

2024

ANNUAL REPORT YMCA OF MEWSA



YOU BELONG HERE

Building a stronger community together.

the



LETTER FROM DR. JOE & ROSE



Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2024 and look ahead to 2025, we are proud to share the YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge, and South Amboy's ongoing impact and our strategic vision for the future. This period has been marked by growth, innovation, challenges and an unwavering commitment to strengthening individuals and families across Middlesex County.

Our childcare services continue to be a cornerstone of our mission, providing nearly 3,000 children with safe, high-quality care. Families rely on the YMCA for education, development, and a sense of security, ensuring that children have the resources they need to thrive.

Community support and well-being are at the heart of our work. LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA is one of our programs providing critical resources for those recovering from illness and working toward improved health. We remain dedicated to offering opportunities that help individuals rebuild strength, confidence, and community connections.

Looking ahead, we are embarking on our newly developed strategic plan, a roadmap to guide our YMCA in meeting the changing needs of our community while remaining financially sustainable. We will focus on these key priorities:

- **Early Learning:** increasing access for children and families, exploring new models, developing best practices, and influencing policy to improve child outcomes.
- **Holistic Wellness:** Becoming the leading community resource for preventive wellness to reduce chronic and progressive diseases.
- **Youth Achievement:** Providing educational support, social-emotional learning, and real-world skills and workforce development for youth to close the opportunity gap.
- **People Are the WHY (Y):** Connecting individual passion to purpose for staff, volunteers, and members.

This vision reflects our deep commitment to building a stronger, more resilient YMCA that continues to serve as a vital resource for all. The YMCA's mission is only possible through the dedication of our staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners. We are grateful for your support, enabling us to provide life-changing programs and services. Together, we will shape a healthier, more connected future for generations to come.

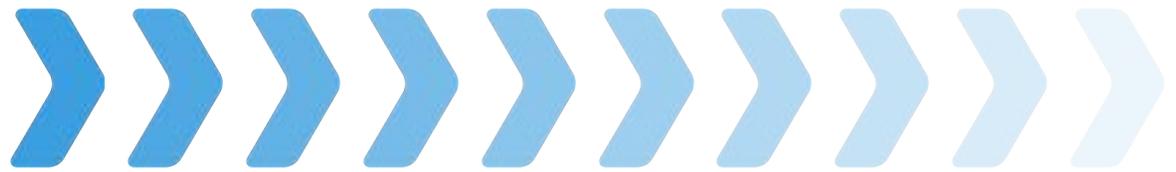


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Amie Thornton

Saimaa Venky

Douglas Wheeler

Mission

We are dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities through programs that develop values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The YMCA serves all people, regardless of age, religion, gender or financial means and is committed to helping everyone develop a healthy spirit, mind and body.

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FOSTERING PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING >>>>>>>

WHERE FITNESS, FRIENDSHIP, AND SERVICE COME TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY.

For Rich and Kathy, the YMCA is more than just a gym—it’s where they’ve found purpose, connection and a way to give back.

Most mornings, you’ll find them at the Y, working out side by side. What started as a way to stay active has grown into a cherished routine that supports their physical health and mental well-being. Studies show that regular exercise boosts mood and energy levels—something Kathy and Rich have experienced firsthand.

But it’s not just the workouts that keep them coming back—it’s the people. From morning trivia at the front desk with Jean to catching up with fellow members, the Y has filled a social gap that opened after retirement. For Kathy, the daily interactions have become a meaningful part of her day, helping her feel connected, engaged and part of something bigger.

And when it comes to giving back, they lead with heart. Rich supports our food insecurity efforts, collecting and delivering donations to local pantries. Kathy serves on the Development Committee, helping raise critical funds that allow others to access YMCA programs through financial assistance. Once a week, she also teaches ESL through our **Togetherhood Program**, helping her students—some of whom are newly arrived in the country—build language skills and confidence in a welcoming space.

Their commitment is a reflection of everything the Y stands for: supporting healthy living, fostering community and opening doors for all.

Kathy and Rich show us what happens when you don’t just go to the Y – you belong. And when you belong, you thrive.



“The Y has given me a place to not only workout but also to volunteer and make new friends.” - Kathy

Volunteering, with groups like the Y’s Togetherhood, is a powerful way to boost physical and mental well-being. It reduces stress, supports heart health, and creates a lasting sense of purpose.² Togetherhood volunteers build meaningful connections, gain new skills, and make a real difference through four focus areas: food security, ESL support, green initiatives, and blood drives.

Studies show that regular physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic diseases, improve cardiovascular health and enhance overall mood by releasing endorphins—natural stress relievers¹.

¹ Mayo Clinic - Exercise and Stress

² Mayo Clinic - Benefits of Volunteering



OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

27,000

Y MEMBERS

Members working together to achieve their health goals while being an important part of the community.

71%

OF LIVESTRONG

cancer survivor participants meet the recommended 150 min/wk of activity vs. 26% of the control group, a level linked to lower recurrence and improved survival.⁹

1,087

FAMILIES AWARDED FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Individuals and families connected with opportunities to improve health, make friends and contribute to a stronger more cohesive community for ALL.

772,509

TOTAL VISITS

from members and visitors in 2024.





4,413

SENIOR MEMBERS

keeping connected to community and discovering new forms of fitness.

1,741

DONATIONS MADE TO THE YMCA

in 2024. Gifts to support critical programs and services for young people and families in our community.

\$350

AVERAGE DONATION

Contributors that allow everyone to access the resources and support they need.

3,969

TEEN MEMBERS

building friendships, confidence, and healthy habits at the Y.

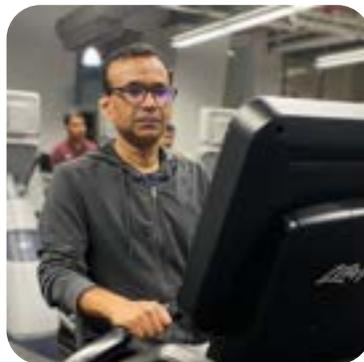
BUILDING STRONGER FAMILIES >>>>>>

For many families, life moves at a hectic pace, making it difficult to carve out time for meaningful moments together. But at the YMCA, families find not only a place to stay active but a place to grow stronger—physically, emotionally and socially—together.

The Maurya Family's YMCA Journey

Members of the Edison YMCA since 2019, the Maurya family has embraced all the Y has to offer—group exercise classes, ping pong, workouts and connections with fellow members. The Mauryas have made the Y their second home. As immigrants to the U.S., the Y became their bridge between their new life and their roots, offering both connection to their cultural background while also meeting people from all walks of life. Through the Y, they found a true sense of belonging.

Research shows families who stay active together build stronger bonds and enjoy better overall well-being. According to the Physical Activity Council, 76% of families who exercise together feel more connected, and children are more likely to adopt lifelong healthy habits. Parents also report better ability to handle the physical and emotional demands of family life (parent burnout is real!).³ Yet, with today's hectic schedules, it can be hard to find family-friendly fitness spaces. That's where the YMCA fills the gap—with parent-child swim lessons, family classes, and open gym time, the Y makes it easy (and fun) for families to move together.



Sociologists highlight the importance of a “third place,” a space beyond home, work, or school, where people can relax, connect and feel a sense of community. For many, the YMCA fills that role. In a time when screens dominate and stress is high, the Y offers a welcoming space where families can focus on their health, build relationships and take a break from daily pressures.

The impact goes beyond physical health. A sense of routine and belonging, core to the Y experience, is deeply tied to mental well-being. Research shows that supportive social environments help reduce anxiety and depression, especially in children and teens. For families facing financial, emotional or social challenges, the Y becomes a source of stability and hope.

Many families can't afford these opportunities but thanks to donor-funded financial assistance, they can. Your support keeps the Y open and inclusive FOR ALL.



OUR REACH IN NUMBERS

551

EARLY EDUCATION KIDS

Children building social and emotional skills in an enriching environment.

1,065

KIDS AT CAMP

Youth were able to unplug and be active at the Y's 10 day camps.

5,018

LEARNED TO SWIM

individuals of all ages building water safety skills, confidence, and fitness in a supportive environment.

1,064

KIDS IN AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

YMCA after school care provided opportunities for children to learn, grow and thrive as they made their way from K-5th grade.





14,597

LOCAL RESIDENTS

in our communities are considered low-income, needing some form of financial assistance to participate in the Y.

58,132

MEALS SERVED AT OUR CHILD CARE CENTERS

Nutritious and delicious meals and snacks provided to children.

195

SAFETY AROUND WATER SECOND GRADERS

were taught life-saving water safety to prevent accidental drownings.



3 IN 10

WATER SAFETY

Parents feel that water safety is a priority for their children.⁶

⁶YUSA

ENRICHING & TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAMS >>>>>>>

The YMCA has long been a pillar of youth development, providing children with opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive through sports and enrichment programs.

Sports, in particular, have shaped young lives by building discipline, teamwork, and resilience. For Anthony and Sidate, the Y is more than just a place to play, it is their foundation for success. Now, as staff, they're paying it forward.

From Player to Mentor Anthony's Story



Anthony, now a leader at the South Amboy YMCA, grew up looking forward to his time at the Y.

"When I was younger, I couldn't wait to go to the Y after school. Basketball, swimming, there was always something to do. Now, working here, I see that same excitement in today's kids. It brings back everything the Y meant to me growing up."

Anthony's journey from a young member to a mentor highlights the Y's lasting impact. Today, he pours his passion for basketball into coaching and youth development, helping kids grow just like he did.

For families in our communities, where 7% of children live in poverty, access to YMCA programs is critical. Low-income kids are far less likely to play sports, missing key developmental benefits. The Y is working to change that.

Anthony and Sidate are just two examples of how the Y changes lives. They grew up here, found their futures here, and now mentor the next generation. Your support helps more kids, regardless of their background, discover their potential through sports and community.

Creating Opportunities for Others Sidate's Journey



For Sidate, the Y has been a constant presence in his life, providing stability through frequent moves due to his father's Navy career.

His connection deepened when he began working as a personal trainer and youth development mentor.

"One kid, JD, always asked me to teach him basketball. Years later, I learned he was playing freshman basketball. That moment stuck with me—WOW, I did that. I helped him find his passion."

Now, Sidate helps young athletes build confidence, develop skills, and find a sense of belonging, just as he did.

73%

of parents believe that sports benefit their child's mental and physical health. And they are right! ⁴

Participating in sports is associated with:

- Lower rates of anxiety, depression and stress
- Improved bone health and weight status
- Higher self-esteem and confidence
- Reduced risk of suicide
- Less substance abuse and fewer risky behaviors
- Increased cognitive performance
- Increased creativity
- Improved psychological and emotional well-being for individuals with disabilities
- Increased life satisfaction

55%

of parents believe that sports benefit their child academically and improve future careers. Research supports this! ⁴

Participating in sports is associated with:

- Improved teamwork, social skills and responsibility
- Improved life skills (e.g., time management, work ethic, empathy, negotiation)
- Improved determination, perseverance, grit, resilience and critical thinking
- Higher levels of academic achievement and greater leadership qualities
- A decrease in health care costs (collectively, up to \$28 billion per year)
- A stronger long-term labor market

⁴ CDC

⁵ Project Play



40%
**FAMILIES WITH
YOUNG CHILDREN**
report difficulties
affording child care. ⁷

1,437
YOUTH IN SPORTS
Children were taught team-
building skills in a fun and
exciting way using sports.

329
7TH GRADERS
take part in our free membership
to strengthen healthy behaviors at
the beginning of their transition
from childhood to adulthood.

491
UNITS OF BLOOD
collected at Y blood drives,
potentially saving 1,473 lives.

33%
KIDS AGES 5-14
in NJ are regularly left without
adult supervision after school. ⁸

⁷ Center for American Progress

⁸ NJ After 3

FINANCIAL SUMMARY >>>>>>>>

The YMCA of Metuchen, Edison, Woodbridge and South Amboy’s 2024 budget reflects a year of growth, resilience, and deepened community impact. With a total revenue of \$14.9 million, up from \$14.6 million in 2023, we’re seeing the results of strong membership engagement and increased participation in programs.

On the expense side, the YMCA is making intentional investments to expand its reach and better serve the community. Total expenses reflect enhanced support for Youth Development and Healthy Living programs while maintaining our strong commitment to Child Care. Increased spending on facilities and operations ensures our spaces remain safe, welcoming and high-quality. The YMCA continues to diversify its funding streams and remains well-positioned to pursue new opportunities. The YMCA of MEWSA is on solid financial footing and ready to build on its mission—strengthening individuals and families through programs that promote wellness, learning and connection.



2024 BUDGET

Revenue

Membership Dues	\$2,583,937
Program Service Fees	\$9,513,678
Investment	\$1,329,979
Grant Income	\$195,566
Fundraising Revenue	\$600,560
Other Revenue	\$693,858
Total Revenue	\$14,917,578

Expenses

Program Expenses	
Youth Development	\$1,780,425
Healthy Living	\$2,630,180
Child Care Programs	\$6,150,448
Operating Expense	
Management and Facility	\$3,133,069
Fundraising	\$128,544
Total Expense	\$13,822,666

>>> Funding Supports

- 4 Health and Wellness Sites (Branches)
- 8 Preschool & Early Childhood Sites
- 10 Day Camp Program Sites
- 20 Before & After School Sites

Health and Wellness Sites

Metuchen Branch
65 High Street
732-548-2044

Edison Community Campus
1775 Oak Tree Road
732-494-3232

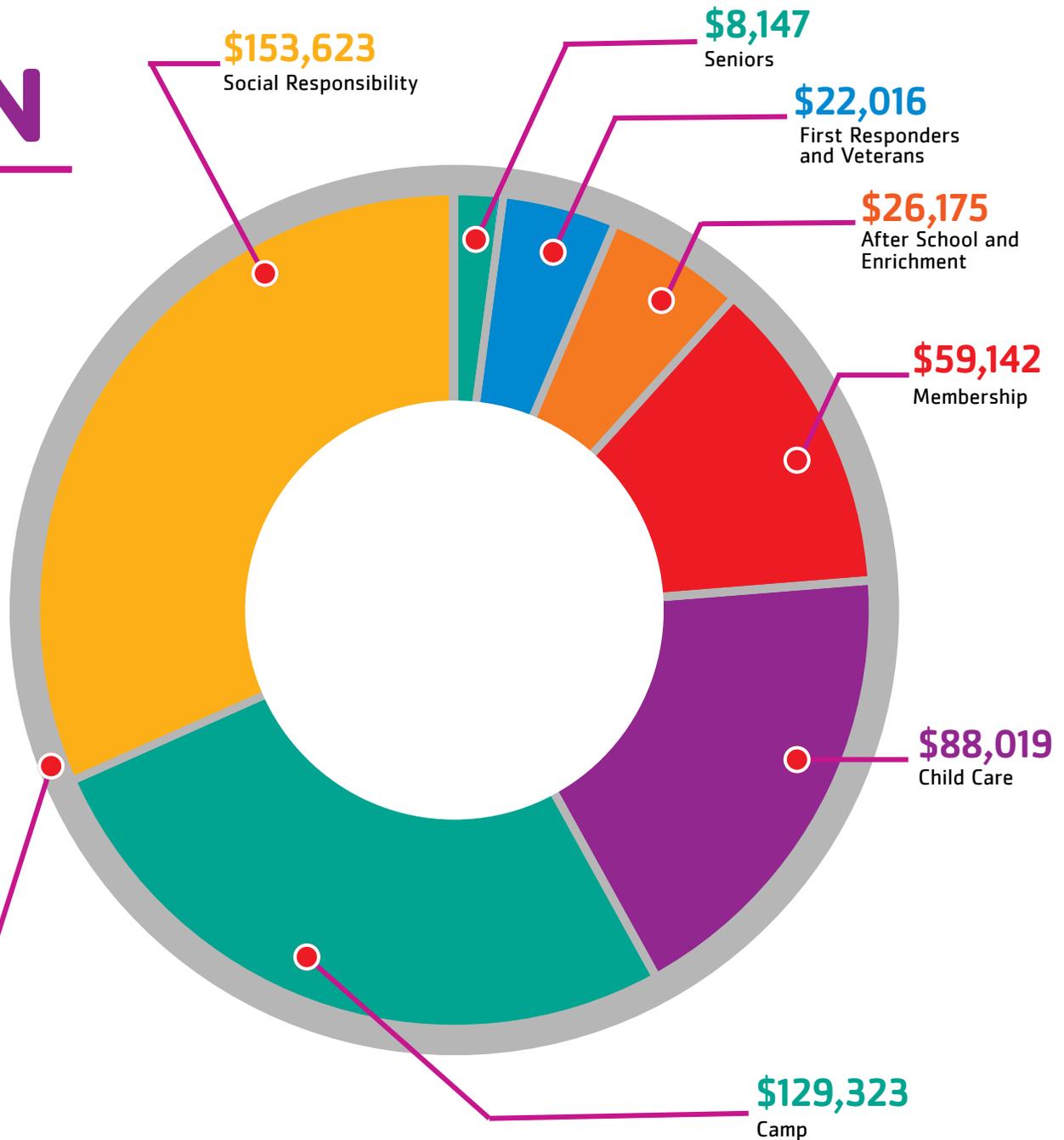
South Amboy Branch
200 John T. O’Leary Blvd.
732-553-9622

YMCA at Piscataway
520 Hoes Lane
732-562-2302

2024 ANNUAL CAMPAIGN

The YMCA is committed to ensuring everyone can access life-changing programs and services, regardless of their financial situation. Through generous donations to our Annual Support Campaign, we're able to provide scholarships and subsidize programs—giving every individual and family the opportunity to participate, no matter their ability to pay. This support helps the Y fulfill our mission and sustain critical social responsibility programs like LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA, Youth and Government, our 7th Grade Initiative and Safety Around Water, which empower youth, support survivors, and save lives across our communities.

\$486,445
Financial Assistance
awarded in 2024



2023-2024 DONORS

*Gifts from
10/1/2023 - 9/30/2024

Every donation makes a significant impact by creating positive change for children, families and individuals in our community. Your generosity enables us to remain a cornerstone of our community. With your support, we can continue to reach out to those who need us the most and ensure access to programs, memberships and activities for all.



Chair's Roundtable (\$1,000+)

LEADERSHIP GIFTS (20,000+)

Hackensack Meridian Health
JFK University Med Center
John and Mary Hogarty
Mike and Anne Lackland,
Childers-Lackland Foundation
Manasquan Bank,
Charitable Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation

Gifts of \$10,000-\$19,999

Amazon
Optimum / Altice

Gifts of \$5,000-\$9,999

Catherine Barnes
Costello-Runyon Funeral Home
Bob and Rose Cushing
Paul and Elaine Edgcomb
Halecon
LyondellBasell (LYB)
Navigation Consulting LLC
Enbridge
Spencer Savings Bank
Wegmans Food Markets

Gifts of \$2,500-\$4,999

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Candy Smith
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Lightpath
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Meehan Valuation
New Jersey YMCA Alliance
PepsiCo
Provident Bank
Rise Light & Power
James and Pam Schleck
Jason Shao & Laura Heian
Kyle and Liz Strohmman
TD Bank

Gifts of \$1,000-\$2,499

1143 Asset Management
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AJ Jersey
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Amboy Bank
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Bank of America
BCB Bank
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OUR MISSION

We are dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities through programs that develop values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. The YMCA serves all people, regardless of age, religion, gender or financial means and is committed to helping everyone develop a healthy spirit, mind and body.

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