



# TRANSFORMING LIVES

2025, ISSUE 2

## LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends and Supporters,



At Greater Somerset County YMCA, we believe that caring for others starts with caring for ourselves. In a world that rarely slows down, self-care isn't a luxury – it's a necessity. It's the pause that gives us strength, the breath that brings us clarity, and the movement that restores our spirit.

It's important to shine a light on the power of self-care – and how the Y is uniquely positioned to help individuals and families embrace it. Whether it's through a morning swim, a quiet moment in meditation class, or the shared laughter in youth programs and group fitness, the Y is a sanctuary for mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

Thanks to your support, our Y is more than just a place to work out. It's a place to reconnect, recharge, and rediscover balance. You help create a community where everyone – regardless of age, background, or income – can take that important first step toward a healthier, more fulfilled life.

As we share stories in this newsletter of lives transformed and routines renewed, know that your generosity is behind every moment of self-care and personal growth that happens here. On behalf of everyone who benefits from your generosity, thank you for giving your best to the Y and our communities.

With deep gratitude,

*David M. Carcieri*

David M. Carcieri  
President/CEO



## FORCE FOR GOOD Annual Campaign Update

Through your support of Greater Somerset County YMCA, you do more than give – you stand up for your neighbors. You open doors for individuals and families facing financial, physical, or emotional challenges, ensuring they have access to the programs, resources, and relationships that can transform lives.

Your impact is real – and far-reaching. You help:

- Local families afford child care and summer camp
- Seniors find connection and community
- Adults manage chronic health conditions
- Families struggling with food insecurity
- Teens get academic support and mentoring opportunities
- Children with special needs build confidence through inclusive programs
- Neighbors of all ages learn life-saving swimming skills
- And so much more

Last year alone, the Y provided nearly **\$2.7 million** in financial assistance and mission-driven programs – a 35% increase from the year before. We would not be able to do this without our donors, like you.

In our 2025 Annual Campaign, you've helped raise **\$1,345,856** so far. That's an incredible achievement, and it speaks volumes about your belief in what we do together. We're committed to closing the gap between the funds raised and the growing needs we serve – because every dollar goes directly back into the community.

Thank you for being a force for good. Together, we're building a healthier, more connected future.

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

# HEART OF COMMUNITY

## 2025 Spirit Awards

This April, in honor of National Volunteer Month, we had the distinct pleasure of recognizing outstanding individuals and community partners with our 2025 Spirit Awards. These awards celebrate those who give their time, talent, and heart to uplift others and move our mission forward – strengthening community in everything we do.

Volunteerism has been at the core of Greater Somerset County YMCA's 152-year journey, and today, that spirit is stronger than ever. Whether it's distributing food, supporting individuals with special needs, or leading initiatives that remove barriers and lift up neighbors, our donors, volunteers, and partners are the driving force behind lasting impact. They help us build a vibrant, thriving community – and in doing so, they embody the very best of social responsibility.

To our incredible volunteers and generous donors: thank you. Your dedication fuels change, inspires hope, and builds a healthier, more connected community for all.

Congratulations to the 2025 Spirit Award recipients – you truly light the way.



**YOUTH**  
**Dean Capizzi**  
Saturdays In Motion



**ADULT**  
**Angela Della Ventura**  
Food Security



**FAMILY**  
**The Walpow Family**  
Saturdays in Motion



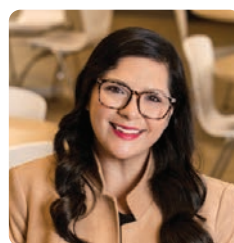
**ACTIVE OLDER ADULT**  
**Asha Gurunathan**  
Food Security



**GROUP**  
**Strategic Planning Task Force**  
Jesenia Brown, John Cassimatis,  
Danielle Lumby, Catherine Millet,  
Kim O'Loughlin, Kathy Timko



**50<sup>th</sup>**  
**ANNIVERSARY**  
**The Westfield Foundation**  
**COMMUNITY PARTNER**  
**The Westfield Foundation**  
Support of Child Care & Summer Camp



**LEADERSHIP**  
**Nazesh Catellona**  
Branch Board



**RAY OF LIGHT**  
**Kathleen Poole Adamik**  
Total Parkinson's Program



**RAY OF LIGHT**  
**Mario Perrotti**  
Veterans Support



**BOARD LEADERSHIP**  
**Greg Romano**  
Board of Directors



**PHILANTHROPY**  
**Jacke & Hank Schram**  
Community Advocates



**LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT**  
**Hugh Fitzpatrick**  
Board Volunteer & Philanthropy







## EARLY IMPACT

### The Uncommon Thread Partnership

Over the past six months, Greater Somerset County YMCA has launched a partnership with The Uncommon Thread. The partnership leverages both organization's expertise – Greater Somerset County YMCA's Early Education Program and The Uncommon Thread's early intervention therapies for children on the autism spectrum.

The goal of the partnership is to thoughtfully integrate Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies into a mainstream educational setting, with the aim of supporting students in developing language, communication, focus, social connections, memory, and academic skills, while also addressing behaviors that may present challenges to learning and participation. The collaboration establishes a welcoming, supportive early education environment that benefits neuro-typical and neuro-divergent children alike.

These new innovative programs are made possible thanks to you, our donors, and our partners. The impact of the collaboration is evident in the families' experiences, like for Maria and her son.

"I am really happy we made the decision to enroll Luca in the Y's early education program. The Y staff is so welcoming and his ABA therapist from The Uncommon Thread is so supportive; that has helped Luca to make a smooth transition. Although he has experienced separation anxiety in the past, we haven't seen that with his transition to the Y.

Following Luca's autism diagnosis, I was nervous about his care, education, therapy, and personal growth. As parents, I think we all want the best for our children. The Y's partnership with The Uncommon Thread brings me peace of mind. He is benefiting from being in a mainstream classroom with the safety net of having support from an ABA therapist when he needs it.

Through this program, Luca is growing more comfortable interacting with his peers in a social and educational setting. He is engaging in interactive play rather than parallel play, and the other children inspire him to try new things – it's a great model – we've seen the impact in Luca's interactions at home and in social settings.

The Y's partnership with The Uncommon Thread has changed my understanding of the Y and its mission. I love that the Y offers an inclusive environment for individuals with special needs."

## EVERY STEP COUNTS

### Hillsborough Hop 5K

Wow – what a turnout we had at this year's Hillsborough YMCA's HOP 5K Walk/Run! Held on Saturday, June 7, the NJ USATF sanctioned race attracted over 800 runners, and the community was in full force along the route to cheer them.

Among the top finishers were:

- Male: Maxwell Chan
- Female: Megan Pearson

The Hoppy Award, which recognizes the Hillsborough school with the highest percentage of students participating in the race, went to Auten Road School with 82 participating students. In total, more than 156 elementary students participated in the race – a 20% increase over last year. A standing ovation went to Melva Murray who finished the 5K at 92 years young; that is a true testament to the spirit of health and perseverance the Y celebrates every day! All in all, it was wonderful to see the community come together to support the Y's mission.



## FINANCIAL BLESSING

### Meet Journelle

Because of you, families who might otherwise struggle to afford child care now have access to a safe, nurturing environment where their children can learn and grow. Your generosity is opening doors and creating brighter futures – one child at a time.

"It's not easy to have someone else care for your children. That's why I am so grateful for the Y. Raising three children on my own is difficult – I have a long commute to work and many bills to pay. When I learned that I qualified for the Y's financial assistance, I was so excited. My kids are safe in the care of the Y's friendly staff who support them inside and out. The Y's camp and child care allow me to work more hours during the week and throughout the summer to better provide for my family. The best part is that my kids love the Y's programs – they get upset when I pick them up early because they have so much fun. Without the Y, we would be struggling. The Y is a blessing in our lives and I will never take that for granted." – Journelle





## NURTURING POTENTIAL

### Y Achievers

Y Achievers is a career and college readiness program offered at no cost to inspire high school students to pursue their personal, academic, and professional goals. The program, which runs through our Plainfield and Somerville branches, includes weekly meetings, college/career planning, internship guidance, and college tours. Our program staff aim to be positive role models who demonstrate the importance of goal setting, hard work, resilience, and ethical decision-making. Thanks to your support, participants, like Glendalyn, realize the value of the program in their lives.

"My first experience with the Y was when I was a shy, quiet 8-year old. I had moved from a different school district and making friends was a challenge. At After School Care and Summer Camp, the Y staff helped me step out of my comfort zone, try new things, and make friends. The Y is a place where I feel safe and supported. Now that I'm a little older, the Y is helping me to prepare for college in the Achievers program. I realize that the Y has helped me to become brave and confident. I've learned the importance of staying true to yourself and to find commonalities with others; this is what builds lasting friendships. The Y has always made a positive impact on my life; I feel it in my personal growth, improved social skills, and strengthened self-assurance." – Glendalyn



## ESSENTIAL CHILD CARE

### Meet Danielle

"For me, the Y is 'make it or break it'. I am a single mom of 5 children, a full-time paralegal, and a full-time student. If I didn't have the Y's programs, I wouldn't be able to work, pursue my education, or support my family. My 6-year old triplet boys – Felix, Jacob, and Noah – love being a part of the Y's before school care and camp programs. From playing outside, to arts and crafts, to making summer friends, to the diverse environment, to the supportive staff – my boys are exposed to and benefitting from people and experiences that inspire them to be caring, open, and compassionate. Having the opportunity to apply for financial assistance, means I don't feel like a burden to others and I don't have to struggle as hard to make ends meet. The Y is a wonderful asset in our community." – Danielle



## 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 Branch Leadership:

**BASKING RIDGE:**  
Washima Redding ([wredding@gscymca.org](mailto:wredding@gscymca.org))

**BRIDGEWATER:**  
Laura Margeotes ([lmargeotes@gscymca.org](mailto:lmargeotes@gscymca.org))

**FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP:**  
Madhur Patel ([mpatel@gscymca.org](mailto:mpatel@gscymca.org))

**HILLSBOROUGH:**  
Madhur Patel ([mpatel@gscymca.org](mailto:mpatel@gscymca.org))

**PLAINFIELD:**  
Leonardo Gonzalez ([lgonzalez@gscymca.org](mailto:lgonzalez@gscymca.org))

**PRINCETON:**  
Heather Scapp ([hscapp@gscymca.org](mailto:hscapp@gscymca.org))

**SOMERVILLE:**  
Laura Margeotes ([lmargeotes@gscymca.org](mailto:lmargeotes@gscymca.org))

Get ready for a summer of adventure, discovery, friendships and memories. Learn more at [gscymca.com/camp](https://gscymca.com/camp)

## GREATER SOMERSET COUNTY YMCA

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[gscymca](https://www.instagram.com/gscymca)

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