



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT[®]
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

TRANSFORMING LIVES

FALL 2017

LETTER FROM THE CEO

DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,



There are many points of view surrounding the subject of social responsibility and often times the perception is that large, for-profit corporations deliver the most impact. At the Y, we

believe that being socially responsible starts with the individual. And, by working together, bound by common purpose and passion, we can make a difference in the lives of all. This is why expanding the social responsibility programs at Somerset County YMCA is one of our areas of focus and a key part of our

strategic plan. It is our mission to ensure that we are meeting the needs of the community and giving every person in the community the opportunity to thrive.

In this issue of Transforming Lives, you will see examples of the many ways our members, staff and volunteers give back to our neighbors, making tangible the idea of social responsibility. These opportunities are made possible by the generosity of time, patience, spirit and you. Thanks to your generous donations, the Y continues to offer programs that support, nurture and enrich the lives of our community.

In recognition of your generous support, we are pleased to have updated the donor wall at each of our branches with the names of those who have donated at the Chairman's Roundtable level in 2017. Thank you to all donors for your heartfelt and continuing support of our cause to transform lives.

Sincerely,

David M. Carcieri

David M. Carcieri
President/CEO

VOLUNTEERISM: IT'S IN OUR DNA

This year's recipient of the Jack Welch Social Responsibility Award is Jamie Hannigan. This award, named in memory of Jack Welch, who was a long-time friend of the Y and former member of the Board of Directors, is presented to a Somerset County YMCA employee who exemplifies the core values of the Y by volunteering his or her time and talents to strengthen community. Jamie is a lead preschool teacher, and dance and drama instructor for enrichment at Hillsborough YMCA, a branch of Somerset County YMCA. When not working at the Y, Jamie volunteers at The Children's Hospital at St. Peter's University Hospital, teaching dance classes to the Craniofacial Girls Group. Additionally, Jamie raises money and organizes events for foundations such as The Joyful Heart, Susan G. Komen, Leukemia & Lymphoma and Hugs for Brady. "I believe that helping others is indeed the responsibility of every human being," explains Jamie. "I love helping my community, and I strive to set a good example for my students. My hope

is that they too will endeavor to lend support to those who need it."

Jamie is just one example of the thousands of volunteers at the Y. Volunteerism is not only a large part of what we do at the Y, it is what enables us to open our doors every day. From those who donate their time to support our facilities department, to volunteers who assist with our many programs, to those who serve on the Board of Directors, their tireless efforts and selfless contributions are indispensable. This kind of goodwill also extends beyond our doors and fuels the Togetherhood[®] Program. Here we identify community needs and volunteers organize and lead projects that give back to our neighbors through veterans support, senior outreach and events that celebrate our vibrant community. At the Y, we believe that volunteering can improve your own life, as well as someone else's.



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STEPPING UP

Nurturing children and teens to become active, thriving and contributing members of society is paramount to the Y's cause of strengthening community and giving back to our neighbors.

This fall we are expanding our Youth Civic Engagement and Leadership Program across all branches, creating an opportunity for young people to affect real, positive change in their communities. Three key components of the program include Youth and Government™, Model UN and a multitude of leadership and volunteer opportunities. At the Y, we believe that involving teens in the study and discussion of community, national and global issues not only makes them better, more confident citizens of the world, but helps them develop life-skills such as public speaking, problem solving and consensus building. By providing these leadership and service opportunities, the Y endeavors to expand the cultural, social and economic sensitivities of our future leaders while enriching the lives of the community we serve.



Hillsborough YMCA Youth and Government team

EMPOWER YOUTH Youth and Government™

Youth and Government™ is a state-organized YMCA national program designed to simulate local, state and national government processes. Since its establishment in 1936, Youth and Government has sought to educate young people about government processes so as to better prepare them to be active, informed and responsible citizens. Modules include the judicial, legislative and executive branches of government, and are led entirely by the teens, with guidance from teachers and volunteers. Participants agree on the current issues and bills to be addressed, and establish departments and staff positions that mirror all the required roles within the local, state or federal government. Somerset County YMCA's program culminates in April with a presentation of participant-passed bills to legislators at the New Jersey State House.



MODEL BEHAVIOR Model UN



Model UN is a simulation of the UN General Assembly, enabling teens to serve as ambassadors from UN member states to debate current issues on the organization's agenda. In these roles, delegates make speeches, prepare draft resolutions, negotiate with allies and adversaries, resolve conflicts and navigate real UN procedures in order to foster cooperation and resolve global problems. Issues are researched and agreed by the participants and cover a range of real-world current affairs such as security, human rights, food and hunger, the environment and economic development. The program concludes with a regional conference in January, where delegates present and discuss their resolutions within the wider assembly. Through Model UN, the Y endeavors to broaden children's knowledge and understanding of other cultures.



Model UN at Somerville YMCA



SIM volunteer at Somerset Hills YMCA

GIVING BACK Leadership and Volunteerism

The youngest members of Somerset County YMCA are shining examples of the positive impact and force for good that volunteers can bring to the community. **Over 230 children and teen members** have contributed their energy, passion and skills through myriad leadership opportunities and volunteer efforts, consistently affirming the joy and personal satisfaction they have gained as a result of getting involved. A program where the power of teen volunteers is most evident is Saturdays in Motion (SIM). Recently celebrating its 26th anniversary, SIM is the longest-running recreational program for children with autism in the United States. SIM, which is free to community participants, brings together children with autism and teen volunteers through play and swimming while offering parents caregiving respite.



Your generous support helps to strengthen our community.





DONOR SPOTLIGHT

B.R. Ramaprasad, known to his friends as Rama, has been coming to Somerset Hills YMCA for more than 25 years. "Back then, I would be here when the doors opened, before sunrise, to swim. Now that I'm retired, I come during the day for my daily water jogging." For Rama and his family, the Y has always been about the people. "What started as a place to work out has grown into a relationship for us, and that's due to the staff. They have always been exemplary."

"I support the Y because I believe in the programs. The Y helps us all better ourselves in everything we do," explained Rama. Whether it's cultural celebrations or volunteer programs or wellness classes, Rama feels that the Y brings together the community and creates an atmosphere of camaraderie. "I see the kids volunteer at Saturdays in Motion and I'm so impressed; they have endless patience and great attitudes. I witness those suffering from illness come here for exercise and support and I can see that they are uplifted. For us, the Y is a fraternity sealed in a common goodness which connects us all."

A TIP OF THE CAP Scholarship Recipients

On August 18, families, staff and volunteers gathered together at Somerset Hills YMCA to proudly celebrate the achievements of three local students who were awarded college scholarships for their leadership, academic excellence and service to the community.

Marc Koch, Somerset Hills YMCA executive director, presented two scholarships to deserving students, **Leah Horowitz** and **Wanyioko Gitau**. Ms. Horowitz, a YMCA dance teacher, was the recipient of the Tannenbaum Family Scholarship and is studying Communications and Dance at Rutgers University. Mr. Gitau, a lifeguard at the Y, was the recipient of the Millicent Fenwick Scholarship and is studying Finance at Seton Hall University.



Wanyioko Gitau, Leah Horowitz and Victoria Vena

Carol Fanning and her grandson Jake presented the John Fanning Scholarship to **Victoria Vena**, a YMCA volunteer who is studying Communications, Law, Economics and Government at American University.



8 years, nearly
\$50,000,
awarded to
28 students



MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

When Sandy Schwartz moved to New Jersey from Florida, she could not have imagined joining the Y. "I never knew much about it. And now, three years later, I can't imagine not coming here every day. I love it." Sandy, a member of Hillsborough YMCA, comes daily to ride the stationary bike and exercise in the therapeutic pool. "My doctors see the difference, and in addition to improving my physical well-being, coming here elevates my mood," says Sandy. Unlike a regular gym, Sandy enjoys the buzz of activity around the Y. "As a retired teacher, I love being around the kids. I think the commotion and energy are great." According to Sandy, the socialization aspect is as important as the exercise. "I've made friends here. I ride bikes with a regular group, or sit in the lobby and chat with people. Everyone, including the staff, is so friendly." For Sandy, the glass is always half-full. "Sometimes the smallest changes bring on the biggest transformations. Like being on the treadmill; if I increase the intensity just one level, I get so excited, because I know I'm moving forward and making progress."





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The Y is the nation's leading nonprofit committed to strengthening the community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. At Somerset County YMCA, we believe everyone, regardless of age, income or background, should have the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For information about Somerset County YMCA and financial assistance, visit us at www.somersetcountyyymca.org.



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR



NOV. 1-20
NOVEMBER FOOD DRIVE



NOV. 24-DEC. 18
GIVING TREE



FEB. 7, 2018
ANNUAL MEETING