

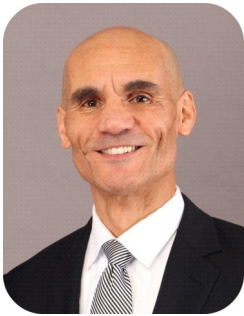


**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**YMCA OF GREATER HARTFORD
PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER
December 2011**

The YMCA of Greater Hartford supports the balanced development of the mind, body, and spirit of ALL people through programs and services that develop youth, promote healthy living, and demonstrate social responsibility.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



A Year in Review and a Wish for 2012

As 2011 comes to a close, we are provided with an opportunity for reflection. Coincidentally, this also marks the end of my first year as the President and CEO of this wonderful organization. This reflective time brings to mind certain words and sentiments I would like to share with you.

The first word is "**attachments**" and it is attributed to Lucia, a teen at the Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth and Family Center. In a recent conversation, Lucia was asked, "Why is the Y important to you?" She responded, "It provides me with attachments." When asked what she meant, she explained that the Y provides her with attachments to others at the Y, a safe haven, and many opportunities for growth. Lucia is attached to several people within the Y who provide her with support, guidance and love – these are her attachments. Thank you for being an attachment.

The next word is "**generosity**" and it is attributed to staff and volunteers who regularly demonstrate their commitment to, and support of, our mission. As a result of this generosity, we continue to be a relevant and deeply impactful organization. The generosity of many is the reason we are able to provide countless children and families with the opportunity to be a part of our "Y" family. A family that is caring, honest, respectful and responsible. Thank you for being generous.

The last word is "**compassion**" and it is attributed to the leadership of our organization who rallied to support children and families during the recent October snowstorm. Many of our facilities provided needed services to members and non-members alike. We became a sanctuary where the community was offered warmth, hot showers, and a place to recharge – literally and figuratively. The compassion exhibited by everyone enabled us to serve our community in a time of need. Thank you for being compassionate.

Each of these sentiments is best expressed by Faith Palmer, a Y staff person, who recently wrote, "I believe in the Y because it gives children a safe place to be. The Y is a home; the Y is a family to our members. I give to the Strong Kids Campaign so that anyone who wants to be a part of our Y family has the opportunity."

Thanks for making this a year filled with **attachments, generosity and compassion**. Have a wonderful holiday season and may 2012 be filled with love, joy, happiness and good health.

James Morton, President/CEO

THANKSGIVING AT THE Y

The Y is a gathering place where people can come together and celebrate with friends and family. At the East Hartford and Wilson-Gray YMCA's, friends and families came together to enjoy a Thanksgiving feast and a few quiet moments before the busy holiday season went into full swing.

(Pictured right: friends at the Wilson-Gray Y take a break from their Holiday feast to pose for a photo.)



AROUND THE Y...GREAT THINGS ARE HAPPENING EVERY DAY

BRAVING THE EARLY WINTER STORM

We thank you for your understanding, patience and support during our October snowstorm. Thankfully, our Downtown YMCA and Wilson-Gray YMCA were fully operational in the days following the storm. As each of our other Y facilities came back on-line, they were able to provide members and guests with warm meeting places, hot showers, and the opportunity to re-charge cell phones and computers.

We were touched to receive so many encouraging words following the storm, and would like to share some of them with you:

"Again, I commend you and your team for making the Downtown Y invaluable to so many. It makes me proud to be a member!"

"Love the Y! You guys are really coming through for the community between the open showers and Halloween do-over!"

"My kids had a great time there and it got our minds off the power outage for a bit. Thanks for doing that for the kids!"

PARALYMPICS MONTH

"I was eager to have one of our members with disabilities try a sport and experience the possibilities beyond her disability," said Chris Pallatto, VP of Membership and Strategy Development, as he shared the experience of one of our members participating in the Family



Cycling Ride organized in collaboration with the Sports Association from Gaylord Hospital during Paralympics Month.

"I was hopeful that she would enjoy the morning with her family and zip around in a fancy adaptive bike, provided by our partners at the Sports Association. I had hoped that she would have a great day and want to do it again. What I hadn't really visualized was the wild look of joy on her face at the end of the ride. I hadn't expected to hear such laughter. I hadn't expected to be part of a very personal, meaningful experience with her family."

WILSON-GRAY YMCA ACHIEVERS - HARLEM CELEBRATION



On Saturday, December 17, 50 Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth and Parent Achievers traveled to Harlem, New York, the birthplace of the YMCA's Achievers Program. While in Harlem, the group visited the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, viewing 2 exhibits: *Malcolm X: A Search for Truth* and *Romare Bearden: The Soul of Blackness/A Centennial Tribute*. The group also attended a performance at the Apollo Theater by *Ballet Hispanico*, featuring an exuberant homage to salsa legend Celia Cruz by the Artistic Director Eduardo Vilaro. Parent and Youth Achievers were able to experience and celebrate Harlem's rich historical and artistic relevance, past and present. Our Achievers wish to thank Fairview Capital's JoAnn Price for generously sponsoring this memorable experience.

LIVESTRONG® AT THE YMCA

ONE VOICE...so many stories.

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is more than a 12-week program that helps cancer survivors overcome the effects of fatigue and de-conditioning from the disease and its treatment. It is about a group of individuals who come together and are able to cry together, laugh together, and support each other as they go through the daily struggles of living with and fighting the disease. A few weeks ago one of our LIVESTRONG participants came into the Y not feeling her best. She is usually one of our most vocal and humorous members, but on this day she wasn't herself.

At last, she shared with us that her doctors were unsure about her treatment, so they had been experimenting with different medications. The medications had a tendency to make her feel tired and dizzy. At the end of the workout, however, she had a smile on her face, and color in her skin. When we asked her how she was feeling now, she said "So much better!! Half the battle is getting here!"—Just another great example of how exercise, cancer or no cancer, can make anyone feel great!





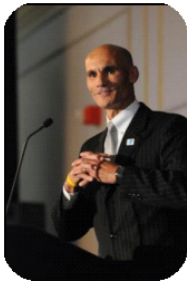
CONGRATULATIONS DAN and SENATOR WILLIAMS!

The Connecticut Alliance of YMCA's recognized our Chairman of the Board, Dan Tracy (pictured left), for his "active involvement, tireless dedication, and continued support for the YMCA of Greater Hartford," with its *Salute to Volunteers* award.

Senate President Donald E. Williams was also honored by the YMCA of Greater Hartford, on behalf of the Connecticut Alliance of YMCA's, as Legislator of the Year for his efforts to secure state funding for the construction of a full service YMCA in Putnam, Conn. Pictured (right) at the event are, from left to right, YMCA Capital Campaign Trustee Laurence Hale, Sen. Williams, Campaign Trustee Betty Hale, and James Morton.



JAMES at the Y-USA All-STAFF MEETING



The 2011 Y-USA All-Staff Meeting in Chicago touched on several subjects of importance to the YMCA movement. Neil Nicoll, CEO of the YMCA of the USA, indicated that the strategic focus of the Y for 2012 falls keenly on "Brand and Cause, Signature Programs, Diversity and Inclusion, and a Nationwide Campaign."

At any Y event, however, the strongest focus is on our mission to serve. James Morton, our CEO, was the keynote speaker. The Y-USA Newsletter reports that his "personal story was raw and riveting, but showed us all how impactful one adult can be in the life of a child. James left us with no doubt that we can make a difference."

YMCA CELEBRATES CHAMPIONS

Guests of Honor, Sean and Leigh Anne Tuohy, imparted the message, "Don't wait for people to ask you to help, go out and give." This enjoyable and exciting evening was made possible by presenting sponsor, Cigna, and a number of generous sponsors and attendees.



As the family that inspired the film *The Blind Side*, the Tuohys (pictured above with Mayor Pedro E. Segara and James O'S. Morton) shared their story and delighted their listeners. They "applauded the mission of the YMCA, and encouraged our guests to give a 'hand-up' to someone in need," said Sue Joyse, our VP of Development. The event raised over \$50,000 in support of Y programs that enhance youth and family programming.

REGIONAL COMMUNITY FAMILY YMCA: Closer To Construction

CME Associates, Inc. has contributed \$10,000 to the Regional Community Family YMCA Capital Campaign, bringing the total raised to \$8.6 million. Over 66% of the \$13 million needed for the construction of the new facility has been raised through grants and capital campaign contributions.

Photo (left to right) Paul Kelly, Campaign Vice Chairman; Laurence Hale, Newell Hale Foundation; James Morton, YMCA of Greater Hartford; John Guszowski, Co-Chair CME Corporate Giving Committee; Richard H. Strouse, Chairman Board of Directors CME; Evelyn Cole Smith, Co-Chair CME Corporate Giving Committee; Joseph Adiletta, Capital Campaign Corporate Division.



BOARD AND STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

BOARD MEMBER: Joe Sargent



"I BELIEVE IN THE Y BECAUSE.. it acts as a significant catalyst for delivering important opportunities and benefits to the community with a focus on enhancing children's capabilities, promoting healthy living for all ages and providing the leadership to promote social responsibility in effective ways for all its constituency."

A bit about Joe:

Joseph D. Sargent, Chairman, Bradley, Foster & Sargent. Joe serves on the finance committee and has been involved with the Y for more than 6 years. Joe first got involved with the Y because he felt he could help the Y continue to be financially viable. "The Y has been in the Greater Hartford community for more than 150 years and I would like to see it here for 150 more," said Joe.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Deborah Evans - Our new Vice President of Leadership Development and Staff Support. Welcome!

Marcy Yanus - New Executive Director of the Farmington Valley YMCA! Welcome to Greater Hartford.

Bob Nenna - Has a new position as the Executive Director of the Wheeler Regional Family YMCA.

Shawn Fongemie - Has become the new Executive Director of West Hartford/Tri-Town.

Jennifer Odorczyk - Is the new Child Development Director at the East Hartford YMCA.

AT THE Y, WE ARE GLAD TO IMPACT THE LIVES OF SO MANY...

A TRIUMPH IN ONE CHILD'S LIFE ~From the Wheeler Family Y Staff

Ray (not his real name) came to us three years ago as a new member of our all-day preschool program.

Ray frequently exhibited challenging behavior, including violent tantrums which led to crying that lasted for hours. As bad as his behavior got, however, our teachers, counselors, and program instructors knew we couldn't give up. Ray's grandparents, his legal guardians, were always appreciative of our efforts.

Remarkable improvements in Ray's behavior were evident this summer, as staff continued to work with him.

As the summer came to an end, a note card from his grandmother arrived in the mail. It stated:

To the Staff:

My husband and I would like to take the opportunity to thank each and every one of you that had any dealings with my grandson, Ray, over the last year and a half...You will never truly know how much your help and encouragement meant to us and Ray. Wheeler YMCA staff definitely lives out their mission EVERY SINGLE DAY even in the most difficult of all tasks. I am sure the life of one boy has been drastically changed for the better because you all cared enough to 'hang in' there with him. May God continue to bless all of you each and every day.

READ TO SUCCEED: One Participant Shares her Story



"My name is Sabrina Flintroy and I am a participant in the YMCA -Read To Succeed Adult Literacy Program.

Although I graduated from high school, I was illiterate. Thanks to

Read to Succeed I am more confident. I can read and my vocabulary has improved.

Now when I attend meetings for my children, the school staff no longer speaks over my head. I am able to participate as an equal. This makes me feel good about myself and makes me a better mom.

I want you to know how important the program is to me and that it must continue to provide for other adults like me."



A PARENT'S GRATITUDE

Priscilla Reyes, our Youth and Family Director at the Wilson-Gray YMCA, was recently struck by a mother's gratitude for the support provided by our before and after school program.

She received a letter from the mother that demonstrated how important and impactful our work can be in the life of a child. A portion of the letter is shown here:

*"I would like to let you know how very, **very** pleased I am with the work that your child development staff is doing. Their efforts have made my child's days less stressful and I am extremely grateful".*

"The values around which your program is centered are much more than just words or catch-phrases. My child is being treated with respect and I am watching him begin to believe in himself."

"The words "thank you" do not seem sufficient, but they are all that I have to give."

THE Y ... FOR ANY AGE

Marjorie Morgan joined our Indian Valley Family YMCA when we first opened. She is a frequent visitor of our facility. She loves walking with her buddy Joan Lange (another member) on our outdoor walking trail. Joan always makes me laugh when she says how quickly Marge walks the trail. The two ladies always start out walking together, but Marge always finishes first and beats Joan back to the facility! Then they come inside and walk on the treadmills.

Joan shared with me that, when she lost her husband in 2009, she went into a state of depression. She wasn't doing anything except laying around the house. She needed something in her life and decided to join the Y. After joining our facility and being around people, she said, "the Y has made a world of difference in my life". She has connected with members and this has made a significant difference. By the way, she reports that her cholesterol level has dropped to 200 since being active at our facility. She says the "Y has done [her] wonders!"

PUTNAM AND HARTFORD KIDS ENJOY UCONN GAME

On December 18th, more than 250 parents and children from Putnam and Hartford had lunch at the Wilson-Gray YMCA Youth and Family Center and were treated to the UCONN vs. Holy Cross basketball game. The tickets were generously donated by UCONN and St. Francis Hospital. The event was organized by Husky Sports and YMCA staff, and included kids from several local organizations. The parents, mostly fathers, and kids had a wonderful time, as UCONN beat Holy Cross by 37 points. Incidentally, and interestingly enough, R.J. Evans, the leading scorer and best defender for Holy Cross, is from the "Quiet Corner".

