



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

COMMUNITY NEWS

A community newsletter from the New Canaan YMCA

STRONGER, TOGETHER

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA Supports our Community's Strongest Individuals



Congratulations to our 2018-2019 LIVESTRONG at the YMCA graduates!

After seven years, the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA cancer wellness program continues to grow serving as a health and wellness resource for cancer survivors within our community.

The LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program is a national research-based program that offers individuals affected by cancer a safe, supportive environment to participate in physical and social activities focused on strengthening the whole person. Medical studies have shown that moderate levels of appropriate physical activity can

reduce fatigue, boost self-esteem, and improve muscle strength and physical endurance in individuals following cancer treatment. LIVESTRONG at the YMCA seeks to address the limited availability of physical activity programs specifically for cancer survivors.

Participants meet twice a week and work with a LIVESTRONG at the YMCA certified Personal Trainer. Each group member receives a three-month membership to the Y, which coincides with the program dates and allows these individuals to take advantage of

Thanks to donors of the Y's Annual Support Campaign, the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program is available to any cancer survivor within the community at no cost.

all that our Y has to offer, including yoga, Tai Chi, Zumba, swimming and much more.

A former participant and breast cancer survivor shared,

Page 2: Tips to stay on track with your goals this summer

Page 3: Water safety tips from the Y aquatics staff

Page 5: Photos from the Y's thriving special needs initiative

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

Remaining Healthy and Active at Any Age

Understanding the Body as we Age

As we age, it is inevitable that we will experience body changes and changes in metabolism. However, physical activity and exercise regimens can help improve the health of older adults while also preventing and delaying the onset of diseases. Not only does exercise and physical activity help the body physically, senior fitness can also provide benefits to brain health. This leads to increased self-worth, independence and happiness. Physical activity leads to higher levels of functional health, better cognitive function, and a decreased risk of role limitations.

According to the World Health Organization, older adults who are physically active tend to show lower rates of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, type 2 diabetes, colon cancer and breast cancer,

healthier body mass and composition, and a higher level of cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness.

Physical activity in older adults includes leisure time (walking, dancing, gardening, hiking, swimming), household chores, engaging in play, games, sports, or planned exercise. Many of these activities can be completed through daily activities, with family or friends, or within the community.

It's never too late to begin an exercise program to improve your health. It is recommended that older adults should aim for 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week. This aerobic activity should be performed in increments of at least 10 minutes.

Enjoy Your Summer While Staying on Track

As we look forward to the summer temperatures and planned vacations it is also important to keep healthy eating habits at the forefront for you and your family! There are plenty of ways that you can stay on track throughout the summer. Kristin Schnitzler, R.D., and Group Wellness Director at the Y, provides some tips to help you stay healthy and stick with your fitness goals even while on vacation.

- Be prepared. Pack non-perishable snacks like trail mix, apples, bananas, whole grain crackers, popcorn and unsalted nuts to have on hand to avoid unhealthy fast food options.
- Make your own breakfast. Make a heart healthy bowl of oatmeal topped with dried fruit and/or nuts and seeds, or make eggs and serve with whole grain toast and fruit.
- Make your own lunch. Pack a cooler with whole grain sandwiches made with low sodium deli meat, and slice up veggies like bell peppers, cucumbers, or carrot sticks for a healthy side.
- Watch out for food poisoning. Don't let perishable foods sit for more than 2 hours without refrigeration.
- Keep alcohol to a minimum. A better option is a 'mocktail' of seltzer, splash of 100% fruit juice, and ice.
- Enjoy treats in moderation. Enjoy smaller portions of treats such as a kids sized ice cream cone or a smaller pastry.

STAY ACTIVE, STAY HEALTHY

Active, older adults have taken advantage of the many group exercise opportunities available at the Y. Each day, individuals enjoy classes like chair fitness, chair yoga, chair pilates, aquamates, gentle yoga, fit & functional, tai chi and many more.

To learn more about the various classes available, contact Eva Saint at esaint@newcanaanymca.org.



MISSION IN ACTION

Thank you to our Donors!

"The YMCA is one of my most favorite places in New Canaan, and is an essential part of my daily routine. I use the Wellness Center and downstairs Zone several times a week. My time at the Y serves as a therapeutic experience. I find running and working out peaceful and leave feeling less stressed and rejuvenated. As a young member in the community, I have also enjoyed the opportunity to meet and interact with other people my age. It is difficult to meet other thirty-somethings in the area, but at the Y, I feel less isolated.

The YMCA encourages me to live an active, healthy life and to interact with my fellow community members. This is a special place for me and I am very grateful to be a member."

ACHIEVE THROUGH TEAMWORK

Recent News from our Community's Aquatics Teams

The Y's three competitive aquatics teams had another year of hard work, determination, and fun. Each are closing out the spring with impressive accomplishments, proving once again the benefits of working hard together as a team.

The **Whirlwind diving team** is going strong in its 22nd competitive season.

Congratulations to Kevin Bradley, who captured the high school triple crown for the second year in a row, winning the FCIAC title, Class State Title, and Open State title. Whirlwind had five divers in the top fifteen of the state for girls, and seven divers in the top fifteen of the state for boys.

29 divers represented our Y at the YMCA National Diving Championships, winning first place for the boys division and second place for the Combined Team Champion Award.



For the **Aquianas synchronized swimming team**, 2019 marks its 41st season of competition. The 70 members include Emma Tchakmakjian, who is training full-time with the Senior National Team for the Olympic Qualifier in July and Olivia Li who ranked 1st in the 2019 Junior National Team Trials. This will be her 3rd appointment to the National Team.

The 13-15 year old age group won the East Zone Highpoint Trophy this past February while the JRs swept the team, duet, and solo events at their zone championship in March.



2019 has been a successful season for the **Caimans swim team**. Recently, the Caimans brought home the 2019 overall Regional Championship meet trophy, along with the overall mens and womens winners. The Caimans also had 31 swimmers continue on at the CT Age Group Championships, earning place for the team. 14 Caimans swimmers will head to Greensboro, NC for Short Course YMCA Nationals and 15 swimmers head to the TYR Elite Showcase to finish the season.

Thanks to their hard work and dedication this season, the Caimans set 19 new team records so far this year.



New Water Polo Programs at the Y!

Danilo Sierra has joined the Y's team and is leading the new water polo programs at the Y. Danilo has been playing water polo since the age of 12, and is an experienced coach at various levels. Water polo programs range from introductory lessons through house scrimmages, and are available for ages 8 and up.

A FUN AND SAFE SUMMER FOR ALL

Tips for a safe summer from our Y's aquatics staff:

- Never swim alone! Always swim with a buddy.
- Always swim in a designated swimming area, with a lifeguard on duty.
- Adults should constantly and actively watch their children. Parents or guardians of young children should always be within an arm's reach while in the water.
- Appoint a 'designated watcher' to monitor children during social gatherings at, or near, a pool.
- Inexperienced swimmers should wear a Coast Guard approved Personal Flotation Device (PFD), whether swimming in a pool or an open body of water.
- Install 4ft. or taller fence around pool and spa with self-latching gates. If the house serves as a side of the fence, install an alarm to the door that enters to the pool area.
- Teach children water safety and swimming tips as early as possible.

MISSION IN ACTION

Thank you to our Donors!

"My daughter was able to join the Whirlwind Diving Program this year only because of the financial aid she was granted. We drive 45 minutes each way 6 days a week (some days we leave at 4:45 am) to have her train with the amazing diving coaches! Because of her training at the Y she was awarded 2nd place in the state of CT in the girls High School diving season and is being considered for All American in girls diving. Her confidence in herself and her personal drive have grown exponentially! She considers the Y and her teammates her second family."

CREATING MINDFULNESS

Health and Wellness Advice from the Y

MindUP - Helping Children Develop the Mental Fitness Necessary to Thrive in School and Throughout Life

Bernadette Johnson
Stamford Health
Director of Executive, Corporate & Occupational Health Services

All children in the world are our most precious resource for a happier, healthier tomorrow. They deserve all we can give them to thrive and succeed in this sometimes-challenging world. Parents want the best for their children to be successful. There are tools that can help develop a more calm and connected child to allow them to pursue their dreams.

MindUP is the signature program of The Goldie Hawn Foundation, a not-for-profit organization created in 2003 in response to the global epidemic of childhood anxiety, depression, aggression and suicide. Combining the brilliance of neuroscientists, teachers, positive psychologists and experts in mindfulness, MindUP gives children the knowledge and tools they need to manage stress, regulate emotions and face the challenges of the 21st century with optimism, resilience and compassion. Millions of children,

families and teachers have been taught MindUP in schools around the world and this continues to grow.

Here are some parent tips for bringing MindUP lessons and concepts into the home environment:

- Connect with your child through mindful moments such as taking time to immerse yourself together in present activities including listening to sounds, or taking a walk outside. These can help to enrich feelings of enjoyment.
- Practice gratitude at a family meal. Simply noting one thing we are thankful about helps induce positive emotions.
- Join together daily in a quiet, focused breathing exercise. Together, take three deliberate deep breaths to bring calm and reduce stress.
- At the end of the day, ask your child to share one or more things that went well today. This helps foster a positive mindset.

To learn more about the MindUP Program, visit www.mindup.org.

MISSION IN ACTION

Thank you to our Donors!

"The YMCA has truly helped me in many ways. I am a single mom with 2 beautiful daughters. Their dad was diagnosed with brain cancer 3 years ago, and since then he has lost his short term memory... It has been extremely difficult for the girls, and for myself. I found myself working 40-50 hours per week and was always looking for part time work. How would I ever be able to afford camp along with all other expenses? I needed the girls somewhere close, yet somewhere fun - somewhere where they could be kids. A place where they would laugh, build friendships, learn how to trust, and build self-confidence. A place where they would make happy memories!

I had no idea the day I went to the Y, that my prayers would be answered... because of people like you, my daughters have gained such confidence in themselves; they absolutely love camp. The counselors know when girls are being adolescents and when they just need a hug. I am so grateful for the memories the girls are making. They count the weeks until they go back - amazing!! Camp offers leadership as well, which is important as kids grow. The independence is great!

I can't tell you what it means that people like you are donating to such a great organization, where they truly help those less fortunate. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping to make memorable summers for my girls. I hope one day to be able to help people the way you are..."

BUILDING HEALTHY YOUTH



Congratulations to the 26 young members who completed the Youth Strength Training program so far this year, providing them with the tools to stay fit. Upon completion of the class, participants receive their F.I.T. pass, granting them access to our Wellness Center.

To learn more, contact Eva Saint at esaint@newcanaanymca.org.

CELEBRATING ABILITIES

Our Y's Special Needs Initiative



2019 Unified Sports Basketball Tournament

Our Wildcats basketball team, comprised of kids with special needs and typical peers, practiced all winter and competed at the Unified Sports tournament in February.

Thank you to our Annual Support Campaign donors who make it possible for our Y to offer programs, special events, and support for over 100 children, teens, and adults with special needs!

9th Annual World Down Syndrome Day

Approximately 250 volunteers, families, and kids enjoyed the Y for an afternoon of sports, music, Zumba, ballet, karate and arts and crafts.



STAR Outings

We're proud to host the adults from STAR for special activities at our Y. Activities have included cooking, exercise, and art classes.

YSN Caribbean Family Party

Approximately 80 teens, kids, and families enjoyed a carnival themed evening at the Y with carnival games, DJ, dancing, photo booth, crafts and cotton candy.



Theaterworks

One of 45 specialized programs offered each year, Theaterworks features weekly theater workshops building confidence and social skills, and culminating with a family performance.

SWINGING FOR A CAUSE

Y's Annual Charity Golf Outing Supports Special Needs Programming

The Y's 21st Annual Charity Golf Outing was held on May 10 at the beautiful Country Club of Fairfield. Thank you to our participants and sponsors who helped raise over \$80,000 for the Y's Special Needs department!



Rob Cioffi (Co-chair)
Chris Pohle (Co-chair)
Jack Casey
Karen Charlton
A.J. Conley
Kim Connors



2018 YMCA GOLF COMMITTEE

Brian Hetherington
Jeff Jacob
Tim Knowles
Ed Mohr
Jack Murphy



Bill Pratt
Brian Regan
Tom Richardson
Brian Schwartz
Rick Selvala
Chris Susanin

NURTURING THEIR POTENTIAL

A Look at our Community's Y Kids

Our **Rainbow Station** three's class landed in outer space in March. They began a month-long look into space, learning about the planets, gravity, astronauts, NASA, telescopes and so much more. The children even had the opportunity to build their own space ship out of recyclable materials. One highlight of the month included working with the children to make jet packs using cereal boxes, water bottles, tin foil, and tissue paper. The children had a great time outside trying their jet packs and blasting off to the moon!



The **Kids Unlimited** after-school program continues to be busy busy with lots of fun activities filling the afternoons. Recently, KU celebrated Mardi Gras, complete with masks, beads and King Cakes. KU also welcomed the warmer weather and the first day of spring with their Spring Fling celebration. The afternoon was filled with arts and crafts, planting seeds, and creating a garden of flowers with decorated cookies!



MISSION IN ACTION

Thank you to our Donors!

"I would like to say how thankful my family and I are for the financial assistance we are receiving. My kids love the sports (especially swimming) and without assistance we wouldn't be able to afford and pay for the classes for all of them. I am very glad for this opportunity because without it, my kids would probably be sitting in front of the TV.

Also, I cannot express enough what a help the financial assistance is for us during the summer. Being able to participate in summer camp keeps them active, develops their social skills, and they always learn something new. Of course, they are also making valuable friendships. THANK YOU so much for this!!"

BUILDING LEADERS

New Canaan YMCA's Teen Board Members



Solomeya Marynovych and Luke Crowley, both seniors at New Canaan High School, joined the Y Board of Directors in September of 2017. Since joining, they have launched the Y's first Teen Leadership Committee. Over the past year, the two have developed and executed ideas to expand the teen influence and presence at the Y.

Maynovych shared, "I've been living and breathing the Y since I was a little kid, starting from summer camp programs, to joining the Caimans swim team. Now, I love leading and being a part of the Teen Leadership Committee. After several years at the Y, the opportunity to be on the Board has given me a different perspective on what goes on

at the Y." Recently, Marynovych and Crowley organized a teen interview workshop featuring local educator, Jim Foley. Crowley explained that, "whether it be for a job, internship, or college interview, all participants learned something applicable to them personally."

Crowley also mentioned, "being on the board has brought me closer to New Canaan's most diverse and respected community members and I've learned more than I could have ever imagined. Solo and I look forward to our last few months on the Board and are excited to see next year's Teen Board Members continue to grow the teen presence at the Y!"

GET INVOLVED

Make a Difference with the Y

Togetherhood Committee

The Togetherhood Committee is a member-led volunteer group within the Y, and has helped hundreds of people in a variety of ways. In 2018, the Togetherhood Committee coordinated a dinner for 40 single mothers and their children at the Inspirica homeless shelter in Stamford, and served approximately 90 meals at the Open Door Shelter in Norwalk. The committee also provided backpacks filled with school supplies to local children and traveled to New York City to hand out clothing and serve breakfast to those in need. Togetherhood's annual Adopt-A-Box project also provided our troops with supplies and goodies overseas.



Contact Nicole Jezairian at 203-920-1657 or njezairian@newcanaanymca.org to learn more about making a difference through Togetherhood.

FOREVERWELL GROWS STRONG AT THE Y

Our ForeverWell programming has continued to provide active older adults, 55 years and up, with the opportunity to get active, stay fit, and be social. The ForeverWell pop-up lunches continue to be extremely popular, and take place on the last Friday of every month. Other ForeverWell programming includes fitness activities that provide a variety of cardio, strength training, mind-body, and aquatics classes for all abilities.



KIBERA CONNECTION

The New Canaan YMCA is in its 12th year of partnership with Facing the Future, a child development center serving the Kenyan slum of Kibera.

Our children at Facing the Future are continuing to learn, grow, and thrive due to the generosity of our Y and community members. This past December, we held our first Holiday Bazaar at the Y. We combined our annual coffee fundraiser with the sale of handmade jewelry from the women and teens of FAFU and baked goods, provided by our own Y staff members and volunteers. The event was a huge success thanks to the generosity of those in our community. In addition to the FAFU Sponsorship program, the Craig Panzano Scholarship Fund has continued to make an impact on the lives of children at FAFU by assisting them in continuing onto high school and continuing their education beyond FAFU.

Thank you to all of our donors who have supported Facing the Future and the Panzano Scholarship.

Contact Nicki Jezairian at njezairian@newcanaanymca.org to learn more about our partnership with Facing the Future.

CHANGE A LIFE Lemon-Aid for our Friends Across the Globe



Take time for philanthropy as a family! Host a Y lemonade stand to benefit Facing the Future in Kibera, Kenya this summer.

Packets for interested families and teams will be available at the beginning of June at the Front Desk.

Sponsor a Child

This past fall, we launched our FAFU Sponsorship program, which allows families and the children of Facing the Future in Kibera, Kenya, to build personal, lasting relationships. For less than a dollar a day, families can provide a student at FAFU with one year of educational supplies, two meals per day, a school uniform, medical supplies, check-ups, and the gift of making a connection across the globe.



NEW CANAAN COMMUNITY YMCA
564 South Avenue
New Canaan, CT 06840
203-966-4528
www.newcanaanymca.org



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Skaperdas, President
Craig Panzano, Executive Director

Robert Cioffi	Pam Norton
A.J. Conley	M.E. O'Connor
Kevin Cowser	Allyson Pastushan
Luke Crowley	Chris Pohle
Kelly DeFrancesco	Mark Rajkowski
Scott Fuller	Rick Routhier
Sean Hurley	George Russell
Jeff Jacob	Bob Spangler
Jessica Knowles	Margaret Triolo Riley
Jason Konidaris	Eric Zinczenko
Solomeya Marynovych	

Emeritus Committee
G. Thomas Hargrove, Past President
Jennifer Forese
Chuck Kontulis
David Squier



See inside for photos of your friends & neighbors, plus health tips and stories about how the Y is changing lives within our community.