



THIS IS Y.

A Newsletter for Donors, Members, Volunteers and Friends of the Y • November 2021

Join us in the Campaign for a New Y

The time is now!

THIS IS Y Community Phase co-chairs Julia Stiltner and Kendra Goldberg invite you to be an instrumental part of the new Y. See PAGE 2.

PROJECTED GROUNDBREAKING
July 2022

PROJECTED GRAND OPENING
December 2023

BUILDING A THRIVING COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE REACHES THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

Your Y extends a warm invitation to take part in the **THIS IS Y** Campaign for a new Y facility, which is now **\$5 million away from its fundraising goal!**

Despite a pandemic that impacted operations and fundraising plans, the new Y is **closer than ever to its \$42 million goal.**

"We are so fortunate to have such dedicated supporters infusing this project with energy even through a global crisis that overwhelmed our daily operations," says Eugene Family YMCA

CEO Brian Steffen. "The building of a new YMCA in Lane County is a long-awaited dream for so many. This last push is like putting the final touches on a masterpiece. **The community's vision and commitment will be realized soon** when fundraising is complete and groundbreaking begins."

The Eugene Family YMCA anticipates breaking ground at the new facility location at 24th Avenue and Hilyard Street in July 2022. Construction is

continued on PAGE 4



THIS IS Y Community Phase Co-Chairs



JULIA STILTNER

Daughter of the late Liz Chambers, third-generation trustee of the Chambers Family Foundation



KENDRA GOLDBERG

Daughter of the late Scott Chambers, third-generation trustee of the Chambers Family Foundation

Help Us Build Social Capital with a New Y

We are thrilled to lead an effort to **raise the final dollars for a new Y**, truly a community center for every age, ability, race, belief, religion, gender—for everyone!

The new Y will be the equivalent of the village public square, a place that serves as a focal point for public life, where the people of Eugene will **spend time connecting, sharing victories** and talking about future goals.

The Y will be a place where the network of relationships among people that enable a society to truly thrive are built and strengthened. More than a gym, it will be a dynamic space for community to be built.

It's at the new Y that children will learn social skills, experience academic success, form lifelong peer relationships, gain confidence around the water and witness healthy habits in action. Here, in the new Y, seniors will connect with friends at the same time that they strengthen their hearts. And it's **a place where parents will know their child is safe** and engaged while they grab a group exercise class to focus on their health.

We understand the need for the new Y. We are both moms to three young children and operate our own businesses. We know the struggle to find **time for self-care and healthy habits**, the difficulty finding quality child care and the need to have a friendly smile from someone who is there to help you improve.

The current Y facility, built in 1955, is outdated and too small to accommodate the community's need for a town square. We are committed to seeing this vision become a reality, which is why **our foundation has committed \$1.5 million** to the project and why we are volunteering our time to co-chair this final fundraising phase.

Right now, all of us have the opportunity to bring to reality a much-needed community center that will serve hundreds of thousands of people of all ages each year. **Your donations will have a profound impact on the THIS IS Y Campaign.**

We are in the last steps of a marathon project. Passion, energy and dedication have gotten us this close. Now we need the involvement of thousands more to get to the finish line. **Now is the time** for individuals to get involved if they haven't already.

Join us!

THIS IS Y.

Y Pool and Community Vital for Melica's Health

Melica was 6 when she started swim lessons at the Eugene Family YMCA.

Like most families, Melica's mom wanted her to be safe in the water. But there was also a more urgent reason: Melica had been diagnosed with Prader-Willi Syndrome and **needed the water to strengthen and stretch her muscles** and ward off extra weight.

Prader-Willi Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder, left Melica with low-muscle tone and an irrepressible hunger.

"When Melica was diagnosed, the doctor told me, 'the pool is going to be her friend'," says Melica's mother, Jane. "In fact, **the pool is essential to her wellness.**"

When COVID-19 shut the Y facility and other local pools, walking and virtual classes weren't able to fully offer Melica the exercise she needed. Being sedentary led to significant health problems, including sciatica and digestive issues.

"Melica had to undergo a colon surgery during the pandemic because of lack of exercise," Jane says. "When you have low muscle tone, walking is very difficult and can't provide all the fitness. Plus, **swimming is something she loves.**"

Melica, 22, remembers when she started swim lessons with Y staff Sabrina Hershey Black, now the Aquatics Director.

"She would have me find the animals painted on the wall and swim to them," Melica says. **"It was magical. She made it so fun."**

Sabrina's fun swim lessons were also strategic and educational: Melica knows every swim stroke and how to do flip turns. Even the swim team that practices at the Y is impressed with her form.

Melica also goes to aqua aerobics and loves aqua Zumba. She enjoys soaking in the hot tub after a



Melica and her mom, Jane

good pool workout, and she makes friends while using the locker room afterwards.

"I know the lifeguards really really well," Melica says. "I know many other people at the Y, including some with Prader-Willi Syndrome too, and I know other Y staff. **It is also my social place.**"

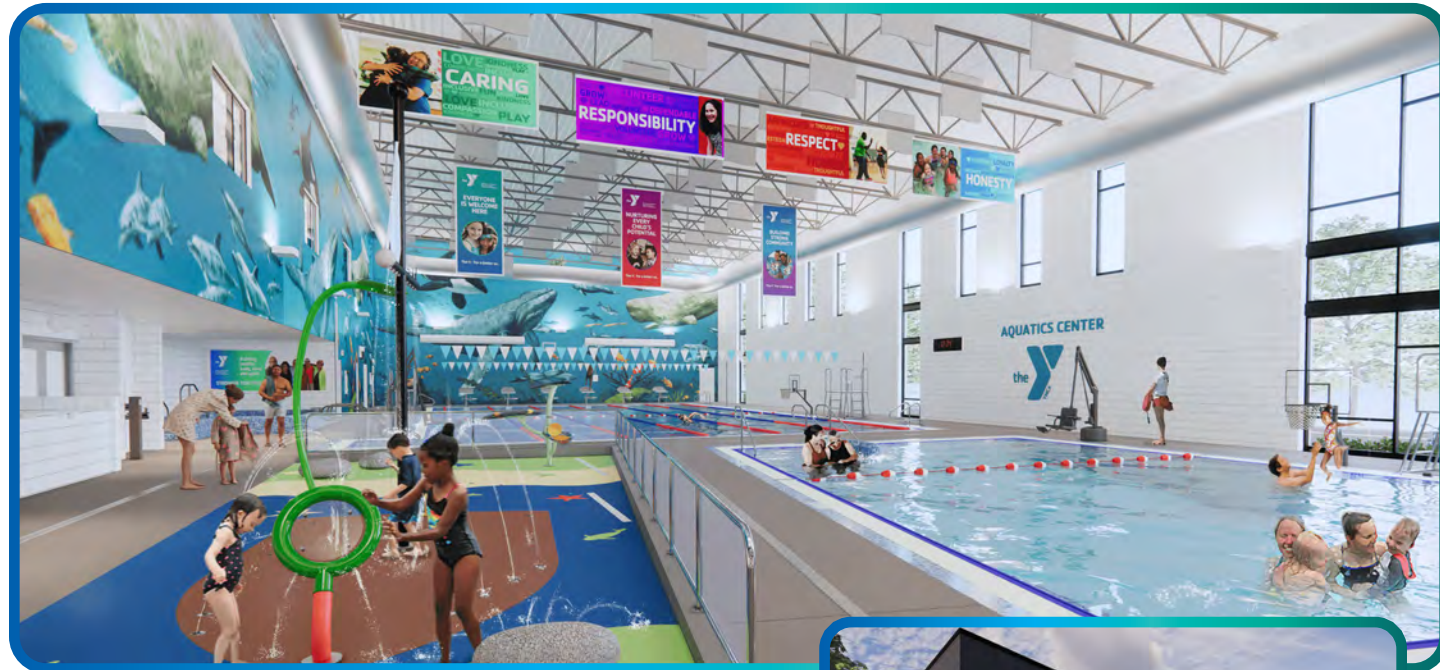
Before the pandemic, Melica spent time in the steam room and sauna. She took yoga classes. She walked to and from the Y and home every day.

"It is total community for her," Jane says. "She feels safe there. The staff know her—they are even aware of her eating disorder and how to keep her safe from food. We are so grateful she is part of the Y community."

Now, even with restrictions related to COVID, including when reservations were required for her favorite classes, Melica has continued to go to the Y at least 4 times a week.

"I wouldn't be who I am without the Y," she says with a bright smile.

Join us in the Campaign for a New Y



Aquatics Center: Space to build confidence around water, strengthen muscles through low-impact fitness, restore movement with rehabilitation in a warm-water pool and promote lifelong skills in a 6-lane lap pool.

continued from **PAGE 1**

expected for 17 months, with an anticipated grand opening in December 2023.

“There is no better time to participate in our THIS IS Y Campaign than now,” says Chief Development Officer Danielle Uhlhorn. “Raising \$5 million now is the final action needed in this herculean effort. We are confident we will



Inviting, warm spaces allow people of all ages to connect, socialize and gather.



North entry on 24th Avenue and Hilyard Street

quickly meet our goal because this community understands the Y’s impact on youth development, health and wellness, and response during a crisis.”

To help inspire the final \$5 million and formally launch the Community Phase of the campaign, **a \$500,000 matching challenge has been offered by an anonymous family whose children received financial assistance to attend the Y’s child care programs.** The family will match \$1 for \$1 all new donations and pledges up to \$500,000.

“I don’t know what I would have done without the Y’s help—my family’s story could have been so different,” says the donor, who used the YMCA’s



Health & Wellness Center: Ample room for independent or coached fitness routines and classes to ensure all abilities can grow strong.



Encouraging movement and activity with 3 group exercise rooms and a spin studio to keep people active and connected.



A Club House and Learning Lab for youth to explore, invent and grow their minds!



Ample bicycle and vehicle parking for easy access to the facility.



A 3-lane indoor track for safe jogging and a gym, where youth and adult sports keep people active and engaged.

fitness and child care services during a financially difficult period in their life and was able to complete a college degree due in large part to the support from the YMCA. **“The Y has been a multi-faceted support system.** It’s helped me grow as a parent and community member, and my kids have all benefited from the children’s programs—they are all civic-minded from growing up at the Y.”

Now, years later, this donor wants to extend the Y’s reach to other families that are in similar need.

“The new Y will help countless families who need a guiding light during a difficult time,” the donor says. **“We are grateful to be able to contribute to such a meaningful expansion.”**

Be a part of this incredible project.

DONATE TODAY.

For other creative ways to give, see the back page.



THIS IS Y.

The Y is an Invincible Summer to James

James Ericksen-McCrea, 33, still remembers the adventurous, exciting feeling Y summer camps gave him when he was a boy.



"There were long hikes, rafting, mountain biking," he reminisces. "I learned to love being outdoors and experiencing new adventures. **I have a wild heart from my time in Y camps and an appreciation of the wilderness.**"

James became a counselor-in-training (CIT) as a young teenager, and then he spent years as a camp counselor passing along what he learned as a camper. He has continued to explore the incredible outdoor spaces in the Pacific Northwest, now with his fiancé Mandy, whom he proposed to during a camping trip this summer.

"I still try to bottle that feeling that camp gave me," he says, laughing.

James also worked as a YMCA afterschool teacher during the school year—helping kids with homework and leading them in fun, physical games to release their energy. It's there that he learned how to resolve conflict, manage kids' emotions and expectations, and help them talk through problems—all keys to emotional health.

"The core values of the Y stick with kids," he says. "It gives a framework of ethics that is digestible for young minds."

Now, James can be found at the Y almost every morning for an hour lifting weights, playing basketball or doing yoga. **He credits the Y with teaching him how to lift weights safely, prevent injuries and lose weight in a healthy way** (he lost 140 pounds between 2017 and 2018!)

"I learned practical tools for success at the Y," he says. "I've had such a breadth of experience here, it is hard to sum up. But I hope that one day I'll have kids in camp here and then **I'll be an old man sitting on the Y steps.**"

James points to the lifelong friends he made in camp, working at the Y and staying fit and healthy through the Y as evidence of its power for every day people.

"It truly is a community center. I don't think of it as a gym," he says. "Philosopher Albert Camus said, 'In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.' **The Y represents the invincible summer to me.**"



**SPONSORING THE
EUGENE FAMILY YMCA**

Your Y Knows Exercise is Good Medicine for Cancer Patients

Eugene Family YMCA staff found an innovative solution to serve cancer survivors when the COVID-19 pandemic halted the in-person LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA program: a series of specific **fitness videos for those recovering from chemotherapy, radiation, surgery and other cancer treatments.**



"It was heartbreaking to have to tell people we couldn't offer the program during the shutdown. **Cancer didn't stop during the pandemic and loneliness didn't stop—**

isolation and loneliness only got worse," says Colleen Hogan, Program Coordinator for the LIVESTRONG at the YMCA program. "This video series is a gift to our community and the world at large. We looked at what we do in the 12-week program and we wanted to make sure we met all of those same milestones in a video series."

Colleen, Y Health & Wellness Director Kim Miller, and program instructor Lisa Milton evaluated proven post-treatment exercise and self-care content for the creation of 6 videos covering **lymphedema, range of motion and balance, cardio and strength training, and meditation.**

"Exercise can be as good as any pill I prescribe and is sometimes even better for my patients," says Dr. Joseph Fiorillo, an oncologist with the Oregon-based Willamette Valley Cancer Institute. **"I prescribe exercise because it helps the healing process during and after treatment and helps prevent recurrence of disease."**

This video series fills the gap for patients who have been unable to join cancer survivor programming."

The Y anticipates a surge of cancer patients and survivors seeking support and services over the next year as cancer diagnoses rise because individuals are returning to regular screenings and doctor appointments post-COVID.

"We anticipate a great need to serve more cancer survivors than ever before," says Heather Hodge, senior director of Community Health at Y-USA. "The RECLAIM videos are a great example of the Y's incredible reach across the country. The Eugene Family YMCA is meeting the needs of their community—in this case, cancer survivors—and, thanks to our YMCA network, able to share these resources with all YMCAs for similar use."

"I often advise light exercise with trained specialists because it improves my patients' quality of life and, ultimately, their outcomes. Pre-COVID, I recommended LIVESTRONG at the YMCA; now, I send my patients to the RECLAIM videos because it is a COVID-safe cancer exercise series from a trusted source."

—Winnie Henderson, MD
Oregon Surgical Wellness

This project was possible due to a \$10,000 grant from Texas 4000, a nonprofit charity bike ride focused on cancer research, and Turell Group, a marketing, digital and communications agency, that generously donated video production and editing services.

Closer than Ever: Join Us and Donate to Your New Y!

Your support is critical for the completion of this campaign, which will help thousands more individuals find health and wellness in Lane County!

If you are interested in supporting the campaign for a new Y, consider the following:

- Make a one-time or monthly recurring donation
- Checks can be made payable to the Eugene Family YMCA, 2055 Patterson St., Eugene, OR 97405. Be sure to include "New Y Campaign" on the memo line.
- Online donations can be made by using your camera app on this code, or by visiting eugeneymca.org/donate
- Consider a letter writing campaign to friends, family and colleagues inviting them to join you in the campaign for a new Y
- Donate appreciated stock



Expand your impact by considering a multi-year pledge:

\$10/month for three years = \$360
 \$25/month for three years = \$900
 \$50/month for three years = \$1,800
 \$100/month for three years = \$3,600

QUESTIONS? Contact Chief Development Officer Danielle Uhlhorn at danielle@eugeneymca.org

THIS IS Y.

Art for All Wall Showcases Local Photographer



Local Photographer Blake Robertshaw, longtime Y member, offers a new way to see the Oregon landscape in his photography exhibit on the Y's Art for All Wall, up until Dec. 3.

"From the airplane, I can see the enormous influence we have on the landscape; our story is being carved onto ancestral lands. **My hope is that by sharing these images with you I can show you what lies beyond the tree line,**" he says.

Blake grew up in the high desert of Eastern Oregon but left for the U.S. Coast Guard operating search-and-rescue lifeboats. He draws upon that experience as well as that of becoming a pilot for his artwork.

"Flying aerial firewatch, navigating the sea, and hiking throughout Oregon have led me to a myriad of captivating views: some extraordinary and others alarming," he says.

The Y's Art for All Wall showcases the creativity of local artists, inspires discussion



of relevant pressing issues, and embodies the Y's core values and mission. **The next exhibit will feature Y staff member and local artist Sarah Finney's Faces of Hope collection.**