



# Dear Friends,

August marked the last days of summer camp and the transition into the school year for our kids. Even though summer has come to an end, children had the **Best Summer Ever™** and created memories that will last a lifetime. This summer, our Y operated **21 Summer Camp sites** and provided **12,087 unique camp experiences**.

At the branches, we are gearing up for fall programming and excited to offer our members and participants a variety of programs including **enhanced senior programs, youth sports, fitness challenges and more**. Make sure to stop by your Welcome Center for more information on upcoming programs.

YMCA of Southwest Florida will be partnering with Urban Strategies, Inc and through Choice Neighborhood Initiatives. Our YMCA has been awarded an \$870,000 grant to serve the community of Southward Village. Our YMCA will bring **high-quality youth development and Safety Around Water programming** to this underserved community with the goal of closing the achievement gap and ensuring **children have the resources needed to thrive**. The Y will increase access and participation in high-quality extended learning opportunities by enrolling school age children in out-of-school time activities decreasing chronic absenteeism. Children will also have access to YMCA Safety Around Water lessons to ensure children in the community learn the skills needed to stay safe in and around water.

Collaborations and **partnerships make it possible for our Y to ensure that all have access to our programs**. We can go beyond our walls and serve those who need the Y the most. I extend my utmost gratitude to every partner and donor who has joined our movement and makes this possible each day.

**Together, we are creating healthy families and communities. Together, we will thrive.**

Sincerely,

Gene T. Jones  
President & CEO  
YMCA of Southwest Florida



## UPCOMING EVENTS



Hank Hochstetler Memorial Golf Tournament



Pete Mason Memorial Golf Tournament



YMCA Sandbar Half Marathon & 5K



Black Tie Gala



Tropical Nights

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# YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA & MANATEE COUNTY FAMILY YMCA NEWS

## Summer Camp in Review

At camp, we grow, explore and learn about ourselves and the people and world around us--having fun throughout the entire process!

Although this year posed unique challenges with the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, we were uniquely fortunate to have served and learned from the **over 12,000 camp experiences** that happened at YMCA of Southwest Florida this summer. In the 54 days of Summer Camp this year, we learned that: **camp friends are the best friends, resiliency is best learned through play and camp keeps us intellectually engaged.**



This past summer reinforced what we always knew; that camp teaches children the value of effort, helps kids believe in themselves and builds community – under any circumstance. And for us grown-ups, camp season this year has been a timely reminder to enjoy every opportunity for a moment connecting to the joy of life beyond a screen... because you will never win a game of tag sitting behind a computer!

## The Beginnings of a Great School Year

School is back in session and **816 middle school students and early learners began their first day of school** earlier this month. There are few things more exciting than the first day of school as children return to their classrooms and prepare for new adventures. Our early learners will build the **foundational skills** needed for **school readiness** as their daily curriculum focuses on learning through play. Both of our SKY Academy middle schools welcomed incoming 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Our SKY Students are preparing for a school year focusing on **overall wellbeing including academics, health and wellness.**

We wish our students and early learners their best year, yet! We cannot wait to see what your future holds!

## Back to School Bash

On Saturday, August 7<sup>th</sup>, the Englewood YMCA along with Living Hope Church and Kids Needs of Greater Englewood, with the support of The Rotary Youth Foundation, Symbiont Service Corp, Michael J. Looney Electric, Elsie Quirk Library and several local churches and businesses, hosted its 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Back to School Bash as a drive-thru event. **Families received backpacks with school supplies and toiletries, and Kids Needs opened their closets to provide free tennis shoes, socks and clothing.** The whole community came together for our children and families to have a successful school year.

## Y-Kid Goes to the Olympics!

Mary Tucker, 2021 Olympic Silver Medalist visited the Venice YMCA's After School Enrichment Program where children were given the opportunity to meet the Olympian. Mary was awarded the Silver Medal in Mixed Air Rifle. This was a very special event for our Y as Mary was a YMCA participant as a child through our Youth Development Program.



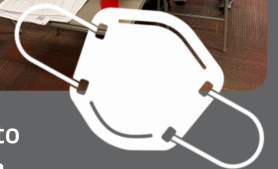
Congratulations, Mary, we are so proud of you!

## Manatee County Family YMCA Hosts Vaccination Event

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, Manatee County Family YMCA partnered with the COVID-19 Regional Coalition and the Multicultural Health Institute to serve as a "Shots in the Arms" Sarasota Vaccination event site.



The YMCA is proud to be able to support our local public health initiatives to make vaccination easy and accessible to everyone. If you are currently eligible to get vaccinated, we encourage you to find a vaccination location and schedule an appointment today at <https://www.vaccines.gov/search/>.



### YMCA of Southwest Florida

Bonita Springs • Englewood • Fort Myers • North Port  
Port Charlotte • Punta Gorda • Venice

701 Center Road, Venice, FL 34285 • [ymcaswfl.org](http://ymcaswfl.org) • 941.492.9622

### Manatee County Family YMCA

Bradenton • Lakewood Ranch

5100 Lakewood Ranch Blvd, Bradenton, FL 34211  
[manateeymca.org](http://manateeymca.org) • 941.798.9622

The Mission of the YMCA is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.