



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT COAST YMCA PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER

cccymca.org

FALL 2018

LET THEM PLAY!

Dear Friends:

As kids return to school, many of our summertime routines fade as we enter the busy fall season. Summer vacations, camps, swimming and other warm weather activities are replaced with class, homework, organized sports, and that very important part of the day - *after-school*. Many adults of the baby-boomer generation will remember the after-school time as the greatest part of the day when we'd play outside with our friends free of the distractions that claim the time of today's youth. We did not have addictive electronics grabbing our attention. Rather, our focus was placed on what we were going to play and if we had enough kids to play it. But that was a different time.

Today, the after-school time, usually between 3:00 – 6:00 p.m., can be filled with unhealthy influences and behaviors. At the end of the school day, many kids will return home with a parental directive to lock the door and stay inside. That's usually when the refrigerator door swings open and some kind of electronic screen is turned on. Research tells us that kids will spend an average of eight hours each day in front of an electronic screen, and that up to three of those hours will involve the child sitting motionless. And for the parent returning home after a long day, they may find a child that has eaten a lot of bad food, has not done their homework, and has had no physical activity. So, how can we help families facing these challenges?

At the Y, we say – Let Them Play! The Central Connecticut Coast Y serves seventy two elementary and middle schools offering high-quality after-school programs. The Y's After-School Program has three components including a healthy snack for kids to enjoy right after school, working with kids to help them finish their homework, and then, the best part of the afternoon – playtime! We encourage kids to be kids by enjoying good, fun, physical play through games and sports where everyone feels welcome and included. And the best part for parents is that when they arrive for pickup, their child has had a healthy snack, homework is done, and their young one is tired out from an afternoon of play.

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
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.

THANKFUL FOR ALL

As we enter into a new season here at the Central Connecticut Coast Y, we have many things to be thankful for. We are thankful for the opportunity to serve children, families and communities. We are thankful for the support we receive in all twenty-five of our towns and cities. And, we are thankful for our staff, our partners and especially our donors. We value each and every relationship, we are fortunate to build, as we increase our impact.

Recently, we welcomed a new donor to our 2018 Annual Campaign. This donor thanked a longtime friend of the CCCY, board member Dave Bjorklund, for Dave's "good advice and friendship". Each year, Dave completes a letter writing campaign to one hundred friends, inviting them to invest one hundred dollars to the CCCY Annual Campaign. This act of philanthropy, storytelling and outreach is the definition of a true Y Champion. We are thankful for you, Dave Bjorkland. We are thankful for ALL Y Champions that work tirelessly in their communities, in their own ways, with their networks in support of our Annual Campaign.

This fall season, we are continuing our conversations and community outreach to ensure we are able to offer the programs which build a healthy spirit, mind and body FOR ALL. We will take the time to be intentional and recognize all we have to be thankful for.

Friends, what are you thankful for?

Have you donated to our Annual Campaign this year? Have ideas on how to help us with development? Email Amy Wiltsie at awiltsie@cccymca.org. Don't miss out on helping us get to our goal!

DONATE FOR A BETTER US, TODAY! <http://www.cccymca.org/make-a-difference/give/>



CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

The CCCY has elected two new members to the Board of Directors.

James (Jay) McGuinness is the Vice President of Commercial Leading for Chelsea Groton Bank in Glastonbury. Jay was previously the chair of the Hamden/North Haven Y Board of Managers. He has already logged many hours strategizing the future of the CCCY.



Jay McGuinness



Mike Papale

Michael (Mike) Papale is brand new to the Y Mission. Mike leads the Wallingford based non-profit foundation, In A Heartbeat, Inc. He has already proven to be a life-saver with his generous donation of defibrillators and equipment.

We welcome both of you and look forward to your vision and energy. We are thankful for you.

TEACHING LIFE SKILLS

Learning to be safe in and around the water is a life skill. The CCCY takes every opportunity to teach our members and those throughout our community how to respect and enjoy the water, especially our youth. In May 2018, through our Safety Around Water program, the CCCY taught over 1,700 children fundamental water safety skills. Because, when you know how to stay safe in and around the water, swimming is fun and great exercise.

As part of the early learning curriculum, small groups of New Haven YMCA Youth Center preschoolers are introduced to the water and how to swim. For some children, this is their first experience in a large pool! They engage in fun, interactive games with an aquatics instructor that teaches them to float, kick their feet and stroke their arms. They then spend time on specific water safety drills. They are so excited when it is their time for swim lessons. They exit the water exhausted from the physical activity but so proud of their accomplishments!



LIFE CHANGING SUMMER

This was the fourth summer that the CCCY collaborated with the CMAK (Chase Michael Anthony Kowalski) Foundation and ran a grant-funded, six-week youth (ages 5-13) triathlon training program. This year, the Race4Chase programs were based at the Lakewood-Trumbull Y Outdoor Center, the Woodruff Family Y and the Soundview Family Y. It was an incredible experience for all 133 children, the volunteers and counselors that lead the program.

Some participants started the program not able to swim and were afraid of the water. On the day of the race, some children had the ability to do a few strokes, or be fully submerged, while others swam confidently. A few participants biked with their training wheels at first, but learned to bike on their own by race day. One even placed first in their age group. Yoga and dance instructions were added to the daily training disciplines with two professional triathletes motivating one group with their personal success stories.

All participants learned to how to set personal goals and improve upon their personal best. They ran faster, biked more efficiently and swam stronger - just like Chase did. During an incredibly active summer, they made new friends and built relationships with adults that will last a lifetime.



PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Over 875 Bridgeport youth enjoyed recreation, educational and social enrichment as participants in the CCCY's 2018 Summer Lighthouse Program.

The Lighthouse Program, a City of Bridgeport collaborative effort with community partners like the Bridgeport Y and the Ralphola Taylor Community Center Y, ensures that city young people benefit from quality after school and summer programming which develops spirit, mind and body. This year's five-week summer program featured a wide range of activities including cooking classes, water slide and splash pad play, swim lessons, yoga classes, picnics, family literacy nights, and educational support. Conducted at a number of Bridgeport school sites, the programs are easily accessible for all families.

Ever meet Wally, the Alligator, one of the family of reptiles from 'Reptiles on the Move'? Our summer students did! Special guests captivated the children with a hands on nature experience. They cheered with deafening exuberance when the principal at a host school showed his strength and courage (although originally fearful) and actually held Wally.

In addition to learning more about nature, the students improved their math and reading skills using the Prodigy program. Equipped with their IPADS, the students accessed the State of Connecticut Education Department's Common Core Standards platform, and engaged in entertaining educational activities.

To support social development and family bonding, families gathered for dinner and a movie, a grant funded night out to strengthen family relationships. Other participants focused on the fine art of restaurant etiquette with the Bridgeport Youth Council (BYC) learning table manners, ordering, and proper tipping - complete with a trip to a local restaurant.

Older students had the opportunity to design some of their own activities such as a trip to a local creamery utilizing public transportation, interviewing participants for a site newsletter and competing in a Crayola nationwide competition to design a thank you card or poster for a teacher. Winning submissions will be printed on a crayon box. Enjoying the local flavors of the city, some walked to the cove for lunch, the splash pad and the movies.

One of our participants, age 5, really captured the essence of the program, saying, "I liked learning how to swim..... counting to 100 and my ABC's". He stopped to think and added, "We had so much fun stuff to do. I would have to say I liked everything about this summer. Is that ok for me to like everything?"



MISSION MOMENT

At the start of camp season, a father approached two Valley Y staff members on separate occasions. Welling-up, he shared how excited he was to send his daughter to camp again. She began last summer without many friends and was very shy. Then, thanks to her camp counselor, she became more outgoing and independent, even participating in the camp talent show! He wanted the Y staff to know that we are not just providing a summer camp that parents can use as summer child care, but we are influencing the lives of the youth in an extremely positive way.