

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

NOVEMBER 2025



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear YMCA Family,

Each day, across our branches and communities, we see the incredible power of the Y's mission in action, children learning, families growing stronger, seniors finding community and neighbors supporting one another.

Our work is deeply rooted in the belief that every individual deserves the opportunity to reach their full potential, spiritually, mentally and physically. That belief continues to guide every program we offer, every partnership we build and every life we touch. From early learning to youth leadership, from chronic disease prevention to community nutrition, the Y continues to be a trusted partner in strengthening the foundation of Southwest Florida.

This fall, we have seen extraordinary growth in each area of our mission. Our Beacons Program is inspiring students to think about their future careers and educational goals, equipping them with the confidence to lead and the tools to succeed. Second Grade Swim through MONDA Swim is teaching critical life-saving skills to more than 1,500 children through YMCA instruction. And through new initiatives to expand food programs in DeSoto, Hendry and Glades

Counties, we're ensuring that no family in our region goes without access to nutritious food.

These milestones are more than just numbers—they represent stories of transformation and connection. They remind us that the Y is not just a place to go; it is a movement that brings people together and creates lasting impact.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our incredible team, the support of our volunteers, members and the generosity of our donors and community partners who make our mission come alive every day.

Thank you for walking beside us in this journey of service and hope.

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 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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TRUNK OR TREAT: A CELEBRATION OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY



Across Southwest Florida, Trunk or Treat has become one of the YMCA's most anticipated annual traditions—creating a safe and welcoming space for families to celebrate together. Thousands of children and families attended Trunk or Treat events across our branches this October, enjoying festive decorations, costumes, games and community connection.

These events embody the heart of the YMCA's mission—bringing people together to share joy, strengthen bonds and foster belonging in a positive and family-centered environment.

BEACONS PROGRAM: GUIDING YOUTH TOWARD BRIGHTER FUTURES



Our Rise Up Program exploring Big Cypress, building confidence, leadership and lifelong friendships through adventure in nature.

The YMCA's Beacons Program continues to light the way for youth across our region—providing mentorship, leadership development and opportunities for personal growth. In partnership with the Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation and the YMCA of the North, this career and college readiness program helps students discover their potential through experiential learning and meaningful community connections.



By helping youth explore their interests and connect education to real-world careers, Beacons equips the next generation with the confidence, purpose and skills to lead.

For more information on participation or volunteering for Beacons please contact Adam Danapolis at adam.danapolis@skvyatthey.com.

DID YOU KNOW 92% of YMCA of Southwest Florida's VPK students entered elementary school kindergarten ready in 2025?

BRIGHT BEGINNINGS FAIR: INVESTING IN EARLY LEARNING



Our Bright Beginnings Fair continues to make a powerful impact by connecting families with early learning resources, community partners and educational opportunities. Through this event, families gain access to valuable information about early learning programs and resources, developmental milestones and enrichment activities that lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

Investing in early learning remains one of the YMCA's top priorities—ensuring that every child has the chance to start school ready to learn, grow and thrive.



HEALTHY LIVING

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YMCA HURRICANES SWIM TEAM



YMCA of Southwest Florida Hurricanes Swim Team recently hosted a dual meet against the Lakewood Ranch Lightning, with over 100 swimmers participating. Competitive swimming teaches perseverance, teamwork and discipline—values that extend beyond the pool and into everyday life.

Congrats to our swimmers! And thank you to our volunteers, coaches and officials.

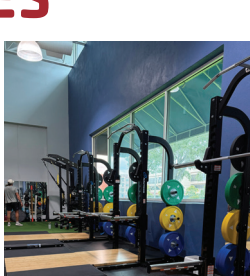


WELLNESS-A-THONS: GIVING TUESDAY

Mark your calendars for Giving Tuesday, December 2, 2025 as we host our association-wide Wellness-a-Thon! These exciting events unite members and staff in support of community wellness and youth programs. Join us for fitness challenges, spin sessions and community fun—all for a great cause.

For more information, please contact your local Y.

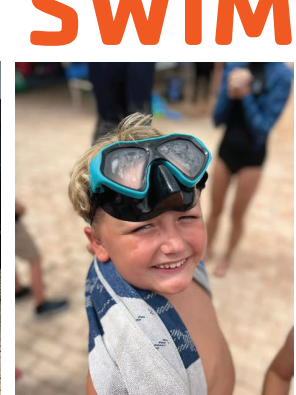
NEW EQUIPMENT AND EXPANDED WELLNESS OPPORTUNITIES



Our wellness journey continues to grow stronger! Sarasota City YMCA and Palmer Ranch YMCA have introduced new state-of-the-art fitness equipment, designed to elevate member experiences and support overall health and wellness for all ages.

We encourage you to stop by and check us out!

MONDA KIDS SWIM



This fall, YMCA of Southwest Florida partnered with MONDA Kids Swim and Sarasota County Schools to offer swim lessons to second graders at four YMCA locations across the county.

For the 2025–2026 school year, the Y will serve 16 schools and reach 1,566 students, teaching essential water safety skills and swimming fundamentals. Each school visits the YMCA daily for one week, ensuring that transportation and timing are never a barrier to participation.

By starting early, we are equipping children with lifesaving skills, building confidence and fostering a lifelong love of the water.



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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INCREASING ACCESS TO MEALS IN MANATEE COUNTY



Exciting progress continues in our hunger relief efforts. The Bradenton Nutritional Support Center officially opened on October 15, 2025, in partnership with Feeding Tampa Bay and Publix. This fully stocked pantry is already providing essential support for families facing food insecurity.

FLORIDA BLUE FOUNDATION PARTNERSHIP: NOURISHING COMMUNITIES

We are deeply grateful to the Florida Blue Foundation for awarding YMCA of Southwest Florida a grant to support our expanding food program efforts in rural communities.

This past summer, we extended our Rural Feeding Program to DeSoto, Hendry and Glades counties, serving over 10,000 meals each week while students were out of school. With Florida Blue Foundation's generous support, we will continue this vital work through our Nourishing Communities initiative—providing access to nutritious food, nutrition education and opportunities for physical activity for individuals and families across these regions.

Food insecurity remains one of the most significant drivers of health in the United States, contributing to increased risks of chronic diseases such as obesity, heart disease and certain cancers. Rising food costs, reduced funding to local food banks and economic pressures have only amplified the need for reliable community-based support.

Through partnerships like this, YMCA of Southwest Florida continues to bridge gaps in access—ensuring that every family, regardless of zip code, has the nourishment and resources needed to live healthier, more connected lives.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER MENTAL HEALTH

The YMCA recently hosted a Teen Mental Health First Aid Training, empowering teens to recognize signs of distress among peers and seek help when needed. The training, which received local TV coverage, underscores our commitment to mental well-being—especially during the formative years when peer support is so vital.



CHECK OUT THIS IMPACT VIDEO

CASINO ROYALE
JANUARY 31, 2026
[Click here for more information!](#)

A NIGHT IN THE BIG APPLE
FEBRUARY 21, 2026
[Click here for more information!](#)

WHY COOK!
MARCH 4, 2026
[Click here for more information!](#)