

# CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

## YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

FEBRUARY 2022



## FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH

Our members and staff wore red on National Wear Red Day to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease.

Our YMCA proudly participated in this national awareness campaign to help support heart-disease prevention and encourage our community to make heart health a top priority in 2022.



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

Dear Friends,

Each day, I see firsthand how the Y impacts our community. From children in our early learning programs to seniors in our Programs for Health, the Y changes lives. February was no different. YMCA of Southwest Florida has experienced some incredible things this year already. We have expanded partnerships to address critical issues, welcomed new and old members to our facilities and increased youth development programs to underserved communities.

Never has there been a better time to be part of such an amazing organization as our Y continues to touch the lives of those in our community. This month's newsletter will highlight many of the exciting things happening throughout our association.

I am humbled that you have chosen to be part of the Y's movement. Together, we are creating healthy families and communities.

Sincerely,

*Gene T. Jones*  
Gene T. Jones  
President and CEO  
YMCA of Southwest Florida



### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Nurturing the potential of every child and teen for a path to success.

### HEALTHY LIVING

Improving the health and well-being through partnerships with health care.

### SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Foster a greater sense of engagement to provide support to our neighbors.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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## REDEFINING EARLY LEARNING

YMCA of Southwest Florida announces its Redefining Early Learning Initiative following the rebranding of its Early Learning Academies. For over 34 years, YMCA of Southwest Florida has provided early childhood programs and currently operates four YMCA Early Learning Academies serving over 600 children annually.

YMCA of Southwest Florida will lead its region's efforts to transform the early learning model through an innovative approach that focuses on children's overall well-being, preparing children to excel academically, family engagement and support, staffing and community collaborations.

A tremendous thank you to Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation. Barancik Foundation's support is instrumental in our Y's ability to



transform early learning; we are incredibly grateful for their dedication to our Y, children and community. Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation is the YMCA's leading partner and has committed \$408,000 towards this initiative. Funds from the grant will be used for staff investments and becoming NAEYC accredited.

Community leaders and early childhood experts will work in partnership with our Y to help lead the initiative. The Y's Social Impact Committee will also play an integral role.



## 2022 CAMPFIRE CONFERENCE

This month, three of our Youth Development Leaders attended the 2022 Campfire Conference in North Carolina at YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly. Our Youth Development Leaders spent their days with colleagues from across the nation as the conference provided inspiration, education and fellowship. The skills learned at the conference will be implemented in our upcoming camp session as we strive to ensure that every child in our Summer Camp program has the Best Summer Ever™.

For more information on YMCA Summer Camp visit [www.ymcaswfl.org/programs/child-care/summer-camps](http://www.ymcaswfl.org/programs/child-care/summer-camps)

## BENEFITS OF YMCA

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT

Creates a Sense of Belonging		Feeds Children Healthy Meals
Improves Social Skills		Makes Learning Fun
Provides Academic Support		Provides a Safe and Nurturing Environment
Offers Time for Physical Fitness		Builds Confidence

For more information visit [www.ymcaswfl.org/programs/child-care/after-school-enrichment-program](http://www.ymcaswfl.org/programs/child-care/after-school-enrichment-program)



## HEALTHY LIVING

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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## YMCA 360

YMCA of Southwest Florida is excited to bring an innovative new benefit for members that matches their on-the-go lifestyles and puts healthy living at the center of 2022. YMCA360 is a 360-degree seamless Y experience on mobile devices, TV and web. It is now included with every membership.

With YMCA360, healthy living for people of all ages and activity levels is possible anytime, anywhere. The robust digital experience

combines immersive, healthy living with the values of the YMCA in a transformational presentation utilizing best-in-class people, programs and systems delivering the ultimate connected community. More than 300 on-demand exercise classes and programs are accessible 24/7 to provide another way to engage with the Y from home or when a branch isn't nearby.

For more information visit [www.ymca360.org](http://www.ymca360.org)



## YOUTH BASKETBALL IS UNDERWAY

YMCA Youth Basketball programs are developed to teach and encourage teamwork and good sportsmanship. Players will learn basketball fundamentals like how to dribble, pass and shoot. Each week, they will play games and test their new basketball skills. Young athletes will work within a team, navigate challenges and work on agility.

*1,279 players will make new friends and participate in weekly practices and games to learn and use their new skills during Winter Basketball League.*

## WHY THE Y? A LIVESTRONG PARTICIPANT'S STORY

For a cancer survivor, the mental anguish is as taxing as the physical challenges. I was able to enroll in the LIVESTRONG program at the Y and gained strength and comradery. My instructor is compassionate and understanding, but at the same time, she pushes you in just the right way, encouraging you to do more.

*"I knew you would rock it!"*

I expressed to my instructor that I would like to train to walk a breast cancer 5K which I felt was unattainable in my physical fitness level. She did not even blink; she immediately assisted me with a plan and coached me all along the way. On the day I completed the race, she was the first person I sent a text to, reporting that I finished the entire 5K. Her response was, "I knew you would rock it!" She never doubted me, and I am learning to also not doubt myself.



**LIVESTRONG@ AT THE YMCA** is a small-group program developed & established in partnership with the LIVESTRONG Foundation to assist those who are living with, through or beyond cancer to strengthen their spirit, mind, and body.



## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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## CAUSE CHAMPIONS

Each year, our YMCA partners with local businesses and organizations to ensure YMCA programs are accessible to all. Our Y is excited to introduce its newest partnership program: Cause Champions.

Cause Champions are community leaders that build up communities through partnerships with YMCA of Southwest Florida. These collaborative partnerships allow YMCA of Southwest Florida to meet emerging community needs, address critical social issues and serve others without barriers.

As a Cause Champion, you will have the opportunity to choose your championed cause. Together, we will ensure everyone has access to YMCA programs and services regardless of their inability to pay.

For more information on how to become a Cause Champion contact [give@ymcaswfl.org](mailto:give@ymcaswfl.org).

## SOCIAL IMPACT COMMITTEE

Last year, the Board of Directors and all Community Boards across our association came together and identified the gaps in services and needs in our community. The following core areas of focus were identified, Youth Mental Health, Youth & Teen Leadership Programs, Health & Wellness Programs and Hispanic Outreach. From this collaborative effort, an Association Social Impact Committee was developed.

Last month, our association held its first Social Impact Committee meeting under the leadership of Board Member, Sandy King. The committee is composed of professionals with high-level expertise in the identified areas of focus. The Social Impact Committee will aim its efforts on the core areas of focus and how the Y can continue to expand its services as YMCA of Southwest Florida addresses Equitable Community Initiatives.

the **Y** YMCA

**YOU CAN... BE THE ONE**

**2022 GIVING CHALLENGE**  
On The Go!

Presented by the  
Community Foundation of Sarasota County  
**DOUBLE THE GIVING**  
APRIL 26-27 NOON-NOON



## THE GIVING CHALLENGE

BE THE ONE... to connect people to a greater sense of purpose – and to each other – to make our community stronger.

**JOIN US AND DISCOVER WHAT A GIFT IT IS TO GIVE.**

[www.ymcaswfl.org/givingchallenge](http://www.ymcaswfl.org/givingchallenge)

## UPCOMING DATES

- » WHY COOK!: March 10th
- » TROPICAL NIGHTS: April 23rd
- » THE GIVING CHALLENGE: April 26th-27th (noon to noon)
- » HARBOR NIGHTS: November 5th



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