEADER, MARY VALERA

Mary Valera, Membership & Marketing Director for the South Amboy YMCA branch, has recently completed the Hispanic-Latino Leadership Network (HLLN) leadership development program.

Mary notes that one of her favorite parts about her role is engaging with members and being able to celebrate as they reach their health goals. Mary would like to continue to grow within the movement and help develop her team to be successful in all that they do. She would also like to be a trainer one day to teach staff the importance of customer service and cause-driven tours.

Congratulations to Mary for her commitment to The Movement and to the YMCA!



# NATIONAL NIGHT OUT!

# COMMUNITY CRISIS SUPPORT



Joseph Cohen, Program Director, and Karen M. Robson, Director of Operations at the South Amboy YMCA joined the newly-formed South Amboy Municipal Alliance to help promote drug and alcohol

prevention activities for our community. The Alliance hosted a national night out on August 6<sup>th</sup> with rides, games, and a corn hole tournament in partnership with the police department.

*-Contributed by Joseph Cohen*

The South Amboy Municipal Alliance offered a drug awareness program called Fed Up! Several speakers shared stories of loved ones lives impacted by the opioid epidemic in our community. The Y is proud to be a partner with our Alliance and community to offer prevention activities for our youth as well as provide memberships for those in recovery.

*-Contributed by Joseph Cohen*



# BOWL FOR HUNGER FUNDRAISER



YMCA staff Karen Robson, Joseph Cohen and Veronica Vargas attended this year's Bowl for Hunger, an annual fundraiser sponsored by Speaker Craig Coughlin, the Woodbridge Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Middlesex Water Company and Hackensack Meridian Health.

The fundraiser raises money to assist food pantries in Carteret, Perth Amboy, Sayreville, South Amboy and Woodbridge. Since the fundraiser began in 2009, Bowl for Hunger has raised over \$220,000 for the 30 food pantries in

the 19th legislative district. An all-around fun night for a good cause!



Karen Robson, Joe Cohen, Veronica Vargas and former Governor James McGreevy.

Have an article or item of interest for the newsletter? Please submit to Veronica Vargas at [veronica.vargas@ymcaofmewsa.org](mailto:veronica.vargas@ymcaofmewsa.org).

# NEW SIGNAGE FOR YMCA BRANCHES

The Metuchen and Edison YMCA's as well as Grace Early Learning Center installed new exterior YMCA lettering as the result of a brand compliance audit by Y-USA. Each year, several YMCA's are selected randomly by Y-USA for this audit. The purpose is to ensure that all Y's exterior signage, lobby areas, website and printed materials are brand compliant. While we passed with flying colors for most of the categories, two of our branches and one Child Care center needed to replace the lettering on the exterior of their buildings to Cachet font in order to be brand compliant. The Edison Y also installed a new logo on the front of their building.

The Y recently received word from Y-USA that all changes have been reviewed and approved and we are officially brand compliant!



# CHILDREN AT OAKCREST BENEFIT FROM PROVIDENT GRANT

Thanks to a \$10,000 grant received from the Provident Foundation for STEAM activities at our Y, twenty children at Oakcrest Summer Camp were able to participate in a Robotics class this summer! The children were very excited to learn how to build robots and have them accomplish different tasks such as moving backward and forward, turning and returning to the starting point, and following different colored lines. The children thoroughly enjoyed the program and have learned concepts that they will be able to use in the future.

The next phase of the grant will provide STEAM activities in our Early Education and School Age Child Care programs at our on-site and off-site locations!

Thank you to Provident Foundation for their support so that we may provide this critical programming to all!



# YMCA OF MEWSA CELEBRATES WELCOMING WEEK

The YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge & South Amboy will once again be joining Welcoming America and hundreds of other YMCAs and organizations nationwide to host events and to celebrate immigrant's contributions to our communities and to bring together all residents in a spirit of unity.

This year Welcoming Week will take place between September 13-22. Activities will be held at all three branches and will be open to the public. Some of the events and activities going on will include a multicultural art exhibit, global potluck luncheons, a World flags showcase, music and desserts from around the globe, a citizenship preparedness forum and much more!

We invite all Board members to visit our branches during this week to see what the excitement is all about!



# TOP GOLF STAFF VOLUNTEER

# SUMMER FUN AT VENETIAN!



Staff from Top Golf Edison came to Oakcrest Family Swim Club to volunteer their services to help refresh some of the areas that were in dire need of painting! The volunteers painted picnic tables, fencing and the back of the pavilion.

Thanks, Top Golf, for giving back to your community! It means so much not only to our Association, but to all the campers and families who spend their days at Oakcrest!

Pictured left to right: Operations Manager Joseph Alfieri and three of his associates Will Aviles, Samantha White and Brad Cohen. Our very own Tom McCabe, Maintenance Director, is flanked by the Top Golf employees.

*-Contributed by Cindy O'Neill*

South Amboy staff had lots of fun at the Venetian Care & Rehabilitation's annual luau with the seniors. Annette Abolt, Recreation Director, invited SAY staff as they plan their partnership to serve our active older adults.

*-Contributed by Karen Robson*



# <bits & pieces>



Togetherhood volunteers Evelyn Lowenstein and Deborah Wider work the Blood Drive at the Edison Y. Fourteen pints of blood were received!



Metuchen "Camptastic" kids get a visit by the local Police Department.



As part of Middlesex County Destination 2040, Karen Robson and Denise Zimmer attend a storytelling training with coLAB Arts to help build a vision for the future of our county.



Thank you to Mickey Gross for hosting Karen Robson on WCTC 1450AM radio to talk about the work that the Y does to strengthen our communities.



New donor banners are hung at the Metuchen Y in the Fitness Center



Rob and Aubree Nuzzie of 2B Entertainment, YMCA photographer/videographers and also friends of the Y, welcome their new baby girl, Ema! Congratulations!



Metuchen Fire Department comes to Camp Munsee for Annual "Wet Down" at Tommy's Pond!



Metuchen Y's Pat Colandra in her element—surrounded by kids who love her!



The South Amboy Y joined the Epic International Church in Sayreville on August 30th to help give out backpacks stuffed with Y promotions and scholarship information.



The South Amboy Y attended the town's car shows all summer to promote social responsibility, healthy living and youth development programs.

# HEALTHY WEIGHT & YOUR CHILD PROGRAM TO LAUNCH

**Thanks** to a \$20,000 grant received from Y-USA, the YMCA of MEWSA will be launching its free Healthy Weight & Your Child grant to the community with a mid-October kickoff date. Children between the ages of 7-13 who have excess weight will be able to join this program, along with a parent or caregiver, for a supportive and loving environment. They will all learn healthy eating behaviors as well as taking part in physical exercise every week. One free adult membership is also included for the participating parent/caregiver.

Hannah Thomas, Senior Wellness Director, recently attended training for this program at the HW&YC Faculty Academy at Y-USA.

To find out more about this program, please contact Hannah Thomas at [hannah.thomas@ymcaofmewsa.org](mailto:hannah.thomas@ymcaofmewsa.org) or at 732-548-2044.



## GRANT AND DONOR RECOGNITION

<b>TARGET</b>	\$1,000	Soccer Program at Metuchen YMCA
<b>INVESTOR'S BANK FDN</b>	\$10,000	Diabetes Prevention Program/All Branches

Visit <https://www.ymcaofmewsa.org/about-us/annual-report> to view the Annual Report and see a full listing of our 2018 donors.

## HEROES & COOL KIDS



For the second year in a row, Heroes & Cool Kids brought their summer program to the Metuchen YMCA. The program provides trainers to mentor middle school students on important life skills, including sportsmanship, conflict resolution and positive lifestyle choices highlighting drug, alcohol and tobacco prevention.



Trainers Marisa Daniels and Michael Spence guided the 6th to 8th graders with a combination of lessons such as Discovering You, Goal Setting, Success Inhibitors and Waking Up the Leader Within. Each week ended with a project assignment and in the final week, students were asked to write a contract for themselves committing to the principles discussed and how to avoid success inhibitors. The last day of the six week program was celebrated by a pizza lunch that was donated by the Metuchen Municipal Alliance!

*-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur*



## UPCOMING BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

September 25



October 23



December 11

# NEW TEEN LEADER'S CAMP AT CAMP MUNSEE!

New this summer at Metuchen's Camp Munsee was Teen Leaders Camp! The 8-week program allowed teens to learn different skills such as CPR, how to run a business, teach swim lessons, create lesson plans for preschoolers, coach sports games for our younger campers and more. The teens enjoyed journaling their experiences and being able to be hands on throughout camp!

*-Contributed by Gabrielle St. Fleur*



## 50/50 WINNER IS ANNOUNCED!

Congrats to Val Tarr for winning the 50/50 held by the South Amboy YMCA to support youth development efforts. A total of \$10,000 in tickets was sold by staff and volunteers in just three weeks!

Val has a deep connection to the Y as a LIVESTRONG® participant and purchased the winning ticket with money his brother sent him for his birthday! Congrats Val!

Special thanks to Denise Zimmer, Director of Financial Development, and Cathy Haugh, Advancement Assistant, for making this happen so quickly!

*-Contributed by Karen M. Robson*



## STARS & STRIPES CELEBRATION



*-Contributed by Karen M. Robson*

**The** South Amboy YMCA participated in the annual Independence Day Celebration on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. Family activities included obstacle courses, face painting, healthy plate activities and a 50/50 raffle.



Special thanks to Mickey & Sue Gross, Zusette Dato, Mary Taylor, Janet Kern, and SAY staff for making this a successful event!

# YMCA OF MEWSA BOARD WELCOMES TWO NEW MEMBERS!

The YMCA of MEWSA Board of Directors is happy to report the addition of two new Board members.



Nancy Corcoran-Davidoff serves as Executive Vice President, Chief Experience and Human Resources Officer for Hackensack Meridian Health. She is responsible for the strategic leadership, design, implementation and monitoring of programs and initiatives that fulfill the mission to achieve a high reliability culture focused on person-centered care models which provide an extraordinary human experience comprised of safety, quality, respect and empathetic care and services.

Prior to the Hackensack Meridian Health merger, Nancy served in her Hackensack University Medical Center role as Executive Vice President and Chief Human Resources and Communications Officer.

IN 2018, Nancy was named a 2018 Notable Women in Healthcare *Crain's New York Business* and named by *Becker's Hospital Review* as one of 30 hospital and health system CXO's to know in 2018. Committed to giving back, she has served on several boards to share her expertise. Nancy is an advisory board member of the Beryl Institute, a governing board member of Healthcare Innovation Forums and a participating member of

Women in Philanthropy, Experience Innovation Network and Next Generation Patient Experience. She also served as a board member of The Center for Hope and Safety, Bergen County's leading full-service agency for survivors of domestic violence. In addition to these recent honors, Nancy is a recipient of the YMCA TWIN Award and Planetree Spirit of Caring Award.

Nancy is married with two adult sons. Nancy and her husband, Barry, were raised in Bergen County and recently moved to Cranford. They own a home on Long Beach Island where they spend weekends during the summer playing tennis, riding bikes, enjoying the bay and ocean while socializing with a large extended family and friends. Nancy enjoys exercising to stay healthy, reading for enjoyment and learning new ideas while taking advantage of New York Theater, entertainment and museums.



John Hogarty is currently self-employed as a Senior Advisor to Private Equity firms supporting their current and future portfolio investments in the Wealth Management Industry as well as working closely with a number of new FinTech start-ups.

John recently retired as Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Global Wealth & Investment Management for Bank of America / Merrill Lynch. Prior to that, John joined Merrill Lynch as a financial analyst in New York. John also chaired the Risk Management, Investment Management and New Product Review Committees and was a member of Bank of America's Operating Committee as well as the Executive Market Sponsor for Bank of America's combined business activities in the Pacific Northwest Region.

Prior to becoming COO in 2009, John held various leadership positions across Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and Corporate Finance. John was responsible for the design, development and implementation of Merrill Lynch's industry-leading Wealth Management Technology Platform. Prior to that John was CFO of the

Merrill Lynch Wealth Management Americas Division.

John holds the FINRA Series 7 and 24 licenses, professional designation of CPA and received both his MBA in Finance and BS in Accounting from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

John is a member of the Board of Advisors & Board of Advisors Executive Committee for the Silberman College of Business. He is currently the chair of the Council of Corporate Partnerships whose mission is to develop internship opportunities, corporate engagement and giving for the College of Business.

John resides in the Oak Hills section of Edison, since 1993, with his wife Mary, and their three children, Thomas, Annika and Jack. As a family, they are active members of St. Francis Cathedral Parish where John is currently a member of the Finance Council chairing the Investment Committee. John and his family are former long-time members of the YMCA of Metuchen but they still continue to remain active contributors to the annual campaign.

## SOUTH AMBOY WELCOMES NEW BRANCH BOARD MEMBER

The South Amboy Y welcomes Dan Buchanan, as their newest Branch Board member. Dan is in his ninth year as Councilman and has been elected twice as Council President of Sayreville. He has deep roots in Sayreville and is committed to volunteering and giving back to his community for the benefit of all its residents. He is excited to help the Y expand services into the borough.

-Contributed by Karen Robson



# EARLY EDUCATION TRAINING DAY

On Wednesday August 28<sup>th</sup> and Thursday August 29<sup>th</sup>, the YMCA of MEWSA trained their early education staff of close to 140 people for a total of 12.5 hours, building upon their knowledge and experience in the field of early education.

The first day of training was held at Middlesex County College and included topics that pertained to the whole staff. They learned about brain development in the early years, how to deal with children experiencing trauma, how to contribute to a team positively and ways to expand their experience in the Y mission, *Living Our Cause*.

The second day of training the staff convened at the Middlesex Fire Academy in Sayerville and broke out into a variety of different sessions pertaining to length of service as well as the age of the children they are working to educate. There was a new employee track that trained the approximately 55 new staff in the base knowledge necessary to complete their jobs with Infants & Toddlers or with Preschoolers. Then there were a plethora of options for the nearly 85 returning staff to help build upon their knowledge and experience from prior years. Trainings like *Social Emotional Development, Sign Language, Conflict Management, & Strategies for Teaching Young Boys* will assist them in the upcoming year.

Overall, they were excellent days of learning and collaboration that will aid the staff in providing the best quality care to the 550 children we serve daily. Special thanks to Linda Ambis, Northeast Regional Training Manager and Julie Gallanty, Director of NJ Alliance Services, for inspiring our staff to take charge of their own career paths and focusing on living our cause!

-Contributed by Erin Siemers



Training Manager Linda Ambis captures a selfie with the group!

# MARY TAYLOR TURNS 80!



Mary Taylor, Branch Board member and Annual Support Campaign Chair for South Amboy, was surprised with a camper clap-in at the South Amboy YMCA to celebrate her 80th birthday!

The Y is so grateful to Mary for all of the time that she volunteers at the YMCA and gives back to our community!

-Contributed by Karen Robson



# STAFF APPRECIATION EVENT

On Sunday, August 25th, the YMCA of MEWSA held their Staff Appreciation Event at Bowlero for the second year in a row. The event consisted of a fun night of bowling, bonding and fun! The event was free for staff and included bowling for two hours, shoe rental, food and soft drinks. There was much fun had by all!



# REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

The Y participated in an Artistic Rendering of "Voices of the Holocaust—Artists of Terezin" at the Dowdell Library in South Amboy, a live music, poetry reading and discussion, on August 13th. An exhibition was also included which was dedicated to the children's opera "Brundibar" staged at the Teresienstadt (Terezin) Concentration Camp in 1944. This exhibition was originally prepared for and exposed at Berkeley University as part of their Culture Against Destruction Project.

Thank you Council President Mickey Gross, Mayor Fred Henry and Library Director Elaine R. Gaber for offering this amazing presentation.

*-Contributed by Karen M. Robson*



## IMPORTANT DATES

Fall I Session  
Sept 2–Oct 27

Janice Garbolino 5K Run/Walk  
September 14 @ 8:30 a.m.

SAY Halloween Spooktacular  
October 18 @ 6–9 p.m.

Fall II Session  
Oct 28–Dec 22

Tot Trot & Fall Festival  
October 13 @ 10:30 a.m.

Metuchen/Edison Halloween Spooktacular  
October 25 @ 6–9 p.m.

# UPCOMING MEETINGS

## SEPTEMBER

- 4** BOARD GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—5:30 p.m.
- 4** EDISON BRANCH BOARD  
Edison Branch—8:30 a.m.
- 6** PROPERTY COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—9:00 a.m.
- 6** INVESTMENT COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—8:00 a.m.
- 10** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—6:00 p.m.
- 11** SOUTH AMBOY BRANCH BOARD  
South Amboy Branch—6:00 p.m.
- 18** METUCHEN BRANCH BOARD  
Metuchen Branch—8:00 a.m.
- 25** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING  
Metuchen Senior Center  
5:30 Board Meeting  
6:15 Presentation by Four Square, Inc.

## OCTOBER

- 3** CHILD CARE COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—6:00 p.m.
- 8** FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—6:00 p.m.
- 16** FINANCE COMMITTEE  
Wernik Room—6:00 p.m.
- 18** IT COMMITTEE  
AO Conference Room—8:00 a.m.
- 23** BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING  
Wernik Room—5:30 p.m. Fellowship  
6:00 p.m. Board Meeting

### MISSED AN ISSUE?

All Board newsletters can be found on the YMCA website at

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

