

CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

APRIL 2026



FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Dear Friends,

Across YMCA of Southwest Florida, we continue to see the power of our mission in action. From preparing children for kindergarten to providing safe summer experiences, expanding access to healthy meals and bringing our community together through philanthropy, the YMCA remains committed to strengthening the foundations of our community.

This season, we are especially proud of the measurable impact happening across youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Our Early Learning programs are preparing children for lifelong success, our summer camps are providing safe, enriching spaces for youth and our food access initiatives are helping combat food insecurity across both rural and urban communities.

We are also raising awareness about the importance of advocacy and ensuring community voices are heard to support programs like these. At the same time, the generosity of our supporters continues to expand opportunities and ensure everyone has access to YMCA programs regardless of their ability to pay.

Thank you for being part of the YMCA and for helping us create stronger, healthier communities.

With gratitude,

Gene T. Jones
President and CEO
YMCA of Southwest Florida



PERSONAL REQUEST: RAISE YOUR VOICE FOR THE YMCA

This spring, the YMCA is participating in a nationwide Advocate Recruitment Campaign to build a stronger network of community voices. By joining as a YMCA Advocate, you'll receive timely updates about issues affecting our Y, our families and our community. When key decisions arise, Advocates receive Action Alerts — simple, official requests to contact policymakers. Each alert includes clear instructions and easy tools like pre-written messages or call scripts so you can take action in seconds. Your information is always secure and used only for YMCA advocacy.

Join our YMCA Advocacy Network: [CLICK HERE!](#)

Together, we can ensure policymakers understand the critical role the YMCA plays in strengthening our community.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

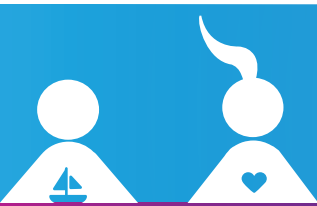
Nurturing the potential of every child and teen for a path to success.

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

APRIL 2026

SUMMER CAMP: COMBATING LEARNING LOSS AND BUILDING CONFIDENCE



YMCA Summer Camp provides more than just a fun summer — it creates meaningful opportunities for children to grow, learn and stay connected. Camp helps combat summer learning loss by incorporating educational enrichment, reading activities and hands-on experiences that keep young minds engaged.

In addition to learning opportunities, campers benefit from safe and high-quality care, physical activity, social development and strong mentorship. Many families also rely on camp for nutritious meals, ensuring children have access to healthy food throughout the summer months. For working parents, camp provides peace of mind knowing their children are in a safe and supportive environment.

Summer Camp at the YMCA creates lasting friendships, builds confidence and ensures children return to school ready to succeed.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

EARLY LEARNING EXCELLENCE: PREPARING CHILDREN FOR KINDERGARTEN AND BEYOND

High-quality early education is one of the most important investments we can make in our community. YMCA of Southwest Florida's Early Learning Academies continue to demonstrate exceptional outcomes for children and families. The Early Learning Academy at PGT achieved a CLASS score of 6.4, while the Venice YMCA Early Learning Academy earned an impressive 6.64. CLASS scores measure the quality of teacher-child interactions and are one of the strongest predictors of school readiness and long-term success. YMCA Charlotte Harbor Early Learning Academy was recognized by the Department of Education for its excellent excellence and delivery of the VPK program.



Because of this commitment to quality, 92% of children in YMCA Early Learning programs enter kindergarten ready to learn, equipped with the social, emotional and academic skills needed to succeed. Each year, our Early Learning programs serve more than 700 students, providing nurturing environments, structured learning and caring educators during the most critical years of development.

These programs also support working families by providing reliable, high-quality childcare that allows parents to pursue careers while knowing their children are safe, supported and learning every day.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

SKY ACADEMY: LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Experiential learning helps students connect classroom concepts to real-world careers. Recently, students from SKY Academy Englewood toured CoolToday Park, the Atlanta Braves Spring Training facility. During the visit, students went behind the scenes to learn how the stadium operates, including production, entertainment, logistics and event management.



This hands-on experience gave students insight into careers in sports management, operations, media production and hospitality. Opportunities like this expand horizons, inspire future goals and demonstrate the YMCA's commitment to preparing students for success beyond the classroom.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SKY ACADEMY!](#)



HEALTHY LIVING

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

APRIL 2026



HEALTHY KIDS DAY BRINGS FAMILIES TOGETHER

Healthy Kids Day welcomed hundreds of children and families to YMCA branches across the association. This annual event encourages healthy habits, physical activity and family engagement while introducing programs that support lifelong wellness.

Families participated in interactive activities, fitness demonstrations, games and educational opportunities designed to promote healthy lifestyles. Events like Healthy Kids Day help families build routines that support physical and mental well-being while connecting them to YMCA programs that keep children active and engaged year-round.

SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM: FIGHTING BACK AGAINST HUNGER

For many children, summer can mean limited access to nutritious meals. The YMCA is committed to combating food insecurity by providing meals where they are needed most. This summer, rural feeding sites will operate in DeSoto, Hendry, Glades, LaBelle and Englewood, ensuring children receive consistent, healthy meals.



In addition, eight open meal sites will serve children across the region, including Bradenton YMCA, Venice YMCA, Sarasota City YMCA, Palmer Ranch YMCA, Franz Ross YMCA, Cooper Street Recreation Center, SKY Academy Englewood and Turner Center. These sites provide free, nutritious meals to children throughout the summer months.

By expanding access to food, the YMCA helps children stay healthy, focused and ready to learn. These efforts also support families by reducing financial strain and ensuring no child goes hungry during the summer.

SUPPORTING NOURISH TO FLOURISH



Through the Nourish to Flourish initiative, community members can sponsor a week of summer camp and help provide children with enriching experiences and nutritious meals. This program directly addresses food insecurity while also ensuring children have access to safe summer programming.

Your support helps provide healthy meals, educational activities and meaningful connections for children who need it most.

[CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT NOURISH TO FLOURISH!](#)



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

APRIL 2026

Before every event, behind every dollar raised and at the heart of every success are the supporters, sponsors and volunteers who make this work possible. Your generosity fuels our mission and allows YMCA of Southwest Florida to serve children, families and individuals across our region. Because of your commitment, we are able to expand access to childcare, provide meals to those experiencing food insecurity, support youth development programs and ensure everyone has the opportunity to thrive. We are deeply grateful for your continued partnership and belief in the YMCA.

WHY COOK: AN INTERACTIVE DINNER WITH PURPOSE



WHY Cook offered a unique and engaging experience, bringing supporters together for an interactive dinner led by Michael's on East. Guests enjoyed a live culinary demonstration in an intimate setting while learning from expert chefs.

This year's WHY Cook event raised \$283,484 in support of the YMCA's WHY Cook and services. These funds help provide access to youth development opportunities, childcare, wellness programs and initiatives that strengthen our community.

GIVING CHALLENGE: INDIVIDUAL DONORS POWERING IMPACT

The Giving Challenge demonstrated the incredible power of individual giving. During this 24-hour campaign, community members came together to support YMCA of Southwest Florida and the families we serve.



Together, donors raised \$133,024 to support YMCA programs, including summer camp scholarships, early learning, youth development and initiatives that combat food insecurity.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE!](#)

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS: TROPICAL NIGHTS AT PALM ISLAND RESORT



Tropical Nights continues to be a signature celebration of philanthropy and community and this year marked a special milestone — 30 years of the Englewood YMCA's signature event held at Palm Island Resort. The event brought together supporters, sponsors and volunteers for an unforgettable evening dedicated to strengthening our community.

For three decades, Tropical Nights has helped expand YMCA programs, provide financial assistance and ensure access to services for families across Southwest Florida. The continued success of this event reflects the long-standing commitment of our community and the shared belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

- SAFETY AROUND WATER DAY
MAY 9TH
- ENDLESS SUMMER
JULY 25TH
- MAKE A WILL MONTH
AUGUST
- SENIOR HEALTH DAY
SEPTEMBER 11TH
- VENICE GOLF TOURNAMENT
SEPTEMBER 18TH
[Click here for more information!](#)
- RIVER NIGHTS
SEPTEMBER 25TH
- BRIGHT BEGINNINGS FAIR
OCTOBER 3RD
- LAKEWOOD RANCH GOLF CLASSIC
OCTOBER 23RD



Website: www.ymcaswfl.org

Contact: 941-492-9622

Email: give@ymcaswfl.org