

# MY Y, YOUR Y



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
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## THE GREATER MORRISTOWN YMCA

79 Horsehill Rd., Cedar Knolls, NJ 07927

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4Q20 Newsletter

[www.greatermorristownymca.org](http://www.greatermorristownymca.org)

A newsletter for members and volunteers of the Y



## REBUILDING AFTER COVID19

Letter from Carol Armour, President & CEO of the Greater Morristown YMCA

I hope this newsletter finds you and your loved ones healthy, happy, safe and that you are remaining as upbeat and optimistic as you can during these trying times. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a devastating effect on all in our community. During the early stages of the pandemic, we were fortunate to be able to help our essential workers on the front lines by providing emergency childcare at **Children's Corner**, our childcare center for Morristown Medical Center staff. Our staff showed up each day, ready to care for the children despite the many unknowns of this virus during the early stages. We are so grateful for their dedication. Along with the staff at Children's Corner, the Administrative Staff continued to work, listening to the daily briefings and updating our membership along the way. On June 15th, we were given permission to reopen our other childcare center, the **Richard F. Blake Children's Center**. We were thrilled to reopen and see our families, but sadly, only half of the children enrolled in both centers have returned. On September 8th, we reopened the **GMYMCA** with the hope that many of our members would return. Prior to reopening, we assiduously followed the protocols and procedures set forth by the CDC and local Health Department. *Continued on page 3.*

## YMCA REOPENING

On Tuesday, September 8th, we reopened the YMCA facility at 25% capacity. We have never been so happy to see you! We would like to thank all of our members for trusting us to ensure a safe work-out environment. Thank you for your continued patience and support as we follow and implement the fluid protocols and procedures provided to us by the CDC and local health department.



## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES COMING 2021

Effective January 1, 2021, we will no longer be offering annual, semi-annual, or quarterly memberships for any age category. **Only monthly memberships will be available.** If you have previously taken out an annual, semi-annual, or quarterly membership, your term will be honored through its expiration date. Should you so choose, these membership types remain available until December 31, 2020.

### REBUILDING AFTER COVID19 CONTINUED

Unfortunately, even with all these positive precautions, less than 25% of our membership, approximately 860 members, have come back. We are extremely grateful to all those who have returned to the Y and hopeful more and more will recognize the efforts we have made to keep you, our loyal members, safe. We miss what was once a bustling facility filled with happy people who looked forward to meeting their friends at our Y daily for a yoga class, a workout in our fitness center or even a cup of coffee in the lobby.

The Greater Morristown YMCA has served the Morris County community continuously since 1874. Our beloved country and our YMCA have suffered through wars, depression, and much more, and yet we have emerged stronger than ever and this pandemic is no exception. We are confident we will be here for another 146 years with your support. Our doors are open and we are prepared to greet you when you are ready to return. Please stay safe and healthy! God Bless America. -- Carol Armour

Top right: easy to see signage can be found throughout our facility, on our machines and equipment. Help Stop the Spread!



## COMING SOON ON-LINE REGISTRATON

One of the silver linings to come out of the COVID-19 Pandemic is one we know everyone has been waiting for - online functionality! We are in the process of transitioning our current membership software to **RELIQUE CORE**, a new award winning platform that will enable our members to create an account and register for classes and swim lessons on-line. We know it has been a long time coming but we wanted to make sure we partnered with the right software company that would be able to hone in on our needs. Members will also have the opportunity to pay bills on-line, reserve a spot for class, see how many spots are available, digitally sign waivers when necessary, use your smart device to check in, and so much more! Non-members will also have the opportunity to join the Greater Morristown YMCA. As you can imagine, the transition from one platform to another takes some time so we will be sure to keep you posted on our launch date!



## PRESCHOOL EXPANSION WITH THE MORRIS SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Greater Morristown YMCA continues to partner with the Morris School District on their free Preschool Expansion Program for eligible 3-4 year olds residing in either Morristown or Morris Township. We currently have 105 children enrolled in our various centers including the **Richard F. Blake Children's Center**, **Angela's Place** (our new location at 6 Saddle Road in Cedar Knolls), and **Children's Corner**. The school year may look a little different this year with the classes split and the children alternating days due to the capacity limits as mandated by the State of New Jersey. We are happy to report that the restrictions are loosening up slowly and that the children will soon be able to attend school Monday through Friday, from 9am-3pm.



## H A P P Y HALLOWEEN!

Our preschoolers had a wonderful time celebrating Halloween in school! Our children enjoyed a parade throughout the school along with parties in their individual classrooms. Due to all the restrictions, parents were not allowed to attend but received many pictures of their children celebrating this special day!



# SUMMER CAMP RECAP: THE BEST SUMMER EVER!

Our summer camp season kicked off on July 6th, immediately after receiving Governor Murphy's approval to reopen. While we had less campers and fewer weeks this year compared to other years, this camp season was by far one of our best. After quarantining for what seemed forever, and being glued to the computer for virtual learning, the campers were ecstatic to see their old friends, meet new ones, and enjoy being children again. Camp was a much more scaled back version of itself this year due to the restrictions placed on us that were beyond our control, but that did not seem to bother our campers in the least. They went back to basics, playing sports outside, building forts, letting their imaginations run wild, and having FUN! The Greater Morristown YMCA is so fortunate to have been able to provide this much needed outlet for the children and also for their parents, who were so appreciative and thankful as by mid-summer, many parents had been summoned back to their offices. We would like to thank the camp counselors, supervisors, and Camp Director, Christine Wyckoff, for their hard work and dedication in allowing this camp to operate smoothly during such a crazy time. We're happy to report that over the 7 weeks of camp, there were NO cases of COVID-19. Our staff took every safety precaution seriously and followed the CDC guidelines, procedures and protocols to a tee. We are currently in the process of planning our 2021 camp season and registration will begin in January 2021. There will be limited spots available for next summer. Please stay tuned for more updates.



Campers worked on a variety of different art projects throughout the seven weeks of summer camp. They were pros at wearing masks!

Below: a camper gives Carol Armour a giant hug to thank her for moving forward with running camp this year. Camp is always fun but this year it was a little sweeter and more meaningful.



# CHILDCARE UPDATE

As mentioned in Carol Armour's letter, **Children's Corner** remained open throughout the entire pandemic and the **Richard F. Blake Children's Center** opened in early June. We would like to thank our staff for their hard work and dedication in ensuring the children are safe and healthy and for remaining so flexible as the rules and regulations continued to change. The children and staff have adapted fabulously to the rules and regulations and we are so fortunate to be able to continue providing this essential service. If you haven't had a chance to read it, we encourage you to read an article printed in the Wall Street Journal on October 15, 2020. To summarize, according to a Yale Study of over 57,000 childcare providers across the United States, "children in daycare programs present virtual no risk of transmitting COVID-19 to adults."



Above: Angela Lepore with her grandchildren

# ANGELA'S PLACE

On September 8th, we were thrilled to open our new childcare center, **Angela's Place**, at 6 Saddle Road in Cedar Knolls. Home to 45 children from the Morris School District Preschool Expansion Program, Angela's Place was named for **Angela Lepore**, a champion for the education of young children. A volunteer and contributor for many years, Angela was the loving wife of our Chairman, Don Lepore. Both Angela and Don saw the rising need for childcare back in the 1980s when more and more women were heading back to the workforce and needed quality childcare. We miss Angela every day but know she is looking down on our children and keeping them safe.

# HARMONY HOUSE CLOSURE

## CHILDCARE TESTIMONIALS

We are sad to announce that due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we had no choice but to temporarily close our beloved **Harmony House**, our center dedicated to those suffering from cognitive impairments. Located just off of Main Street in Madison, NJ, Harmony House was the brain child of Margaret "Peggy" Heller, who lovingly opened this center to help families with the monumental task of caring for family members suffering from these dreadful diseases. Harmony House provided respite for approximately 20 friends, Mondays through Fridays, and we are devastated to see it close. We thank all of our families and supporters since we opened 6 years ago and we hope that one day, we'll be able to reopen Harmony House and keep Peggy's dream alive.



2020 has been a particularly hard year for everyone, especially working parents and children. The stress and anxiety alone has been felt by all, old and young. When the pandemic hit and we were forced to close, we applied to the State of New Jersey to allow us to help parents who were fighting the virus on the front lines, as essential workers. Children's Corner, our childcare center for those working for Morristown Medical Center, remained open throughout the duration of the lockdown. In the beginning, much more was unknown than it is now, however the essential workers were tasked with the problem of helping fight the virus or staying home to watch their children. We are so happy to have been able to provide our parents with this care and we thank them for trusting us to keep their children safe. We are so thankful to have received positive feedback from our parents regarding the care we were able to provide. Here are a few testimonials. Enjoy!

"When the world around us was full of uncertainty, we were confident in our children's safety, education, and development while attending Children's Corner. With both of us working full time throughout, it was great to have Children's Corner there for us. We appreciate all they have done with the adaptations within the building and the new protocols, to be able to continue to provide us with the best and safest childcare. It is also truly admirable the fact the staff, despite all the changes and new protocols, remained upbeat, positive, and engaged throughout. We are truly thankful we were able to rely on Children's Corner to be able to bring a sense of comfort, calmness, and familiarity to the chaos that surrounds everyone's lives with the Pandemic." -- Greg

"I honestly do not know where to start when it comes to the Children's Corner. They have been the only positive in 2020 and I am so thankful for the whole team! They took in my two young boys when our old daycare closed due to the pandemic. I was a mess because my husband is a detective and neither of us had the ability to stay home during the pandemic. From day one, the boys have been welcomed with open arms and warm hearts! The transition to a new place, for me and the boys, was so smooth and we all love our new home. During this crazy time, Children's Corner is the only constant and I know my boys being there is the best situation for everyone. They have had a great time meeting new friends, learning new skills and developing into little men. I cannot thank the entire team enough for their efforts in making things feel normal and taking at least one stressor away from us parents!!" -- Jodi

"I cannot say enough about the professionalism and commitment the YMCA Children's Corner staff exemplified during the COVID pandemic. Their persistence in providing a safe and caring environment during this time was immeasurable. Their presence and effort were invaluable to the healthcare workers that relied on them each day. I am so thankful for each and every one of them." - Brittney

## OUTDOOR FITNESS CLASSES

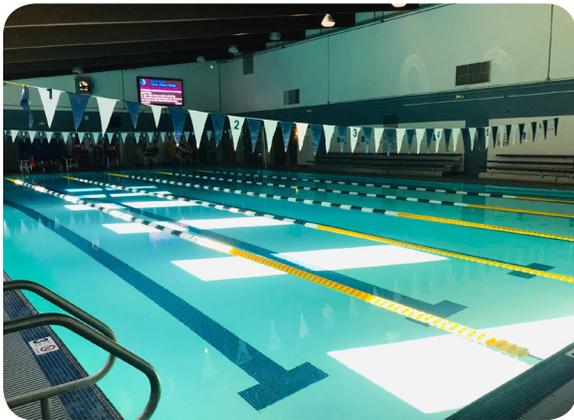
When we started our outdoor classes on June 16th, we were thrilled to see many of our members return. It had been a long three months for everyone, and you could tell members were eager to get back into shape and see their friends, albeit while socially distancing. We would like to thank our Fitness Director, Kelly Schweighardt, for her hard work in planning the weekly schedules as well as lugging the fitness equipment in and out when necessary. Kelly has gone above and beyond to ensure our members have a great work out, physically, emotionally, and most importantly, mentally. We would also like to thank all of our instructors who volunteered while the YMCA was still closed. Since reopening on September 8th, more members have come back and we have been able to add more classes like spin and chair yoga. To date, we've held over 256 classes and had over 3,371 participants. Mother Nature is our only obstacle and with the rain over the last few weeks, we would like to thank our members for their patience and willingness to work out inside with masks on.



# AQUATICS: LAP SWIM, SOLO WATER FITNESS & SWIM TEAM

We are so happy to see our lap swimmers return to the pool and we are thrilled to help provide a physical release during these trying times. Due to lap swimming's popularity, we have continue to add sessions in order to allow our members to swim on a daily basis, should they choose to. We have approximately 120 slots per day, and 51 sessions per week, Mondays through Saturday mornings. We recently added Solo Aqua Fitness for those members who used to take Water Aerobics classes and miss getting into the pool each day. We have had a wonderful turnout and we are thrilled to see our mermaids return! We would like to thank our Aquatics Director, Alanna Van Steyn, for making it happen!

The Greater Morristown YMCA Swim Team is pleased to report that we have 88 swimmers for the 2020-2021 swim season. The team is happy to be back in the water practicing, while following the CDC guidelines and protocols.



# NEW STEAM ROOM!

Another silver lining this year was the completion of our brand new steam room! It was a long time coming, and we are so happy with how it turned out! We hope our members can enjoy it sooner rather than later, we think you will be happy!



# SURVEY RESULTS ARE IN!



# MEMBERSHIP SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to all who participated in our short membership survey. We have taken your feedback and tried our best to implement your suggestions wherever we can, for example, earlier opening hours during the week. Some of the requests we received are out of our control, including use of showers after working out for those who are non-lap swimmers. We continue to interpret Executive Orders and will be sure to open up what we can in compliance with the orders. Thank you in advance for your continued patience and understanding! We will continue to keep you updated on our cautious reopening. Come in and see what we've done to provide you with a safe environment to work out in.

# YMCA HAPPENINGS



## FLU SHOTS

On October 21st, the GMYMCA partnered with Shop Rite pharmacy to offer flu shots in our lobby. We are happy to report that over 28 flu shots were administered in the span of 2 hours. We wish you a flu-free season!

## TOURS

Are you new to the area or did your other gym close permanently? Come and visit us for a mask-guided tour. You can either call our Member Services Desk to schedule a tour or you can simply drop in during our operating hours.

## OPEN AREAS

The pool is open for lap swim and solo water fitness only (reservations required); large fitness center, Circuit Rooms 1 & 2, men's and women's locker rooms (restrooms and sinks only), basketball gym (see website for details).



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# UPCOMING EVENTS

#### THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE AND DROP

The **Greater Morristown YMCA** and **Interfaith Food Pantry** are partnering together for a **Thanksgiving Food Drive and Drop**, to be held on **Saturday, November 14th from 10:00am-2:00pm**. Simply leave all the food donations in your trunk and our Greater Morristown YMCA Swim Team volunteers will take them out - you never leave your car! Where: The Greater Morristown YMCA driveway. Help us reach our goal of 50 turkeys/hams and 2,000 pounds of food. Happy Thanksgiving!

#### TRY THE Y FOR A DAY!

Nervous about rejoining or looking for a new gym? The Greater Morristown YMCA invites you to come and work out for **FREE** for the day to see what protocols and procedures we have implemented. You must register for lap swim, solo water fitness, or outdoor classes. Exercise is extremely beneficial on a regular basis, and even more so during stressful times we find ourselves in. Daily exercise can help boost immunity to help fight viruses as we head into flu season and the winter months. Please call the Membership desk for more information during operating hours.

#### THE HOLIDAYS ARE JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

What better gift to give this holiday than a membership to the **Greater Morristown YMCA**! After such a stressful year, give friends and family the gift of health and happiness and a positive outlook on 2021.