



SPiRIT

AWARDS

&

2024 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN CELEBRATION

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

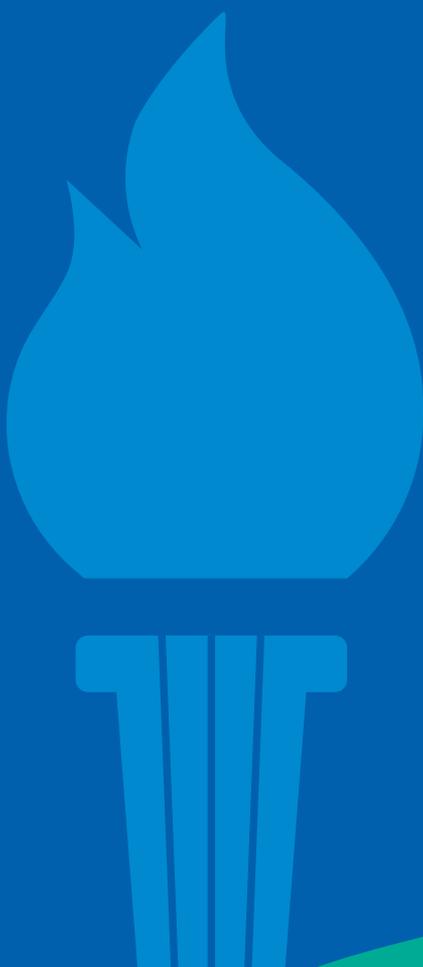
APRIL 10, 2024

Inspire. Empower. Uplift.



**"EVERYBODY CAN BE GREAT.
BECAUSE ANYBODY CAN SERVE. YOU
ONLY NEED A HEART FULL OF GRACE.
A SOUL GENERATED BY LOVE."**

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA 2024 SPIRIT AWARDS

Tonight, we celebrate inspiring volunteers and partners who give selflessly to benefit the community through Greater Somerset County YMCA. We are tremendously grateful for these outstanding individuals and groups. Their contributions enrich lives, advance the Y's mission, and strengthen community.

The Spirit Awards aptly honor Y volunteers and partners for their generous spirit, which helps the Y to provide the support and resources needed for everyone to thrive.

We are proud to recognize this year's award recipients.



YOUTH AWARD

CHLOE MOSS

SATURDAYS IN MOTION AND TEEN ADVOCATE

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA

Chloe is a committed, dedicated volunteer who makes significant contributions to important programs. Through her creativity, organizational skills, and keen problem-solving abilities, Chloe's impact on the Saturdays in Motion and Teen Advocate programs is commendable. Chloe is a compassionate, positive force who consistently brings her best to working effectively with program leadership, peer volunteers, and program participants.

"Growing up, the Y has taught me foundational values, the importance of community spirit, and giving back. I cherish my experience at the Y, and I have learned important skills and lessons that I will utilize throughout my whole life. I am so grateful to be surrounded by such a strong and supportive community."



ADULT AWARD

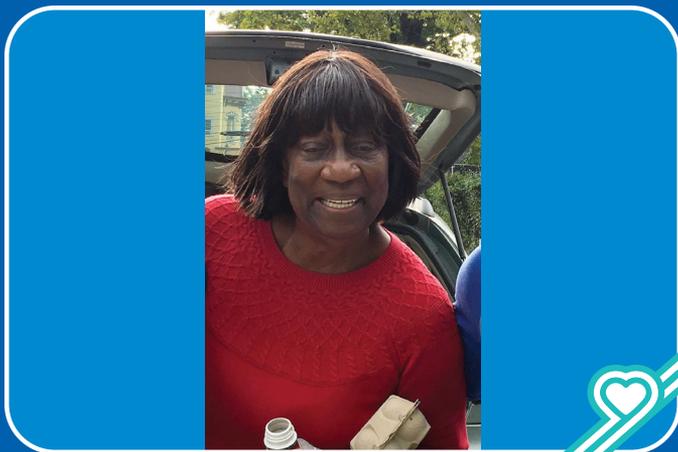
SHAKTI HARRIS

TOGETHERHOOD COMMITTEE VOLUNTEER

BRIDGEWATER & SOMERVILLE YMCAs

Shakti is actively involved in the YMCA community and many Cultural Engagement Committee initiatives. She helped to lead Hispanic Heritage Month celebrations, including an art show and a cultural event with food and dance. She also helped to coordinate service projects for the Martin Luther King Day of Service projects, including a drive for feminine hygiene products, a Courageous Conversation event for Diversity Day, and more. She advocates for the YMCA in her community and is always looking for ways to connect the YMCA to organizations and companies.

“I support the YMCA because it provides a wealth of programs for the community, ranging from wellness to youth leadership, in support of its mission to empower everyone to achieve a healthy spirit, mind and body. The YMCA’s cultural programs encourage meaningful conversations and cultural exchanges across all community members in a safe and supportive environment.”



ACTIVE OLDER ADULT AWARD

ETHEL WHEELER

FOOD SECURITY VOLUNTEER

PLAINFIELD YMCA

As a dedicated volunteer for the Food Security program, Ethel plays a crucial role in organizing and distributing bags of food to neighbors in need. Her hands-on involvement and compassionate approach have a significant impact on the lives of many by ensuring that families receive essential support with dignity. Ethel also extends her volunteer efforts to assisting seniors in the community. Through her caring and empathetic nature, she offers invaluable companionship and connections for seniors experiencing isolation. Ethel's selfless dedication shines through her commitment to both the Food Security program and aiding seniors, making her an essential source of support within the community.



FAMILY AWARD

CHRIS & SARAH HAYEVY

TOGETHERHOOD VOLUNTEERS

BRIDGEWATER & SOMERVILLE YMCAs

Chris is a Branch Board volunteer who also contributes leadership to spearhead the Togetherhood Committee. Chris has recruited many volunteers; and, their collective impact benefits the community through countless projects including food access, local park cleanups, lunch bags for homeless adults, and more. Recently, Chris recruited his daughter Sarah who, in turn, recruited high school friends as junior members of the committee. Together, they lead projects including leaf raking for seniors, a mental health initiatives, and technology tutoring for local seniors, among others. Chris and Sarah exemplify a family that gives back to their community and inspires others do so, as well.

“The breadth and quality of the programs that the Y offers have an immense impact on a great number of people in our area. It gives me joy to be a small part of that.” – Chris

“I’ve seen firsthand how the Y connects volunteers to those in the community that need help the most.” – Sarah



GROUP AWARD

150TH ANNIVERSARY GALA COMMITTEE

Robyn Burke
Peter Cirignano
Chris Edwards
Erika Evleth
D' Brickashaw Ferguson
Kate Fleschler
Marisabel Fernandez
Lisa LaVecchia
Karen Ostarticki
Linda Osterman

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

In 2023, this special group of volunteers stepped up to plan Greater Somerset County YMCA's 150th Anniversary Gala. With creativity and immense enthusiasm, each volunteer contributed their knowledge, skills, and talents. They ensured that every detail was thoughtfully considered – from invitations to silent auction to music to cuisine – which made for a successful event that was elegant and festive. The volunteers' collaborative nature set the tone for an event that brought together longstanding and new Y advocates to celebrate a significant milestone anniversary.



COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD

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

In 2021, the Somerset County Commissioners awarded GSCYMCA with a grant, made available through ARPA funding, to launch a new summer program called Camp SOAR. It was established to support under-resourced families from Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, Manville, and Franklin Township to ensure access to affordable, quality child care during the summer. Camp SOAR was hosted at Colonial Park and included transportation and meals each day. In 2021, there were 125 children enrolled for 5 weeks. In 2022, the camp was extended to 8 weeks with more than double the number of campers. This camp partnership allowed parents to work with peace of mind while their children enjoyed a summer of outdoor recreation and adventure.

“Greater Somerset County YMCA has been an incredible partner to our county government and to our residents. GSCYMCA has helped sustain our community through difficult times by providing needed social connections and promoting healthy lifestyles. Our work together on Camp SOAR has made a big difference to many of our most vulnerable families.”



LEADERSHIP AWARD

JENNIFER GEISBER

TRIATHLON COACH AND COORDINATOR

HILLSBOROUGH YMCA

This past summer, Jennifer enthusiastically introduced the sport of triathlons to our young campers. For several weeks, Jennifer guided and trained over 25 campers for a children's mini-triathlon. She oversaw the assembly of 25 new bicycles and spent countless hours coaching and coordinating activities with USA Triathlon. In this role, like all triathletes, she demonstrated unwavering dedication and commitment to achieve success. In all, 25 children from Camp STAR and Camp SOAR competed and completed the mini-tri with huge smiles on their faces.

"The Y is meaningful to me because it embraces humanity and supports basic needs for all. It is a welcoming community table set with kindness, compassion, empathy, connection, inclusivity, safety, and love. Also, the Y evolves and adapts to meet the needs of our local and global communities. In my experience, the Y as always seeks opportunities and asks 'How may we help and what can we do for you?'"



LIVING OUR CAUSE AWARD

STEVE OLIVER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

For the past 7 years, Steve has been a wonderful ambassador for Greater Somerset County YMCA and the many communities we serve. In 2017, Steve joined the Board of Directors and quickly demonstrated initiative and leadership. He has helped to advance the Y's mission by contributing his knowledge, time and talents to many volunteer roles, including Chair of the Investment Committee; member of the Financial Development Committee; and, team captain for the Annual Campaign Committee.

As an active volunteer, Steve has contributed to the success and growth of Greater Somerset County YMCA with notable contributions that include: participating in the creation of a task force to advance the Y's commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; ensuring fundraising success to meet the immediate and emerging needs of our community; and, providing guidance for expansion into underserved communities that would benefit from vital Y programs and services. Steve is a respected, cause-driven leader.

"The YMCA is an integral component of healthy living within the greater Somerset County community."



RAY OF LIGHT

LEE UDELSMAN

BRANCH BOARD VOLUNTEER

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA

As an ardent volunteer, Lee truly is a ray of light who emanates warmth, enthusiasm, and a sense of purpose. Lee's active engagement speaks volumes about his passionate heart and unyielding dedication as a Board member, as part of the Togetherhood Committee, and as a Saturdays in Motion volunteer. Lee embraces the Y's mission and contributes to many volunteer projects ranging from Veterans support to PRIDE celebrations to advocacy of the Y through fundraising. His welcoming smile, unwavering commitment, and genuine nature combine to uplift every person he encounters, to enrich the community, and to inspire others.

"The Y's core values – Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility – align with my values. The Y's purpose of strengthening community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility are essential to our society. My service at the Y enables me to pay it forward for the opportunities I have received. Plus, I've formed new, long-lasting relationships. It's been a privilege for me to work with the other Somerset Hills YMCA board members and the Y's dedicated staff to contribute to the organization's mission."



BOARD LEADERSHIP AWARD

CHUCK CRAIG

BRANCH BOARD VOLUNTEER

PRINCETON YMCA

Chuck and his family have been active members of Princeton YMCA for nearly a decade. His love of both the Y and the community inspired him to take on a leadership volunteer role within the organization, and his dedication has been exceptional. Chuck's progression from a board member in 2021 to becoming chair of the Princeton YMCA Branch Board, in September 2022, speaks volumes about his commitment and the trust his peers have in him. Chuck's reliability and calm demeanor contribute to effective decision-making and smooth board operations.

"The Y is where family and community become one."



BOARD LEADERSHIP AWARD

DOUG GRIERSON

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

Doug joined Greater Somerset County YMCA's Board of Directors in 2018 and he became quickly immersed in the Y's strategic priorities. Doug has a long, successful career in finance that is rooted in effective leadership and astute fiscal responsibility. As a Board volunteer, Doug applies his keen expertise, skills, and knowledge to his roles as Treasurer and as Chair of the Finance Committee. With an understanding of the many ways in which the Y supports the community, including through financial assistance, Doug is motivated by Y's mission and believes in the value the Y brings to all of the communities served by Greater Somerset County YMCA. Doug is an asset to the Y and a true community champion.

"The Y is the community center where there is something for everyone. It provides opportunities and resources to support people on their journey to reaching their full potential. I get so much more out of the Y than I put in!"



PHILANTHROPY AWARD

BOCINA FAMILY

BRUCE BOCINA, BARBARA CURTIN & BRENDA CURNIN

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

Beginning with Phyllis and Casper, the Bocina family has steadfastly supported Greater Somerset County YMCA for decades. The family's philanthropic legacy with the Y is rooted in volunteer engagement in and charitable generosity toward capital campaigns, fundraising events and annual campaign support. As part of the capital campaign steering committee for Somerset Hills YMCA in the early 2000s, the Bocina family helped to raise \$7.3 million toward the expansion of the Basking Ridge facility. Their unwavering commitment to community and ongoing philanthropic support has been fundamental to the sustainability of the Y.

"Somerset Hills YMCA is an important part of the community and we love that it offers children, teens, and adults a place to go to interact with each other and develop friendships, while engaging in its many wonderful programs and classes. It is a caring place of opportunity, help, and advancement. We agree wholeheartedly with their core values and goals - to promote caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. It has been a privilege to support Greater Somerset County YMCA and watch it grow and extend its loving arms. Thank you for honoring the Bocina Family this year."



LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

GAIL GRANOWITZ

LIFETIME OF SERVICE

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA

With a passion for changing lives for the better and making a positive impact in the community, Gail dedicated many years of service to Somerset Hills YMCA. Over the course of two terms, she took on a role as a Board volunteer and, during her nearly 15 year tenure, Gail demonstrated exemplary leadership, vision, and a deep commitment to serving others.

Beyond her role as a Board member, Gail volunteered on various committees including as chair of the Y's Annual Campaign. In that role, her impact expanded even further. The role was perfectly aligned with her enthusiasm and altruistic goals. Her ability to engage and recruit volunteers led to record-breaking fundraising achievements. From 2012 to 2015, she led the member division of the Annual Campaign. Through her high-energy approach, Gail has made significant contributions to Somerset Hills YMCA. She embodies the true spirit of volunteerism and community service.

"The Y is one of the few organizations that truly welcomes and uplifts all people in our world. Supporting character development and healthy lifestyles, encouraging growth, building community - the Y feels like home every time I walk through the doors."

WHY THE Y

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA
IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

"The Y is my **saving grace**. It is my community."

"I don't know **where I would be** without the Y."

"I like the ability to **stay healthy and interact with lots of different people**. I find the socialization as important for mental health as exercise is for physical health."

"Y staff **listen when you're happy or when you're having a difficult time**. They're an additional support system."

"We have been members of the Y for years and it was the **best decision I ever made**, great experiences for our children and us."

"My family and I are grateful to Y donors. We've been impacted in **so many wonderful ways** and feel very much a part of the Y community."

"The Y is a **blessing in our lives** and I know for so many others as well."

"When I had my physical this year I asked my doctor how I stack up against other 73 year olds. He said he would stack me up against 63 year olds. I attribute most of that to **exercising and the social connections at the Y**."

"Our son has autism, and the Y's Saturdays in Motion program helps him to address his fears and to thrive. Now, he happily engages in activities with other children. The fact that the program is **offered at no cost to participants** is amazing. There aren't enough words to say thank you."



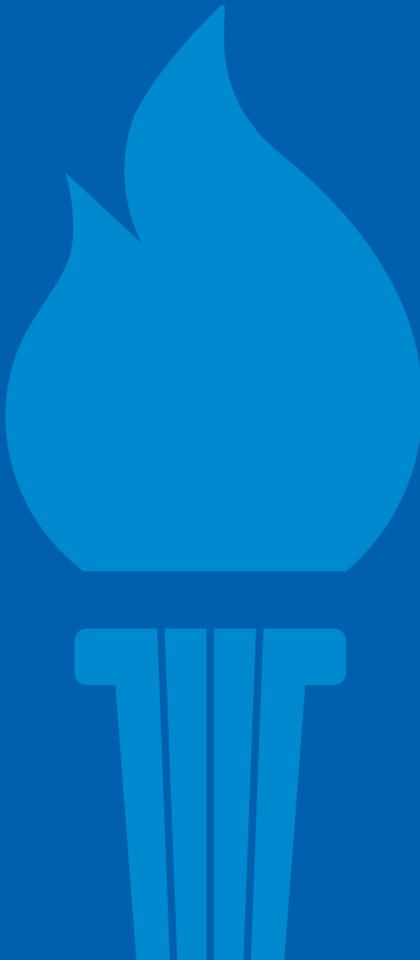
WITH GRATITUDE

**THANK YOU TO OUR
2024 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN STORYTELLERS**

**WE ARE TRULY GRATEFUL
FOR OUR DONORS, PARTNERS, AND VOLUNTEERS.**

YOU ARE THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

THANK YOU!



BOARD MEMBERS

GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greg Romano, Board Chair	Neeraj Chander Randy Evleth	William Mowen Debbie Nungester
Lisa LaVecchia, Vice Chair	Cristina Fineza	Steve Oliver
Doug Grierson, Treasurer	Michael Grippo	Alexandra Rebay
Susan Lattmann, Secretary	Michael Gsell	William Rue
Paul Biondi	Judith Lee	Jeff Steinhorn
	Michael Morano	Kathy Timko

BRIDGEWATER YMCA & SOMERVILLE YMCA BRANCH BOARD

Jesenia Brown, Branch Board Chair	Bruce Goodman	Carol Sloane
Robyn Burke	Christopher Hayevy	Manny Vidal
	Donna Meucci Nejad	

FRANKLIN TWP YMCA & HILLSBOROUGH YMCA BRANCH BOARD

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Victor Ammons	D'Brickashaw Ferguson	Jesse McCrea
Nazesh Cattelona	Jennifer Geisber	Stephanie Moore
Brian Crouthamel	Craig Harley	Kristen Sudol
	Cindy Kay	Alex Voitovich

PLAINFIELD YMCA BRANCH BOARD

Kieran Anderson, Branch Board Chair	Natasha Hemmings	Trevor Morris
Katherine Fleschler	Mark Irwin	Tony Rogers
David Gannaway	Danielle Lumby	Carolyn Wellington
Marc Greenberger	Lamar Mackson	

PRINCETON YMCA BRANCH BOARD

Charles Craig, Branch Board Chair	Jill Constantine	Geoff Spies
Danny Boyle	Marisabel Fernandez	Rachele Sylvan
Jennifer Closser	Catherine Millett	Rusty Szurek
	Mike Roseborough	

SOMERSET HILLS YMCA BRANCH BOARD

Daniel McCauley, Branch Board Chair	Nancy Goguen	Megan Saliterman
Kelly Arcidiacono	Margo Langer	Shahrzad Taghdissi
Suparno Biswas	Nancy Lee	Lee Udelsman
Peter Caputo	Joanne Murphy	Lisa Wax
Ana Duarte-McCarthy	Chris Nassan	
Samir Gami	Michael Osterman	
	Arthur L. Raynes	



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GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

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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](#).