



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

cccymca.org

FALL 2017

## DON'T LET AMERICA HAPPEN TO YOU

Dear Friends:

In my view, we live in the greatest country ever conceived. Although faced with many challenges, the values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility (Y values!) still serve as key components of our nation's foundation. We could also add the concepts of equality, opportunity, due process and many others to the list of ideals that make our country great. But when it comes to your health and wellness, don't let America happen to you. What do I mean by this?

Let's start with the facts. Two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese. Most of us are inactive with less than one-quarter getting the exercise we need. Approximately 90 million Americans are pre-diabetic and 90% don't even know it. Most admissions to hospitals are caused by our lifestyle habits including poor diet, tobacco use, stress, and lack of physical activity – all things that we can control. So why is this America's fault? It's because we live in a society that, in many ways, *contributes* to an unhealthy lifestyle. For example, the vast majority of Americans no longer have to be physically active as part of their livelihood or daily home living. In fact, millions of Americans are glued to some sort of screen for the better part of their waking hours with no movement at all! We are bombarded with messages that invite us to buy and consume sweet, salty, high calorie food and drink with little nutritional value. And many of us lead stressful lives where we "live to work" rather than "work to live."

So here's the point – we cannot passively move through life allowing our American society to have its way with our health. We have to recognize and overcome these societal pressures, and we have to *work hard* on our personal health and wellness. That means that we need to make time and commit to moving our bodies, strengthening our muscles, learning about and eating good foods, avoiding tobacco, and relaxing now and then and having a little fun. Oh, and by the way, the Y is a great place to practice all of these healthy habits!

Best wishes to all for a safe, happy and healthy fall season!



David Stevenson  
President & CEO

Dave





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#### **BRANCH LOCATIONS**

**Alpha Community  
Services YMCA** Bridgeport  
**Bridgeport YMCA**  
**Elm City YMCA** New Haven  
**Fairfield YMCA**  
**Hamden/North Haven  
YMCA**  
**Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA**  
**New Haven YMCA Youth  
Center**  
**Ralphola Taylor Community  
Center YMCA** Bridgeport  
**Soundview Family YMCA**  
Branford  
**Stratford YMCA**  
**Valley YMCA** Ansonia  
**Woodruff Family YMCA**  
Milford  
**YMCA Camp Hi-Rock**  
Mt. Washington MA  
**Association Office**  
New Haven

#### **OUR MISSION**

**To put Judeo-Christian  
principles into practice  
through programs that  
build healthy spirit, mind  
and body for all.**

## **WHY THE Y?**

When you or a family member is in search of meaningful change, not just in yourselves, but in your community too, where do you turn?

If you're like most in our community, you go to the Y.

Why?

Because you know you will find programs and opportunities to support the well-being of your family and the greater community. And you also know that you will be welcomed like family by dedicated and compassionate staff in a friendly environment.

It's people like you who help make the Y the center of our community.

You help change the lives of thousands – whether a family in financial distress, a grieving widower alone for the first time, or a child experiencing bullying at school, your gift to the Y creates a safe and nurturing space where they can thrive.

Your gift provides immediate resources and access to important programs – right here in your community. The Y is committed to giving you the highest quality experience – for you, your family, for every person in the community.

Your donation helps to make your community stronger. Right here. Right now. GIVE at [cccymca.org](http://cccymca.org).

## **GIVE TODAY. FOR A BETTER US.**

## **ASPIRING FOR GREATNESS**

Alexis Smith, Executive Director at the New Haven Legal Assistance Association, Inc., has joined the CCC Y Board of Directors. She has served at the LAA for the past five years. Prior to joining, she was a staff attorney at Greater Hartford Legal Aid. She is a graduate of Duke University and the University of Wisconsin Law School. Welcome, Alexis!

Several members of the CCC Y Leadership team have recently been promoted. Congratulations to Tim Bartlett, Sr. Vice President & COO; Melissa Kessell, Sr. Vice President & CFO and Carmen Colon, Vice President-Bridgeport Ys. Matt LaPrino has been elevated to the Lakewood-Trumbull Y Executive Director position.

We also welcome Michael Bonnard, Director of Property Management, Erin Grayson, Director of Leadership Development & Human Resources and Diana Liptak, Fairfield Y Executive Director.



## SWIM, BIKE, RUN WITH CONFIDENCE

The CCC Y has been part of the CMAK Foundation's Race4Chase program since its inception four years ago. CMAK strives to be a positive force to inspire community healing through family and children-focused initiatives and programs in remembrance of Chase Kowalski, the students and educators of the Sandy Hook tragedy. Chase was a member at the Lakewood-Trumbull Y and participated in many programs such as t-ball and gymnastics.

The Lakewood-Trumbull Y was one of the founding YMCAs in the program. This summer, we had three partnering locations: Soundview Family YMCA, Woodruff Family Y and Lakewood-Trumbull Y.

Over the course of six weeks, 121 children ranging in age from 6 to 12 went home every day exhausted and pumped up from the fun and excitement of training for the Race4Chase Youth Triathlon in the memory of Chase Kowalski.

Our young people came to the Y to learn, grow and thrive in swimming, biking and running all while remembering a wonderful boy, Chase. Many children joined the program not knowing how to swim or ride a bike. After the six week program, many were able to complete multiple laps in the pool and ride a bike completely on their own.

All of this was possible because of the dedicated coaches and volunteers who believe in giving back to their communities and teaching the Y values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.



## EXPANDING TO MEET SHORELINE NEEDS

The summer was filled with construction noises at the Soundview Family YMCA. Soon, the Y will be buzzing with more activity than ever! The result of adding more parking spaces has already put smiles on our members' faces! The expansion of the Spinning Center, Wellness Center and Personal Training area will help them meet their wellness goals while our youngsters enjoy the new indoor play scape. Everyone is looking forward to monopolizing the outdoor Basketball Courts the most! All possible thanks to the support of our donors and Branch Board of Managers.



## EVERYONE DESERVES A HOME

Chronic homelessness is a challenge faced by many families and adults, particularly in Bridgeport and New Haven. With a large team of social workers and an inventory of 400 apartments, the Alpha Community Services Y continues to serve as the largest provider of affordable and supportive housing in Connecticut. The Y and our partners continue to reduce chronic homelessness in Bridgeport and New Haven.

Every May, for the last 16 years, the 'Walk to End Homelessness' has brought the community together in solidarity to support the Alpha Community Services Y goals. Community officials, our Board of Managers, staff, volunteers and individuals of all ages from Bridgeport and surrounding towns unite and walk to raise funds. All donations collected directly benefit the Y programs and supportive housing efforts including the Families in Transition Shelter, Bridgeport's only Family Emergency Shelter.



## TOURS OF IMPACT

It's exhilarating to see our Mission work and sharing first-hand the impact we have on hundreds in our community! Thank you to everyone who participated in our second annual Mission Tours with stops hosted by Alpha Community Services Y—Ending Chronic Homelessness, Fairfield Y—Swimming Lessons and Water Safety, Ralphola Taylor Community Center Y—Closing the Achievement Gap, and the Valley Y—Building Character through Summer Day Camp.

