



TRANSFORMING LIVES

2024, ISSUE 2

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Are you excited about the 2024 Paris Olympics? I know I am!

I've always loved sports, and I am truly inspired by Olympic athletes. They are certainly gifted with natural athleticism but, more than that, their achievements are underscored by the goals they've set, their commitment to the sport, their dedication to training and the challenges they've overcome.

Over the years, many Olympians have had ties to Greater Somerset County YMCA. At a young age, Tobin Heath started playing soccer in Somerset Hills YMCA's backyard. She went on to win two gold and one bronze Olympic medals as part of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team. This year, I was excited to cheer on GSCYMCA Swim Team athletes at the Olympic Trials, including: Kenny Barnicle (age 17), Anna Moesch (age 18), Garrett Gould (age 18), and Emily Thompson (age 18), as well as team alumni including Jack Alexy, Matt Fallon, and Jessie Novak. We are thrilled that Jack Alexy and Matt Fallon both made the Olympic Team! Jack qualified for the 100-meter freestyle and Matt achieved an American record in the 200-meter breaststroke. Congratulations to all our swimmers!

Through your generosity toward the Y's mission, you inspire children and teens to explore new interests, to nurture passions, to achieve goals and to reach their full potential. You ignite achievement in our future generation. We hope this issue of Transforming Lives will shed light on the significant impact you make on children and families through your support of the Y. You ensure that the Y is here to support all, especially under-resourced neighbors.

On behalf of everyone who benefits from your generosity, thank you for giving your best to the Y and our communities.

Gratefully,

David M. Carcieri

David M. Carcieri
President/CEO



Pictured are guests enjoying GSCYMCA's 2024 Annual Campaign Celebration and Spirit Awards.

COMMUNITY STRONG Annual Campaign Update

You champion community!

By definition, a champion is a person who supports and defends a cause. Through your support of Greater Somerset County YMCA, you champion community – specifically, neighbors who struggle financially, physically, and emotionally. You ensure that they have access to resources, services, and relationships that improve quality of life. The impact of your generosity is significant. You help:

- Local families who cannot afford child care or summer camp
- Seniors who seek connections with their peers and community
- Adults who struggle with managing chronic disease
- Families who face food insecurity
- Teens who need academic guidance and mentoring
- Children with special needs who need enriching programs to build self-assurance
- Neighbors of all ages who need the life-saving skill of swimming
- And, so much more!

Last year, Greater Somerset County YMCA provided over **\$1.9 million** in financial assistance to local individuals and families, as well as in support of mission-based programs that address community needs; which is a 14% increase over the previous year.

Thanks to your generosity, we have raised **\$1,481,350** in our 2024 Annual Campaign. With your belief in the Y's mission as our inspiration, we will continue our efforts to close the gap between the amount raised and the support offered. One hundred percent of the funds raised in our Annual Campaign goes directly to the community.

If you would like to become more involved in our fundraising efforts, please contact Sylvia Velez at svelez@gscymca.org. Thank you for your continued support that strengthens community and the Y's sustainability for generations to come.

SELFLESS SPIRIT

2024 Spirit Awards

To celebrate **National Volunteer Month** in April, we proudly presented 13 Spirit Awards to individuals and partners who volunteer their time and talent for the benefit of others. The awards recognize volunteers for their commitment, service, and leadership toward helping Greater Somerset County YMCA to fulfill its mission of strengthening community.

Volunteerism is deeply rooted in the 151-year history of the Y, and volunteers remain as important to our organization today as they were in the beginning. We are truly inspired by the meaningful contributions of all our volunteers. From helping with food distribution, to supporting individuals with special needs, to projects that inspire equity and inclusivity, our volunteers help neighbors to thrive and they are shining examples of social responsibility.

We are so thankful for all of our donors, partners, and volunteers who share a passion for transforming lives and propelling our community forward by investing in our kids, our health, and our neighbors.

Congratulations to the 2024 Spirit Award recipients!



YOUTH Chloe Moss

Saturdays In Motion and
Teen Advocate
Somerset Hills YMCA



ADULT Shakti Harris

Togetherhood Committee Volunteer
Bridgewater & Somerville YMCAs



FAMILY Chris & Sarah Hayevy

Branch Board &
Togetherhood Committee
Bridgewater & Somerville YMCAs



ACTIVE OLDER ADULT Ethel Wheeler

Food Security Volunteer
Plainfield YMCA



GROUP 150th Anniversary Gala Committee

Robyn Burke, Peter Cirignano, Chris Edwards,
Erika Evleth, D'Brickshaw Ferguson,
Kate Fleschler, Marisabel Fernandez, Lisa
LaVecchia, Karen Ostartick, Linda Osterman
Greater Somerset County YMCA



COMMUNITY PARTNER Somerset County

Commissioner Director, Shanel Robinson
Commissioner Deputy Director, Sara Sooy
Commissioner, Melonie Marano
Commissioner, Paul Drake
Commissioner, Douglas Singleterry
County Administrator, Colleen Mahr
Chief Communications Officer, Brad Fay
Greater Somerset County YMCA



LEADERSHIP Jennifer Giesber

Triathlon Coach & Coordinator
Hillsborough YMCA



LIVING OUR CAUSE Steve Oliver

Board of Directors
Greater Somerset County YMCA



RAY OF LIGHT Lee Udelsman

Branch Board Volunteer
Somerset Hills YMCA



BOARD LEADERSHIP Chuck Craig

Branch Board Volunteer
Princeton YMCA



BOARD LEADERSHIP Doug Grierson

Board of Directors
Greater Somerset County YMCA



PHILANTHROPY Bocina Family

Bruce Bocina, Barbara Curtin, Brenda Curnin
Community Advocates
Greater Somerset County YMCA



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT Gail Granowitz

Board of Directors & Philanthropy
Somerset Hills YMCA



DANCE AROUND

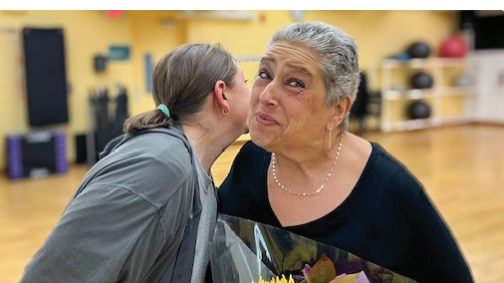
Saturdays in Motion Dance Party

On Saturday, April 27, Somerset Hills YMCA's Saturdays in Motion (SIM) program held its 2nd annual dance party to celebrate the conclusion of its 32nd season and to recognize the program's graduating high school senior volunteers. SIM is the longest running, nonpublic recreational program for children with autism and special needs in the country; it is volunteer-led and offered at no cost to participants.

The 'Under the Sea' theme was embraced in all elements of the event including the costumes, tattoos, balloons, music, dancing and a buffet of homemade goodies. Most importantly, the smiles on the faces of the participants and volunteers expressed the fun had by all.

At the event, the Raynes family honored high school senior volunteers for their years of commitment to the program, for being servant leaders, as well as for their leadership, devotion to the children, responsibility and kindness.

Your support makes the Y a welcoming and inclusive place for all – thank you!



HEALING JOURNEY

LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA

Last year, Tammy faced unemployment and a second battle with cancer. After intense chemotherapy treatments, she needed to recover physically and emotionally; and, she had to find a solution that wouldn't strain her finances. So, she reached out to the Y.

"The Y told me about Livestrong at the YMCA – a cancer recovery program that is offered at no cost! It was exactly what I needed – a place to rebuild my strength, both physically and mentally, without the constant worry of cancer looming over me. The sessions were effective and enjoyable – filled with laughter and camaraderie. Through Livestrong at the YMCA, I regained my physical vitality and also made friendships with fellow participants. The supportive, knowledgeable, and compassionate staff played a key role in my journey towards recovery. Thanks to their guidance, I was better able to face the challenges ahead, including an upcoming surgery.

The Y's generosity didn't end at the last session of the program. They provided financial assistance for a membership so I could continue my progress without financial strain.

The Y's impact on my life is so meaningful; it is a major part of my healing journey. To everyone involved – program participants, dedicated staff, and generous donors – I offer my heartfelt gratitude. This opportunity has made an immeasurable difference in my life."



NURTURING POTENTIAL

Y Achievers

Over the past year, a growing number of pre-teens and teens have been benefitting from a new and expanded Y programs that promote core values, deepen family connections, and inspire them to realize their full potential.

One such program is Y Achievers. This program, designed to inspire bright futures among underserved teens, was newly launched in 2023 in our Plainfield and Somerville branches. Y Achievers is a career and college readiness program offered at no cost to empower high school students to pursue their personal, academic, and professional goals. Program components include weekly meetings, college/career planning, internship guidance, and college tours. Through these programs Y staff serve as positive role models who demonstrate the importance of goal setting, hard work, resilience, and ethical decision-making. In the inaugural program, the 27 participating students had the opportunity to learn from 19 professionals about their careers, and attend two college tours to Fordham University and Seton Hall University.

On behalf of the students, we are truly grateful for your support, which affords these enriching programs. Our hope is to continue to grow the program with more students and in more communities.





HOP TO IT

Running with Compassion

This year's Hillsborough YMCA's HOP 5K Walk/Run had a fantastic turnout. Held on Saturday, June 1, the NJ USATF sanctioned race attracted over 520 runners, and the community was in full force along the route to cheer them.

Among the top finishers were:

- Male: Eric Scully – who set a new course record
- Female: Courtney Skikus
- Dad/Daughter: Rachel Kenneth Ellis
- Dad/Son: Gunjan & Yuvaan Bhargava
- Mother/Daughter: Kathryn & Brooklyn Kutepow
- Mother/Son: Nicholl & Maxwell Young

The Hoppy Award, which recognizes the Hillsborough school with the highest percentage of students participating in the race, went to Auten Road School with 64 participating students. In total, more than 130 elementary students participated in the race. Let's also hear it for Melva Murray who finished the 5K at 91 years young! All in all, it was wonderful to see the community come together to support the Y's mission.



SUMMER CAMP

Ready. Set. Summer!

You are invited... come visit camp and see, firsthand, the impact of your generosity! To schedule a visit, please contact the Program Director:

BASKING RIDGE:
Gabi St. Fleur (gstfleur@gscymca.org)

BRIDGEWATER:
Jamie Norgard (jnorgard@gscymca.org)

FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP:
Alesha Clayton (aclayton@gscymca.org)

HILLSBOROUGH:
Sarah Graham (sgraham@gscymca.org)

PLAINFIELD:
Leonardo Gonzalez (lgonzalez@gscymca.org)

PRINCETON:
Eric Meshirer (emeshirer@gscymca.org)

SOMERVILLE:
Jamie Norgard (jnorgard@gscymca.org)

Get ready for a summer of adventure, discovery, friendships and memories. Learn more at gscymca.com/camp

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

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[gscymca.org](https://www.gscymca.org)

Greater Somerset County YMCA is a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose and each other. The Y empowers everyone – no matter who they are or where they're from – by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. For information about Greater Somerset County YMCA and financial assistance, visit us at www.gscymca.org.