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CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

cccyymca.org

SPRING/SUMMER 2013

## TEACHING KIDS TO BE SAFE AROUND THE WATER

As the weather warms and the outdoor swimming season begins, we are reminded about the great joy and health benefits of being in the water. For many of us, our thoughts also turn to the great tradition and resources offered by the Y in teaching children how to swim and be safe around local swimming pools, lakes, rivers, and the ocean.

This year, our Y has established a goal of serving 12,000 youth in our water safety and swim instruction programs. A key component of this effort is the Y's SPLASH Program through which kids are welcomed at any one of our ten aquatic centers for a *free* week of water safety education. Our talented and highly trained aquatics staff teach the fundamentals of water safety in five situations; public pools, backyard pools, boats, beaches and water parks.



David Stevenson  
President & CEO

By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have just concluded our 2013 SPLASH Program by serving more than 1,500 children, a 30% increase over 2012! We are particularly proud of this program because we make a special effort to involve youth who may not have access to or be able to afford traditional swim lessons.

Our YMCA Strong Kids Campaign allows us to work with children in some very challenged neighborhoods and teach them about water safety, practice safety skills, and have lots of fun around the water.

Thank you to all of our generous donors and volunteers who make the work of the Y possible. You're making a huge difference in the lives of many children and their families, and we couldn't do it without you.



Best wishes to all for a happy and healthy spring and summer season!

*Dave*



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#### BRANCH LOCATIONS

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

#### OUR MISSION

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

## EACH DAY AT THE Y, AMAZING THINGS HAPPEN

**STRONG  
KIDS**

A YMCA Initiative

**Children build confidence while learning to swim.  
Older adults connect over a cup of coffee and a smile.  
People of all ages grow stronger in spirit, mind and body.**

Much of the Y's work is supported by membership dues, program fees and grants, but central to our mission is the commitment to make the Y affordable and accessible to all, regardless of ability to pay. That's why each year the Y asks its members and friends in the community to contribute to the Strong Kids Campaign.

Thanks to our volunteers and many generous donors, we will be able to help kids experience the Y, empower families with access to Y activities and strengthen the communities we serve with Y principles.



*"The assistance we receive from the Strong Kids Campaign has made a huge impact on our family, individually and as a whole. Currently, all of our kids are enrolled in classes they enjoy and get them moving. My husband and I have begun exercising again. The Y has become a second home to us as we spend several days and nights a week either in classes, the gym or in Child Watch. An unexpected benefit has been the solid relationships we are all making with other members at the Y!"*

*Occasionally, when financial concerns arise, our children will ask us if we are poor. My husband and I answer them truthfully with a "No". "We may not be rich in money," we say, "but we are rich in people." Our family considers the YMCA part of our great wealth. Thank you, for your financial support! Please continue to help families like ours afford the "extras" of the YMCA: health, community and core values that have helped make our family strong."*

At the Y, we believe our success is measured by the lives we touch. That's why we pledge that our programs and activities are available to everyone, regardless of income or ability to pay. Contributions to the Strong Kids Campaign are critical to fulfilling this pledge. There's no surer way to better the lives of our neighbors, friends, community and fellow Y members. You can make a neighbor's day a good one by making a gift today at <http://www.cccymca.org/make-a-difference/give/>.

## CELEBRATING Y VOLUNTEERS

The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA recently held its 154<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Volunteer Celebration. The meeting honored several volunteers and named new members to the Board of Directors.

The newest members elected to serve the 2013-2016 term on the Board of Directors are Blanca Kazmierczak and Dr. Mario Garcia. Ms. Kazmierczak is a Vice President at People's United Bank in Bridgeport and Dr. Garcia is the Director of Health at the New Haven Public Health Department. Other Directors elected to serve another term include Lissette Andino, Diane Chiota, Michael Horton, George Logan and Michael Morand. Retiring board members Paul Edison and Peter Hurst were also recognized for their years of service and their dedication to fulfilling the Y's mission.

A highlight of the evening was the awarding of our H. Richard Brew Volunteer Service Award to **Robert Fiscus** of Huntington, CT for long time service and commitment to our Y.

The H. Richard Brew Volunteer Service Award was instituted in 2005 as a way to honor the 35 years of volunteer service to the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA provided by H. Richard Brew. While given upon his retirement from the Association Board of Directors, it is intended that his legacy be honored in subsequent years by presenting this award to volunteers who have demonstrated *character, commitment and long-term dedication* to the YMCA.

Bob Fiscus was one of the first "New Haven" Trustees to be recruited to join the Trustees upon the merger of the Bridgeport and New Haven Y Associations in 1994. He had no prior experience as a Y volunteer but quickly understood his leadership role providing thoughtful guidance and insight. He offered direction relating to mergers with Alpha Homes Inc. in 2003 and the Valley Y in 2008. Bob assisted in the future plans of YMCA Camp Hi-Rock, realized our dream for a full facility in Branford and continues to support our efforts to end homelessness with affordable and supportive housing. Most recently, he worked in partnership with Dave Stevenson, volunteers and staff to create the Real-Time Strategic Plan that guides our future.



David Stevenson, CCC Y CEO; Robert Fiscus, 2013 H. Richard Brew Volunteer Service Award Recipient and CCC Y Chairman of the Board of Trustees; Jon Leckerling, CCC Y Board Chair.

The Central Connecticut Coast YMCA also presented twenty-three Volunteer of the Year Awards to the best of the best in each of our twelve branches to honor their generosity and dedication. The CCC Y has more than 1,293 volunteers across our service area. Their kindness is the core of our existence, playing a critical role in carrying out our mission.





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## FAIRFIELD Y WEATHERED BETTER THAN EVER

It was the largest storm to come up the East Coast on record. At its peak, Super Storm Sandy ripped through Fairfield CT taking down trees and power lines, flooding coastal neighborhoods and sending homes into the ocean.

The next day as the water receded, it was clear, like thousands of other homes and buildings on the eastern coastline, the Fairfield YMCA was a victim of Sandy's fury.

Executive Director Karen Backus and Facilities Director Bob Lewis surveyed the damage. Aside from the power and other utilities being out, everything seemed to be okay. However, as they opened the door to the basement and began to walk down the stairs, they took a step into a flood of problems.

Sandy dumped ocean water, submerging the pool's circulator pumps and leaking pool water into the basement as well, trapping thousands of gallons. The water remained for four days until the Southport Volunteer Fire Department was able to respond and pump the water out of the building.

The day-long process of pumping water revealed two hot water tanks, the circulator pumps for the pool and heat, gas control to the boiler, as well as the Strength and Wellness Center destroyed.

The YMCA staff worked tirelessly to clean up, record what was ruined, and attempt to get back to the day-to-day operations. Three weeks later, the heat was restored and a week after that the pool was back up and running. Pre-K students were able to return to their classrooms and gradually, things got back to normal.

"Our members and community were very understanding and supportive," Backus said. "It was a difficult time for many, especially those who had their children enrolled in our day care."

Still, the YMCA had to find a way to replace the Strength and Wellness Center. A decision was made to move the room upstairs and into the existing gymnasium. A center divider was set up and the basketball court was given a face lift, including new backboards, goals and nets plus a new coat of paint.

With new purchases of state-of-the-art cardio equipment and strength machines, along with donations and acquisitions from the Norwalk YMCA, the other side of the gymnasium began to transform. Finally, on April 11<sup>th</sup>, First Selectman, Michael Tetreau and Backus cut the ribbon, marking the official opening of the new 2,400 square foot Strength and Wellness Center.

"It's very important to our town that the YMCA was reopened," said Tetreau, who used the fitness center for his own rehab after a ruptured Achilles tendon in 1996. "In a time where physical conditioning is of such importance in our lives, it's great to have a place that is so welcoming."

Six months after the storm, the Fairfield YMCA, which has been around since 1964, is better than ever. With approximately 3,200 members, the community organization has something to offer for all ages. The pool, basketball court and Strength and Wellness Center are open for use by all members.

"We're very happy with the upgrades we were able to make," Backus said. "It's an exciting time for both the present and future at the YMCA."

