

# CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MAY 2025



## MAKING WAVES THIS MAY: WELLNESS, COMMUNITY & SUMMER AHEAD!

Dear YMCA Family,

As the days grow longer and the Florida sun begins to shine even brighter, there is a distinct energy in the air—summer is nearly here! At YMCA of Southwest Florida, we are gearing up for another incredible season filled with camps, swim lessons, youth programs and community engagement. This time of year always brings a renewed sense of purpose as we welcome new faces and reconnect with returning families.

Our campuses are buzzing with preparation—from youth sports to academic enrichment to new wellness initiatives. This summer promises to be especially exciting as we launch new programs that not only support physical health but also nurture mental and emotional well-being. With community partnerships growing stronger and fresh initiatives on the horizon, we are poised to make an even deeper impact.

Thank you for being a part of this journey. Whether you are a member, donor, volunteer or partner, your involvement makes the Y a place where individuals of all ages grow stronger in spirit, mind and body.

Here is to a summer of health, connection and purpose.

With gratitude,

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 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

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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### CELEBRATING OUR EDUCATORS DURING TEACHER APPRECIATION MONTH



May is Teacher Appreciation Month and we are proud to recognize the dedicated educators and school leaders who shape young lives every single day.

Whether it is in the classroom, on a field trip, or during afterschool programming teachers are among the most influential adults in a child's life. Their guidance, patience and creativity inspire learning, build confidence and lay the foundation for lifelong success.



At the YMCA, we work alongside teachers in many ways—through our SKY Academies, Early Learning Academies, YREADS, afterschool enrichment, youth mentoring and more. We see their impact firsthand and we are deeply grateful for their dedication and compassion.

To every teacher, aide and school staff member: **THANK YOU.** Your work matters and your efforts do not go unnoticed.

**SUMMER CAMP IS ALMOST HERE – THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER!**



The countdown to summer has officially begun—and there's still time to sign up for YMCA Summer Camp 2025! Across our association, YMCA branches are preparing to welcome thousands of campers for a season full of adventure, friendship, creativity, and growth.

Whether your child loves sports, science, art or just good old-fashioned fun in the sun, there is a place for them at Y camp. Each week is thoughtfully planned to support positive youth development, physical activity and learning through exploration in a safe, nurturing environment led by trained staff.

Spots are filling fast, so do not wait! Visit your local branch or [CLICK HERE](#) to secure your child's place in a summer they will never forget.

### SKY ACADEMY 8TH GRADERS EXPLORE WASHINGTON, D.C. AND BALTIMORE



Our 8th grade students from SKY Academy Venice and SKY Academy Englewood had the experience of a lifetime this spring! The students recently traveled to Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, where they spent time exploring the nation's capital and engaging with history in powerful, firsthand ways.

From visiting the National Aquarium to historic monuments, our students have gained a deeper understanding of our



nation's past and future. One of the trip's highlights was an unforgettable night at Camden Yards cheering on the Baltimore Orioles.

These experiences help bring education to life and foster curiosity, leadership and independence. We are proud of our students and thankful to the donors, teachers and staff who made this trip possible!



## HEALTHY LIVING

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MAY 2025

## MAY MATTERS: FOCUSING ON WATER SAFETY AND MENTAL HEALTH

At YMCA of Southwest Florida, May is a month of awareness, prevention and empowerment. As we step into warmer days and prepare for summer, we are proud to spotlight two critical focus areas: Water Safety Month and Mental Health Awareness Month.

### MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Mental health is just as important as physical health—and this month, we are creating space to talk about it. At the Y, we are committed to supporting emotional well-being for all ages. The Y creates a welcoming environment where individuals of all ages build strong social connections, fostering a sense of belonging that is linked to improved mental well-being and self-worth. By raising awareness and reducing stigma, we are helping individuals and families feel seen, supported and connected.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

This summer, YMCA of Southwest Florida is proud to launch Social Black Belt, a powerful mental wellness program designed specifically for kids and teens. Through interactive workshops and real-life tools, Social Black Belt helps young people build self-awareness, emotional resilience and confidence. The curriculum equips kids and teens with skills to manage stress, strengthen relationships and make positive choices. It is more than a program—it is a foundation for lifelong mental well-being.

### WATER SAFETY SAVES LIVES



**WATER SAFETY DAY**  
May 31<sup>st</sup>  
[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TODAY!](#)

As summer approaches and families flock to pools, beaches and lakes, knowing how to be safe around water is essential. Drowning is preventable, and the Y is leading the way with:

- Swim lessons for all ages
- Safety Around Water education programs
- Tips for parents and caregivers on active supervision and water readiness

We believe that every child deserves to feel confident and capable in the water and every family should have the tools to prevent tragedy before it happens.

[Click here to learn more about YMCA Water Safety Programs.](#)

### DID YOU KNOW

Did you know YMCA of Southwest Florida provided **4,198 Safety Around Water** and swim lessons to individuals in 2024?

## THIS MAY, LET US PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST —OUR MINDS, OUR LIVES AND OUR LOVED ONES.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

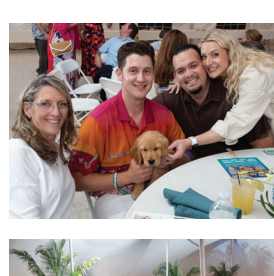
MAY 2025

### TROPICAL NIGHTS: AN EVENING OF IMPACT



In April, the Englewood YMCA hosted Tropical Nights, an unforgettable evening that brought together supporters, community leaders and mission supporters for a cause that touches lives across our region. Guests enjoyed a vibrant evening of live music, tropical fare, auctions and heartfelt stories—each moment a reminder of the impact the Y has on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Funds raised during Tropical Nights



directly support programs that provide access, opportunity and hope for children, families and seniors in our communities. Whether it is swim lessons, afterschool care or healthy meals, every dollar makes a difference.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, attendees, volunteers and staff who made the event such a success. Together, we are building stronger communities—one program, one person and one partnership at a time.

### ARCADIA COMMUNITY DAY BRINGS FAMILIES TOGETHER

On April 12, YMCA of Southwest Florida proudly hosted Arcadia Community Day, a celebration of connection, support and service in the heart of DeSoto County. With over 500 attendees and 41 community-serving organizations on site, the day was a true reflection of what it means to come together for the greater good.

Families had the opportunity to meet local service providers, access free resources, enjoy games and activities for children and learn more about



programs that support health, education and well-being. From healthcare and housing support to job resources and youth enrichment, every booth represented a building block of community stability.

Arcadia Community Day is a powerful example of the Y's mission in action—bridging gaps, lifting others and creating spaces where every individual feels valued and supported. We are thankful to all who participated and look forward to growing this event in the years to come.

### SUPPORT OUR MISSION: JOIN THE COMMUNITY IMPACT CAMPAIGN



YMCA of Southwest Florida's **Community Impact Campaign** is your opportunity to make a direct and meaningful difference in the lives of your neighbors. Your gift helps us provide:

- **Scholarships** for children to attend camp, afterschool programs and early learning
- **Swim lessons** and water safety education that save lives
- **Healthy meals** for families and individuals experiencing food insecurity
- **Support programs** that build mental and emotional wellness
- **Safe spaces** where all feel welcomed, valued and supported

Every dollar raised stays right here in our communities—creating access, opening doors and transforming lives.

If you believe that everyone deserves the chance to learn, grow and thrive, please consider making a gift today.

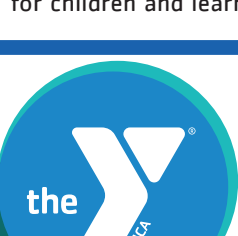
[CLICK HERE TO GIVE](#)

**TOGETHER, WE ARE BUILDING A STRONGER, HEALTHIER SOUTHWEST FLORIDA.**

### UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

**VENICE YMCA CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC**  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2025  
[Click here for more information!](#)

**RIVER NIGHTS**  
OCTOBER 4, 2025  
[Click here for more information!](#)



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