



EXPANDING IMPACT BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

A Newsletter for Donors, Members, Volunteers and Friends of the Y • November 2024

The power of the YMCA's mission is never more evident than when new programs fill to capacity and a brand-new facility comes to life. Since its opening, **the Don Stathos Campus has been a hub of activity, making a tangible difference in people's lives every day.**

Donor support is essential to sustaining this impact in our community. With each generous contribution, the Y can continue to expand programs, maintain facilities and reach even more individuals and families. **Donors provide the vital resources that enable us to offer financial assistance to those in need,** ensuring that everyone has access to the transformative programs and services the YMCA provides. Together, we're building a stronger, healthier community.

Since our opening in December 2023, over 600,000 visits have been made to the new Y! In September alone, 10,740 class spots have been filled by individuals boosting their heart health, balance and strength. The pools offered 839 class spots for members choosing the low-impact, water-based environment.

Youth programs are thriving too. Over **540 children participated in youth sports** in September, learning not just athletic skills but the values of teamwork and sportsmanship. Additionally, **121 kids took swim lessons,** gaining essential water safety skills in the Aquatics Center.



Childcare remains a cornerstone of support for busy families. Our PlayZone for young children saw nearly 2,000 visits in September, while KidZone, designed for older kids, welcomed over 1,000 visits.

With the opening of the new facility, the Y has launched **innovative programs** like Pedaling for Parkinson's, designed to reduce symptoms of the disease, and 5-2-1-0 Move More, Eat Better, a nutrition and

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A NOTE FROM THE CEO & BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Y Community,

As we embark on this new chapter in the Y's journey, we are proud to present our strategic plan for the next three years. This plan reflects our unwavering commitment to improving the well-being of our community, particularly in the areas of **mental health, social connectedness and inclusive programming**.

At the Y, we understand that **our community is strongest when organizations are focused on community listening, collaboration and innovation**. This plan is the result of such efforts and aspirations.

In developing this plan, we also sought to remain focused on our core areas of focus: **Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility**.

While our work has never been focused on facilities and buildings, the new Y has made it abundantly clear that spaces and places are central to expanding connections, programs, partnerships and opportunities. **Each month, the new Y has more than 60,000 visits as people seek to improve their health and wellness.** The new Y has also afforded the opportunity to launch new partnerships and services in transformative ways.



Aligned with our focus on expanding programs and services is our vision for expanding the spaces and places in which the Y can provide programs and services. To this end, **we will be strategically engaging in discussions with community partners, philanthropists and stakeholders** in order to ensure that the Y's services are able to have the facilities needed to meet the needs of the community—not just for the era of this strategic plan, but for the next 100 years.

We are confident that this strategic plan will guide us in making a lasting, positive impact on our community. Please scan the QR code to read your Y's full strategic plan.

Sincerely,

Brian Steffen
CEO

Matt Longtin
Board President



Walk It Off Expands Impact, Health Education

This past summer, more than 430 community members came together for Walk It Off with the Y, a free event designed to **build strong connections** among participants and local organizations while **promoting healthy habits**.



Janis Hayes and her sister were among the returning participants, having taken part in Walk It Off for several years.

"We're both slightly overweight and felt committing to Walk It Off was something we needed," Janis says. "We've done it in previous years, and it's been fun every time."

Each week, Janis' excitement grew, fueled by the guided walks and themed weeks that often encouraged participants to dress up. Her dog even joined in on the fun, making the most of the Dog Days of Summer theme, which featured partners like the Humane Society and The Training Spot, who provided valuable education on animal health and training.

"It was great meeting new people, and I even ended up being crowned 'Ms. Bling' during the last week," she laughed.

The event's creative themes, like "Bling It On," which earned Janis her playful title, helped break the ice among walkers, adding a fun opportunity to make social connections.

"This year's focus was on expanding the event's impact—to attract more participants, bring in a wider variety of community organizations, and offer activities that would appeal to families and kids," says Cass Averill, the Y's 2024 Walk It Off Coordinator. "We succeeded, with an **18 percent increase** in registrations and double the number of booths each week!"

Title Sponsor PeaceHealth joined each week with specialists from their various programs sharing important health information with the community.

"We're grateful for the chance to engage with community members and share ways to build healthy habits in such a fun, welcoming environment," says Susan Blane, PeaceHealth's Director of Community Health. "Partnering with the Y enables us to reach people in non-clinical settings, allowing us to offer basic health concepts in a less intimidating way."

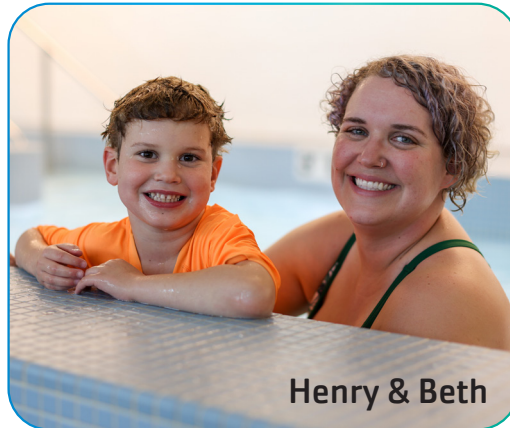


Special thanks to PeaceHealth, 99.1 FM The Beat, NBC KMTR 16, Slocum Center for Orthopedic & Sports Medicine, Bigfoot Beverages, McKenzie SewOn, Eugene Magazine, City of Eugene Parks and Open Space & Hunter Communications for generously sponsoring Walk It Off!

Overcoming Fears and Building Confidence in the Water

In 1909, a swimming enthusiast named George Corsan designed the first group swimming lessons at the Detroit YMCA.

Over a century after their inception, swim lessons continue to be a cornerstone mission of the Y, teaching life-saving and confidence-building skills to people of all ages.



Henry & Beth

"At first, it was really hard for him to get into the pool without me," recalls his mom, YiYi. "Some days he just sat on the side and watched, too nervous to get in."

The Y instructors understood his hesitation and gave him the time and space he needed to feel comfortable. As Bear gained confidence, he grew more eager to participate, especially thanks to the nurturing connection he formed with his instructor, Jayda.

Most weekday afternoons, the Eugene Family YMCA's Aquatics Center is filled with the joyful splashes of young swimmers honing their skills. **Since the new Y opened, 640 kids have learned to swim at the Y.**

"One of the most wonderful things about Y swim lessons is the instructors," YiYi explains. "Bear's been with Jayda for several levels now, and she really knows how to challenge him in a way that keeps him interested and having fun."

Henry, now 6, started his swim lessons at the Y two years ago while in the Friends preschool classroom. At first, he was terrified of the water.

"The Y swim instructors really understood his pace," explains Beth, Henry's mom. "They didn't just throw him in the deep end—they took away the fear and helped Henry gain confidence."



Bear & Jayda

Since overcoming their initial fears, both Henry and Bear have come to love swimming. **They're always having fun while mastering new water skills.**

"Henry is neurodivergent and has a lot of energy," Beth adds. "School can be challenging, but **he truly thrives at the Y.**"

Five-year-old Bear, the third child in his family to participate in Y swim lessons, has a similar story. He started in the Parent/Child classes and has now worked his way up to Level 3. However, the transition wasn't always easy.

YiYi plans to keep Bear in Y swim lessons until he becomes a confident, independent swimmer.

"He really feels comfortable at the Y," YiYi says. **"It's like a big family."**

A Summer to Remember

In keeping with the mission to turn no one away for an inability to pay, the Y offered **\$24,774 in financial assistance to 119 youth in summer programs**—from tennis camp, soccer skills camp and swim lessons to cooking, outdoor adventures and specialty camps!

Among them was 4-year-old Veronika.

Veronika and her mom, Iana, moved to Eugene from Ukraine two years ago. Like many families facing the challenges of adjusting to a new country, Veronika and Iana sought a space where Veronika could be a kid again—where she could laugh, play and socialize.

“I wasn’t looking for preschool,” Iana says. “I was looking for something fun, where she can have new experiences, sing songs and just be a kid.”

Veronika joined the Rainbows camp in August, and it quickly became a bright spot in her summer. Though she hadn’t attended the Y’s preschool, living nearby meant she was already familiar with the area and immediately felt comfortable.

For the first time ever, the Y offered specialty camps for cooking, youth with Down Syndrome, kids identifying as LGBTQAI+, and more!

“Kids need other kids, not just their parents,” Iana says. “In camp, Veronika could make friends and play games. She’s growing up and learning about the importance of social connections.”

One counselor, in particular, made a lasting impression on both Veronika and Iana.

“Kevin, her camp counselor, inspired me,” Iana says, smiling. “He did such a great job with the campers. He was in action all day: singing songs, entertaining them, and doing everything right alongside them. It’s a big job, and he did it all with energy and care.”

For Veronika, camp was more than just a place to play—it was a place to grow, learn, and feel a sense of belonging in her new home.

“Veronika is very independent and self-motivated,” her mom adds. “I hope she can go to Y summer camp again next year.”





Fall events at the Y: Welcoming Festival & Amazon Emergency Water Station Grand Opening

Both events received warm community welcomes and brought together folks of all backgrounds to have fun, learn and be together.



Three years ago, the Y first participated in Welcoming America's Welcoming Week by hosting its inaugural Welcoming Festival.

Welcoming Week is an initiative that encourages organizations and communities to **bring together neighbors of all backgrounds, fostering strong connections** and affirming the importance of welcoming and inclusive places in achieving collective prosperity.

Since then, the Welcoming Festival has grown each year, attracting individuals from all walks of life, including immigrants, refugees and long-time residents.

On Sunday, September 22, over 500 community members, neighbors, friends and newcomers gathered at the Y for the Y's 3rd Annual Welcoming Festival.

This year's festival featured live music and cultural performances, local food trucks, community organization tables, and a wide range of family-friendly fun. The event was truly a community effort, made possible by 25 community partners and 25 volunteers, who collectively gave over 162 hours of their time.

The festival's vibrant atmosphere captured the essence of the Y's mission—that **all are welcome and that we believe we are stronger together, especially when everyone in our community is accepted and celebrated.**

A special thanks to Oregon Pacific Bank for generously sponsoring the event.



Welcoming Festival



Amazon Emergency Water Station Grand Opening

A unique collaboration between the Y, the City of Eugene, and EWEB has resulted in the **Amazon Park Emergency Water Station, located in the southwest corner of the Y parking lot.** Opened in September, this is the sixth site operated by EWEB. Each station taps groundwater using a well and submersible pump, ensuring water availability during a significant natural disaster, like an earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

On September 28, the Y hosted a Grand Opening Ceremony with educational, family-friendly activities, where community members were invited to fill water jugs from the station.

"We want the community to recognize this site as a key emergency hub," said Brian Steffen, CEO of the Eugene Family YMCA. "People can get water, shelter, and access services here in times of need."

The Emergency Water Station adds a key component of emergency preparedness to the Y. The Don Stathos Campus was built to the highest seismic standards and has a commercial-grade kitchen and backup generator system to provide emergency power. Now with the water station, which three Y leaders are trained to help mobilize, **the Y is prepared to serve the community in the event of an emergency.**



To better prepare for an emergency yourself, the Y and EWEB encourage everyone to join EWEB's Pledge to Prepare—a 12-month blueprint for emergency preparedness. Scan the QR code to learn more!



Sisters Find Strength, Joy and Community at the Y

Sisters Pam, 73, and Michelle, 71, fell in love with the Y's **diverse classes, community events and welcoming staff** despite a long commute.

"I love hearing the sounds of kids in the pool area, splashing around and having fun with their parents," Pam says. "I like poking my head into classes just to see people having fun and getting fit."

The sisters regularly attend Flex & Flow, a group fitness class blending circuit training and yoga. Their laughter often fills the room as they turn circuit stations into dance routines or chat with fellow class members.

These connections make their experience more than just about fitness—it's about community. Having grown up in a sports-loving family, they value the Y as a space to stay active and engaged.

"Attending classes is as much a social commitment as it is a workout," Pam explains. **"It makes everything more fun."**



Michelle at Walk It Off

In September, Michelle joined the **LIVESTRONG®** at the YMCA program, a free, 12-week course designed for cancer survivors to rebuild strength, flexibility and confidence.

Though she felt nervous at first, Michelle found support from Flex & Flow instructor Kim and the welcoming group.



Pam and Michelle

"I was a basket case," Michelle recalls about her first day in the program. "I was in tears, but when I saw Kim's face, she made everything better. I'm so grateful for her."

The program's focus on the whole person, not just the disease, helps survivors move forward with renewed spirit.

"The camaraderie of going through cancer bonds you right away," Michelle says. "You don't even need to share your story—you just know what they've been through."



Since January 2024, your Y has offered 80,795 spots in group fitness classes.

Both sisters have also participated in various Y community events. Last summer, they joined the Walk It Off with the Y program at Alton Baker Park, and Pam has attended the new Alzheimer's Awareness Lecture series.

"The Y is a special place," says Pam. **"Everyone can thrive here and feel supported along their way."**

Little Athletes, Big Moves

Since March 2024, **435 young children** have been introduced to the world of sports through the Y's Itty Bitty Sports programs, which are designed to engage toddlers in fun-filled sessions that teach fundamental motor skills and foster a lifelong love of sports.

One mom, Judie, was thrilled to discover these programs for her 4-year-old son, Chaac, after struggling to find many options for toddler programs in the Eugene/Springfield area. Over the past year, Chaac has participated in Itty Bitty basketball, soccer, and the Y's newest offering: volleyball, which is played in the gym using pickleball nets.



Judie shared, **"The coaches are super friendly, and the program is well structured for wrangling toddlers."**

She particularly appreciated that after Itty Bitty soccer each child received a certificate, making Chaac feel like part of a real team.



The Itty Bitty Sports program has grown rapidly since expanding into the new Y, increasing from three to six sports and from one to four session a week. **Judie praised the program's short, four-week duration as a great way to introduce young children to sports.**

A special thanks goes to Jerry's Home Improvement and Carl's Jr. for generously sponsoring Itty Bitty Sports at the Y!

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lifestyle education program for families. **Since the new Y opened, more than 6,400 households received financial assistance for membership or participation in Y programs, and we're striving to help even more.**



GIVE TODAY

"While our work has never been about buildings, this new Y has shown us how vital spaces are to fostering connections, expanding programs and creating partnerships," says CEO Brian Steffen. "It's inspiring to see people achieving their health goals, strengthening family ties, and discovering their purpose. We're committed to being here for good, adapting to the community's evolving needs."

This impact is made possible through the generous support of our community.

Join us in being a force for good this end-of-year season and ensuring we stay **HERE FOR GOOD**. Consider a donation today!

Teen Strength Program Empowers

In December 2023, the Y's Wellness Center expanded from a 3,485 sq. ft. space at the Patterson St. location to a 14,372 sq. ft. facility at the Don Stathos Campus. **The 312 percent increase in floor space** means that it is a top priority to ensure newcomers feel comfortable and safe.

This is especially crucial for teens as they begin their fitness journeys and learn to use the equipment properly.

Just before the move, Health & Wellness Director Kim Miller and her team introduced the Teen Strength Program. This prerequisite course, designed for Y members aged 12 to 16, ensures that **teens receive proper training before accessing the Y's strength equipment**. Upon successful completion, participants gain full access to the Wellness Center.

"The Y is a place where everyone can feel strong," says Kim. "As a mom of two, I know how teens are drawn to the gym. They see lifting videos on social media and want to try it themselves. Without proper guidance on form, technique, and gym etiquette, they risk injuring themselves or others, or disrupting the environment. **This program equips participants with the tools to be healthy and responsible** while learning new skills, emphasizing both fitness

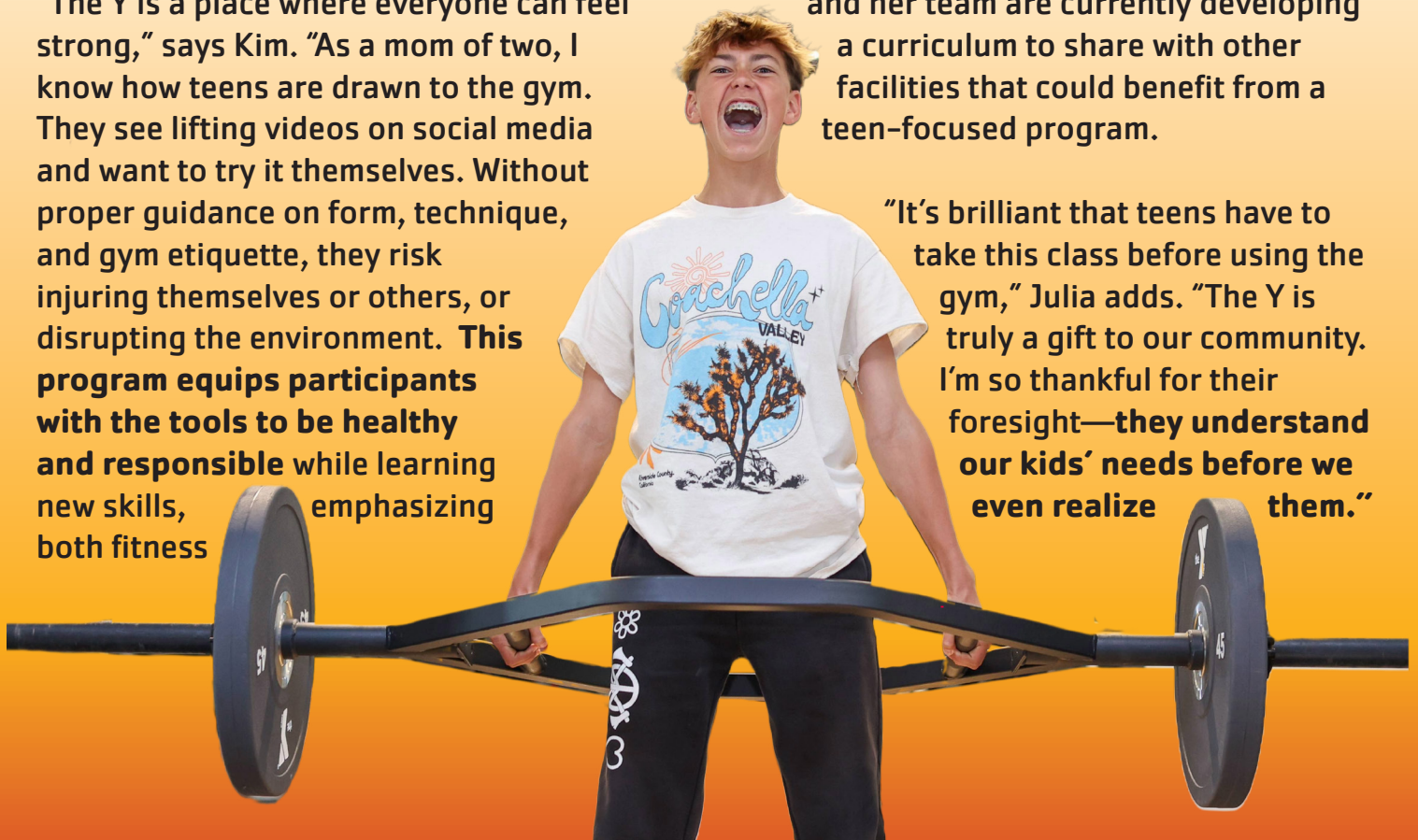
and the **core values of the Y** as they pursue their fitness journey."

For Julia McMorran, the Teen Strength Program seemed like a great opportunity for her son, Miles, to meet peers from other middle schools before starting high school. To her delight, it turned out to be even more impactful and community-building than she had expected.

"This program is so empowering," Julia shares. "Miles feels confident in his form and knows he can ask any of his instructors for guidance. He trusts them completely. **Best of all, he's found an entire community at the Y.**"

Since January 2024, 230 youth have participated in the Teen Strength Program—a true testament to its success and value to teens in the community. Kim and her team are currently developing a curriculum to share with other facilities that could benefit from a teen-focused program.

"It's brilliant that teens have to take this class before using the gym," Julia adds. "The Y is truly a gift to our community. I'm so thankful for their foresight—they understand **our kids' needs before we even realize them.**"





Building Community... One Dish at a Time

Kathy Pyfer's weekly routine involves going to the Y. Kathy regularly attends group exercise classes like Low Impact Aerobics and Strength & Stretch.

"Something's wrong with my day if I don't go to the Y," she says. "It feels like family, and you feel like you belong."

At the Y's Active Older Adult (AOA) Potluck, this feeling of belonging is celebrated. Every month, seniors from the community come together in the Kalapuya Community Room for **delicious food, conversation and to make new connections.**

"I think most seniors could use a little more socializing," says Kate Pryka, who frequents the potlucks. "The Y is a great place to do it."



In a world of digital screens, the AOA Potluck serves as a reminder of the power of face-to-face interaction, no matter age or ability.

Kari Porter, a long-time Y staff leader who hosts the potlucks, says that the potlucks are one of the many ways Y that the Y fosters community building. "Personal well-being has so many facets. Sure, fitness is an aspect—but **our social well-being is equally important,**" she says.

The AOA Potluck continues to thrive because it meets a simple yet profound need: the need for human interaction. In September alone, 23 folks gathered for the potluck. For Kathy, Kate and the many others who fill the Kalapuya Community Room each month, this potluck is more than a meal — **it's a communal reunion, one dish at a time.**



Be a force for good in our community!

Please join us in ensuring that **EVERYONE** in our community has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive at the Y by making a gift to the Annual Campaign. Your donation is not merely a gift—it's a partnership in nurturing the heart of our community.

WAYS TO GIVE:

- **Online or By Mail:** Scan the QR code or make a donation at eugeneymca.org/donate or mail your gift to the Eugene Family YMCA at 600 E. 24th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405.
- **In-Person:** Drop off donations at the Y's Welcome Center. We'd love to thank you in person!
- **Monthly Sustaining Gift:** Become a Y Champion by setting up a recurring monthly donation online at eugeneymca.org/donate.
- **Employer Match:** Increase your impact by checking if your employer offers matching gifts at eugeneymca.org/matching-gifts.
- **Gifts of Stock:** Multiply your impact by donating appreciated stock.
- **Legacy Giving:** Leave a lasting legacy with a planned gift to the Eugene Family YMCA through a donor-advised fund, IRA, or estate gift.
- **Corporate Sponsorship:** Partner with us as a corporate sponsor of a Y program or event!



IMPACT OF GIVING

\$50 DONATION

Build water safety skills or provide healthy snacks for youth

\$100 DONATION

Build confidence through youth sports clinics and leagues

\$250 DONATION

Provide enrichment activities for youth after school

\$500 DONATION

Support individuals in cancer survivor and disease-prevention programs



QUESTIONS?

Reach out to the Y's Mission Advancement Team at giving@eugeneymca.org

The Eugene Family YMCA is a 501c3 non-profit.
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