



PRESS RELEASE

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YMCA of Southwest Florida and Cooper Street Recreation Center announce their New Partnership to Increase Youth Development Services

YMCA of Southwest Florida and Cooper Street Recreation Center (New Operation Cooper Street, Inc.) are excited to announce their new partnership to increase youth development services for the surrounding community. Both organizations will offer youth programs at the Cooper Street Recreation Center that promote academic success and address educational disparities.

In July, YMCA of Southwest Florida will begin its Before and After School Enrichment. The Y will also provide care through Summer Camp and Out of School Days. Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) services will also be offered in the future. Cooper Street Recreation Center will keep offering mentoring, career readiness and outreach programs to middle and high school students.

Cooper Street Recreation Center has been serving the Punta Gorda Historic District and serving Charlotte County since the 1960s and will continue its legacy through programs that build relationships that support, celebrate and strengthen the opportunities and diversity of the community through education, multiculturalism and communication. Its partnership with YMCA of Southwest Florida will strengthen the community by increasing the offerings of high-quality youth development programs. YMCA of Southwest Florida has been a leader in youth programs since 1967 and has a proven track record of engaging, encouraging and empowering children across the communities they serve.

"This is a truly great day for our community and our kids. Cooper Street Recreation Center will continue to expand its unique and powerful presence in our community, while the YMCA can provide a solid financial structure along with new programming opportunities," said Dave Klein, MD FACS, New Operation Cooper Street, Inc.'s President.

According to Punta Gorda YMCA's Community Board Chair and Charlotte County School Board Member, Kim Amontree, "I am grateful for the partnership formed between the Y and Cooper Street Recreation Center. With the addition of YMCA childcare at the facility, every family in our community will have access to safe, quality and affordable childcare. In the fall of 2021, less than half of children who took the Florida Kindergarten Readiness Screener achieved a score indicating they were ready for school. With this partnership, we will ensure that every child who enters our schools is ready to learn."

Gene T. Jones, YMCA of Southwest Florida's President and CEO, agreed. "We are incredibly thrilled to partner with Cooper Street Recreation Center. Both organizations view education as the pathway to opportunity and are committed to ensuring every child has access to services that develop their potential. Together, we will be able to create a continuum of care and support for these children by offering robust youth development programs that reinforce what they learn during the school day, prepare children for Kindergarten and reduce summer learning loss."

"This partnership provides us the opportunity to reach many more children of all ages and provide them with scholastic support, social development, and career readiness," said Jaha Cummings, New Operation Cooper Street, Inc.'s Vice-President and Punta Gorda City Councilman.

YMCA BRANCHES

Bonita Springs YMCA
Bradenton YMCA
Englewood YMCA
Fort Myers YMCA
Franz Ross YMCA
Lakewood Ranch YMCA
Punta Gorda YMCA
Venice YMCA

SKY ACADEMIES

SKY Academy Englewood
SKY Academy Venice

EARLY LEARNING ACADEMIES

Charlotte Harbor YMCA
Early Learning Academy

The Suwyn Early Learning Academy
at Bonita Springs YMCA

Venice YMCA
Early Learning Academy

YMCA Early Learning Academy
at PGT Innovations

OFFSITE LOCATIONS

Bayfront Center
YMCA Camp Estero

ALSO SERVING

Cape Coral
Clewiston
Estero
Labelle
Lehigh Acres
Moore Haven
North Port
Sarasota

WWW.YMCASWFL.ORG

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

For more information on YMCA of Southwest Florida, community members are encouraged to contact Jamie Browning, Vice President of Development, YMCA of Southwest Florida, at (941) 492-9622 or JBrowning@ymcaswfl.org.

About YMCA of Southwest Florida

YMCA of Southwest Florida is a leading non-profit strengthening southwest Florida communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Driven by its founding mission, the Y has served as a leading non-profit committed to strengthening community for more than 175 years. 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. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives and generations, the Y's goal is to improve overall health and well-being, ignite youth empowerment and demonstrate the importance of connections in and across Manatee, Sarasota, Charlotte, Lee, Hendry and Glades Counties.

YMCA of Southwest Florida's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan charts a clear direction for the association and anchors the YMCA's efforts in three initiatives: sustainability, people and community.

About Cooper Street Recreation Center

Cooper Street Recreation Center is a community-based center whose function is primarily threefold: educational support, cultural stimulation and recreational challenges. Our mission is to assist in the development of children ages 4 through 18 and to instill valuable and lasting assets to include pride, motivation and a desire to succeed. NOCS demonstrates its concern by the programs offered and our continuous effort to meet the needs of every student in our community and Charlotte County.