THE JOY OF SWIMMING

Dear Friends:

Since the first indoor pool was built at the Brooklyn Central YMCA in 1884, Y volunteers and staff have continued the great tradition of teaching children how to swim and be safe around the water. Literally millions of kids have been able to experience the joy of swimming safely in a pool, lake, river, or the ocean because of their experience at the Y. Can you remember how good that plunge felt on a hot summer day?

This year, our Y has established a goal of serving 8,800 youth in our water safety and swim instruction program. A key part of this initiative is the Y’s Safety Around Water Program through which kids are welcomed at any one of our ten aquatic centers during the week of June 15 for a free week of water safety education and swim instruction. 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 Annual Campaign allows us to work with children in some very challenged neighborhoods and teach them about water safety, practice safety skills, and experience the joy of being in 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.

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

David Stevenson
President & CEO
MEET DARIUS

Every summer camp has their “Hall of Fame” kids. Darius is one of the leaders at the Hamden/North Haven YMCA Camp Mountain Laurel.

This time of year, Darius’ excitement about summer camp grows; he talks about it every day. As the staff plans for the season, they look forward to catching the first glimpse of Darius’ contagious smile when he crests the hill at camp. He is one of the many and special reasons our staff gives so much creativity and intelligence in planning the camp season.

His father shared with us that, “Darius, a child with special needs, is often treated as a child by the outside world with no concept of individuality or dignity. He comes here to fulfill both of those needs. He gains a great deal of independence, friendships, and the type of memories that shape and make for a strong personality.” YMCA camps are known for being environments where all children find a place of belonging. Camp Mountain Laurel is Darius’ place.

The Y is also his family’s place! Darius’ father tells us how proud he is of his son and all he has been able to accomplish while overcoming the hurdles of a disability:

“The Y summer camp is a major part of Darius’ life. He comes home every day talking about the activities and people involved, as well as what he’s learned that day! He makes at least one new friend a day! He’s learning new ways to experience life in our summer program.”

Through our financial assistance program, Darius and many other children can return to camp this summer. You, along with the camp staff, make that happen. Through the nurturing environment of the Y, parental guidance, and the generosity of donors like you, Darius has grown into an incredible young man who is able to identify and build upon his strengths while meeting great people who love and respect him. He belongs at the Y and Camp Mountain Laurel. You make that possible.

Thank you from Darius, his family, and all the families whose lives you change with your generosity.

MORE THAN GOLF – FORE COMMUNITY

Our favorite Connecticut Golf Courses are ready for the season so the success of our Annual Campaign Golf Outings will live on in our community. Your support enables us to enrich the lives of others through programs and services that develop positive attitudes, build self-confidence and instill strong values. Organize your foursome for one or both of our remaining 2015 Outings:

**Monday, August 3, 2015 Stratford Y – 11th Annual at the Mill River Country Club.**

**Tuesday, September 15, 2015 Soundview Family Y – 9th Annual Sara H. Forbes Golf Classic at the Madison Country Club.**

More info on cccymca.org.
CELEBRATING OUR Y VOLUNTEERS

We recently held our 156th Annual Meeting and Volunteer Celebration. The meeting honored several volunteers and named new members to the Board of Directors. The Volunteer Celebration dinner highlighted the generosity and dedication of our 2014 H. Richard Brew Volunteer Service Award Winner and Adult and Youth Volunteers of the Year.

Re-elected to the CCC Y Board of Trustees were Richard Hoyt, Jeff Jones, and Ron Noren. The newest members of the Board of Directors are Eileen Lopez-Cordone and Kurt Mohlman. Ms. Lopez-Cordone is a Community Development Specialist with United Illuminating, Mr. Mohlman is a self-employed Private Investor. Other Directors re-elected for another term are David Bjorklund, Althea Marshall Brooks, Jason Corsi, Martha Dulla, Bill Jennings, Jon Leckerling and Jatin Mehta. Retiring board members Diane Chiota (28 years of service), Mario Coppola (3 years) and Tim Martin (7 years) were recognized for their years of service and dedication to fulfilling our mission.

We thank our 2014 Volunteers of the Year: Sister Eileen Boffa and Nicholas Arroyo, Alpha Community Services YMCA; Diego Marulanda and Krysta Lindo, Bridgeport YMCA; Colleen Tighe and Sage Williamson, Fairfield YMCA; Leonard Lye and Tyler Wingate-Jenkins, Hamden/North Haven YMCA; Bill and Dave Johnson and Gillian Orlando-Milbauer, YMCA Camp Hi-Rock; Rebecca and Stephen Kowalski CMAK Foundation and Cameron Lazar, Lakewood-Trumbull YMCA; Dr. Jenny Carrillo and Denneya Robinson, New Haven YMCA Youth Center; Walter Luckett and Kimara Smith, Ralphola Taylor Community Center YMCA; Patricia Widlitz and James Douglas (JD) Shaw, Soundview Family YMCA; Brian Vignati and Danielle Peterson, Stratford YMCA; Mary Brozak and Lexi Brinkmann, Valley YMCA; Chad Bedell and Tiffany Truini, Woodruff Family YMCA.

In 2014, 834 volunteers donated 32,439 hours to help the Y fulfill its mission.

NOW SEVEN CCC Y PRESCHOOLS NAEYC ACCREDITED

The Valley Y recently joined the New Haven YMCA Youth Center, Woodruff Family Y, Stratford Y, and our three Bridgeport Y preschool sites by earning accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) – the nation’s leading organization of early childhood professionals.

We are so proud to be recognized for our commitment and for meeting the highest of professional standards. NAEYC accreditation lets families know that their children are in a high-quality preschool program and that they have teachers who are creating engaging classrooms, enhancing relationships with families, and developing rich experiences for their children.
2014 H. RICHARD BREW VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED TO CHRISTOPHER GALLO

Since 2005, the Central Connecticut Coast YMCA has honored the legacy of H. Richard Brew, a retired 35 year CCC Y volunteer. Award recipients demonstrate character, commitment and a long-term dedication to the CCC Y and the Y mission.

Our 2014 H. Richard Brew Volunteer Service Award was presented to Christopher Gallo of Shelton for his long time service and devotion to our Y.

In the early years, Chris worked side by side with Dick Brew. He followed Dick’s passion and dedication, and celebrates his 25th year of volunteer service to the CCC Y in 2015.

Chris has led the Y first as Director then Treasurer, followed by Board Vice Chairman, Chairman and Annual Strong Kids Campaign Chair. Presently, Chris is our Treasurer and serves on our Board of Directors and Board of Trustees. He is also the Chair of our Finance Committee.

In his free time, as a retired CPA, Chris consults in litigation support and forensic accounting services for entrepreneurs and family-owned businesses in transition. He recently published his first book, ‘Unlikely Champions: A Miracle in Williamsport’ which celebrates the 25th Anniversary of how the 1989 Trumbull National Little League pulled off one of the biggest upsets in Little League World Series History when they knocked off a heavily-favored team from Taiwan.

Chris and his wife Debbie are proud of their three adult children, Jennifer, Chris and Jessica.

Y LEADERS ADVOCATE FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES

On April 22, more than 50 Y volunteer and staff leaders traveled to Hartford and visited with elected officials on YMCA Advocacy Day. During the meetings, State Representaives and Senators learned about the strong impact of the Y and how proposed legislation can support the Y’s work in addressing Connecticut’s most serious challenges by building stronger communities.