

2017 ANNUAL REPORT

# HERE FOR GOOD

Serving Meriden, New Britain and Berlin communities

Meriden YMCA | 203-235-6386 | [meridenymca.org](http://meridenymca.org)

New Britain-Berlin YMCA | 860-229-3787 | [nbbymca.org](http://nbbymca.org)

Berlin YMCA Program Center | 860-357-2717 | [nbbymca.org](http://nbbymca.org)



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

DEAR FRIENDS,

As a member of the Y, you're committing to more than simply becoming healthier. You are supporting the values and programs that strengthen your community. At the Y, children learn what they can achieve, families spend quality time together, and we all build relationships that deepen our sense of belonging. The support of our members, volunteers and donors makes this all possible and we are very thankful for you.

Last year the Meriden and New Britain-Berlin YMCAs combined into one association to better serve our communities. Members are experiencing the benefits of the merger with additional child care options for working families, improvements to facilities, new group exercise classes, access to 24/7 fitness, more programs for all ages, and expanded STEM offerings to name a few. In addition we are continuing to improve operational efficiencies and maximize our talented team, purchasing power and resources to continue to be responsible stewards of your membership and program dollars, donations and grants.

The new association serves 10,000 members and the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA employs 737 employees.

Together we can change more lives. Please act today and give, join and volunteer.

Sincerely,

John Benigni, CEO

Marci Moskal, Branch Director, New Britain and Berlin YMCAs

Steve Markoja, Branch Director, Meriden YMCA



John Benigni, CEO



The Y.™ For a better us.™





## Youth Development, Healthy Living, Social Responsibility

Here are some of the highlights of the YMCA's work for our members and community:

### MERIDEN

- Served and delivered 800 meals on Thanksgiving Day, and on Christmas Day, plus Santa gave toys to families;
- Offered free Child Watch babysitting service plus free babysitting for Valentine's and Holiday Shopping Dates for our members with family and single parent family memberships;
- Opened a new Exploration Station with free Friday Night Play Time for members;
- Hosted Family Fun Community Events including Dr. Seuss Night, Movie Night at Mountain Mist and Family Fun Day at Mountain Mist;
- Added Jumpfit, Cize and Triple Threat group exercise classes;
- Added another session of camp and provided over 400 campers per day with the opportunity for outdoor fun and friendship (45% of our campers received financial assistance);
- Offered the use of the new camp cabins to area youth groups at no cost;
- Added ten new dance classes, plus Adult Tap and a Summer Dance Intensive;
- Continued to break the cycle of childhood obesity by providing the free PACE program to local families referred to us by their pediatrician;
- Moved Gymnastics to a new location, revised the curriculum and added more classes for the convenience of our members, which also opened up the basketball gym for more evenings;
- Offered our Rec Express program in two locations (bringing camp to inner city locations)
- Moved CrossFit to a new, larger location at 74 Cambridge Street and added equipment;
- Added more birthday party options including CrossFit, Gymnastics and Exploration Station birthday parties;
- Added new STEM offerings such as Google CS First and two new STEM camps
- Expanded program offerings to include sports programs for older children and revamped youth basketball and youth flag football programs;
- Installed new carpeting in Child Watch and throughout the Y;
- Raised funds and installed a new scoreboard for swim team meets.

### NEW BRITAIN AND BERLIN

- Expanded New Britain Y fitness hours to 24 hours 7 days per week for your convenience;
- Merged with the Meriden YMCA to offer members more including member benefits such as free play time at the Meriden YMCA Exploration Station on Friday nights for New Britain members with family memberships;
- Added new youth programs and classes such as Indoor Rock Climbing and NFL Flag Football, added more youth sports classes for older children;
- Added Silver and Fit, Cardiac Rehab and Enhance Fitness programs;
- Added new group exercise classes including S.W.E.A.T., Yoga, Bike-O-Vision, Silver Sneakers, Piloxing, Cut and Core, The Bottom Line, Intro CrossFit, Tai Chi and Chair Yoga;
- Added the Biggest Winner Weight Loss Challenge;
- Built a new cycling studio, built a new entrance for our Members-In-Residence, installed a new elevator, and improved the pool and pool area;
- Moved Child Watch to the first floor with a beautiful play scape and added Saturday hours;
- Provided high quality child care to children in New Britain and Berlin communities including opening the New Britain Child Care Academy for infant, toddler and preschool care;
- Added preschool classrooms for a new School Readiness program at our 50 High Street location;
- Added a Yoga Studio to our High Street location
- Expanded offerings at Camp Thundermoon
- Refurbished our basketball gyms. Come hoop it up with us!
- Added Group Exercise Classes, Little Chefs and American Red Cross Babysitting classes to the Berlin YMCA
- Added before and after care programs and enrichment programs to Berlin elementary schools.
- More to come! Expanded camp offerings for Summer 2017, parking lot improvements at New Britain YMCA and more programs planned.

# CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES

## Ilena's Story

**From her grandmother Rebecca Cajigas**

Ilena is a student at the Meriden YMCA Martin Gaffey Child Care Center on Crown Street. She is four years old and is in the Y full day preschool program.

"The Y program is a godsend and was recommended to us by the Birth to Three program. Ilena was in another program but I wanted something with more structure for her. I am so glad I found the Y. She has made progress, made friends, is thriving and looks forward to going to school.

I am a "single mom" taking care of her on my own. I can go to my job and concentrate on my work knowing that she is safe and well taken care of. The staff is wonderful!

Ilena likes her reading group and she loves the projects that she does in Ms. Kendra's and Mr. Andy's class. She is excited about learning to write her name.

Ilena also takes swim lessons at the Meriden YMCA on Saturday mornings and loves them. We will continue with summer programs.



## Amber's Story

**From her mother Beth**

My daughter Amber started at the Meriden YMCA's preschool program at the Martin Gaffey Child Care Center on Crown Street last summer. She has some developmental delays and has made great progress. We wish we had found the program sooner. Next year she goes to kindergarten and she does not want to leave Miss Kendra, Miss Liz and Mr. Andy.

The Meriden YMCA staff are invested in Amber's progress and get excited about her accomplishments. The staff feel more like extended family rather than a child care center. They want her to make progress just as much as we do!

The staff always goes the extra mile. Miss Kendra came to Amber's PPT to share information about Amber's classroom progress with everyone involved. It was so helpful to help get everyone on the same page.

I can focus on my work as a teacher knowing the YMCA staff is going to take care of Amber. The staff is wonderful, they make time to talk and make sure students get everything they need.

We are so glad the EIP program recommended the YMCA.



## Emily's Story

From her mother Kathy Lindeman

'I want to help kids. I want to be a camp counselor when I grow up.'

The Y came into our lives at the perfect time and has been wonderful for my daughter Emily. My daughter has difficulty focusing and the staff is absolutely wonderful with her. They treat her with respect, they understand how to work with her and truly care for her. They get her to be on task and give her many opportunities for positive interaction and help her with her social skills too.

Everything that the Y stands for the Y lives up to helping children and teens be better people. The swim staff, child care staff and the Camp Thundermoon staff are very professional. Emily loves summer camp so much that she stays there until the very last second of the last camp day so she could be with Miss D. Emily said 'I want to help kids. I want to be a camp counselor when I grow up.' It does not get better than that.



## Jack and Marni's Story

From their mother Pam Heeps

My kids first started with the camp program four years ago as Little Explorers and then at Camp Thundermoon. I was looking for a true summer camp program with great counselors and activities. The Camp Thundermoon staff is absolutely amazing.

I can tell that camp director Donelle Daigle spends a lot of time picking just the right people for her staff.

My son Jack has had almost all female instructors throughout his school career and other activities. It has been great for him to have male role models at camp (the female counselors are also awesome.) These camp counselors have had a big positive impact on Jack. He wanted to be like all of them – the way he dressed, wore his hair, everything. Many of the counselors work in other Y programs coaching youth sports and also in the aftercare program. My kids have them as great role models in many of their activities. It is the true definition of community.

Every summer my kids come home exhausted and happy each day from camp. They love it and I do too!

My children also attend the after school program at Griswold. We started with the half day program and added from there. Amy has been wonderful and very accommodating of my work schedule and need to add days. My kids enjoy time with their classmates doing fun activities and have an opportunity to play while I finish my work for the day.

I recently recommended the after school and summer camp programs to my neighbor. These programs are so beneficial for the kids and their parents there is no question when someone asks me about the program – I tell them you should absolutely sign their child up!





# CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES

## Rebecca's Story

My name is Rebecca Mailhot, and I am a proud member of the cast of Annie this year. I remember in 2008 when my second grade teacher passed flyers out to my class advertising the Meriden Youth Theater's production of Annie Jr., and I signed up because it seemed like something fun to do. I have been with this organization for more than half of my life. While MYT has allowed me to discover my love for theater and all aspects of performing, it has also taught me to have confidence, to believe in myself, to learn how to take responsibility and be a leader, and so many other valuable life lessons that I could not have learned anywhere else. It has allowed me to create friendships and bonds that I wouldn't trade for the world, and gave me the opportunity to not only do what I love, but do it with people I love. Thank you Carolyn for always believing in me ever since I was in Annie 10 years ago. I know for sure that I would not be the person I am today if it wasn't for this organization and all the people involved in it.



## HEALTHY LIVING

### Aida's Story

For adults such as Meriden YMCA member Aida Vazquez, getting in the pool meant facing a tremendous fear she had developed from a traumatic childhood experience at age ten when a family member held her under the water. "I was tired of being terrified of the water and not being able to swim with my husband and kids. I started by clutching onto the side of the pool wearing a float belt. The first six months was very hard because of my fear. Now I enjoy the water and swim and tread water. I am working with Megan to slowly become comfortable swimming under water. She works with me every week and is so patient. She holds my hand and takes me under the water for a little bit so I can learn to be more comfortable. Last year I was finally able to go into the water on vacation with my husband and kids. My family was so happy."

The Meriden YMCA continues to help youth and adults experience the joy and benefits of swimming, so they

can be healthy, confident and secure in the water. There are a variety of programs to choose from — group and private lessons, swim team, and aqua aerobics.

**"Swimming is not only a fun, healthy activity, but an important life skill for children and adults," said Megan Stegner, Aquatics Director at the Meriden YMCA. "Learning basic water safety skills is a great introduction to the world of swimming that often continues with swim lessons and competitive swim programs. For some adults, getting into the water may help them not only face their fear, but develop safety skills to help themselves and their kids in case of emergency, and grow into a love of swimming and being in the water."**

To learn more about the Meriden YMCA's swim programs, please contact Megan Stegner at 203.235.6386 or [mstegner@meridenymca.org](mailto:mstegner@meridenymca.org).

## Nancy Moorhad, past recipient of the New Britain–Berlin YMCA Healthy Living Award and 95 years young

I started coming to the Y rather late in my life and rather reluctantly at that, even though it had played a role in my family's life earlier. My son had worked there when he was in high school and my daughter's youth group conducted meetings there. She also read there regularly to one of the Y's residents, Fred Woodruff, a blind South Church member.

I discovered the Y after the YWCA announced that it would be closing its pool in 2005 and I had to find an alternate facility. While I was not looking forward to the change, the YMCA made it easy to become an instant fan. Everyone was so welcoming and the facilities were impressive. Since that time, the facilities have continued to improve even more— the fitness center, additional new equipment, the day care center, and the rooms upstairs. It is a cheerful, inviting environment that puts me into a positive frame of mind.

But, beyond the facilities, it is the group of people at the Y that make all the difference. The welcoming faces at the front desk, the caring instructors, and all the lovely people there, are what makes the Y feel like a community and not just a place I go to exercise and stay fit. I try to go regularly (Monday through Friday) at about the same time to take advantage of particular classes. I look forward to seeing both my instructors and these friends and sharing news and socializing. They have become like family to me, which is very important to someone who lives alone.

If I have to miss a few days because of weather or I've gotten a little cold or something, I truly miss going – for the health of both my body and my mind. AND, the amazing thing is – with all that is going on there – that THEY miss ME, too. I've had calls to check up on me when I've missed a few days, to make sure that I am doing okay.

Many of the instructors that I have had the pleasure to work with at the Y are clearly dedicated to what they do. They are experts in their fields and use their knowledge to work with us individually – even in the context of the group.

I've celebrated several of my birthdays at the Y – some impromptu and some planned. It was a most memorable occasion for me and I could not have done it without the help of those who run the Y.

**I believe the Y is a vital part of our community and reflective of it. It offers a place to learn about health and stay fit – no matter what one's age, gender, religion, or socio-economic status.**

If you were to visit the Y on any given day, you would see what a melting pot of our area it truly is. We have people from all walks of life and completely different backgrounds, but all sharing one common purpose – to stay healthy. We are brought together at the Y with this common goal, and, we bond new friendships there – that are so important to staying healthy.

I know that the Y serves our community by helping many local children and families in need who cannot manage the membership fees to use the facilities. This is a wonderful financial assistance program since good health should not be an option open to only those who can afford it. This allows all in our community to participate in the many enriching programs available at the Y.

I am proud to be honored by the Y. But, I believe that I owe much to the Y myself. It is a vital destination where I can build and maintain a healthy spirit, mind, and body. Nothing can replace it and I look forward to continuing to attend daily for many years to come. And, while the Y has served my children and me over the past 50 years, it is extremely important for all of us to ensure its viability and longevity. The Y is an essential resource that must continue to serve this community into the future. Thank you.

## Sandy Duffy, Meriden YMCA – Silver Sneakers Member

In April of 2016 I visited my doctor for my annual physical. He told me I was doing great for my age, except for my weight. He also said that, although I wasn't having any problems with cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes or other weight related issues, unless I did something it would only be a matter of time. My doctor gave me the list of medications for these ailments and said, "take a look at the side effects and decide what you want to do with your health." I was also told that I would likely develop issues with my joints and probably need knee and hip replacements at some point. Knowing people who have gone through these procedures this was not an appealing prospect.

That did it. The first thing I did was to join a physician-supervised weight loss plan. After losing fifty pounds it was time to exercise. My AARP plan included the

Silver Sneakers benefit and I joined the Y. Another member recommended personal training with Sharlene Labissonaire, who is awesome with her clients!

I've lost over 100 pounds with a combination of healthy eating habits and exercise. My goal is to lose fifty more. Sharlene has helped me build muscle, gain energy I haven't had for as long as I can remember! Plus we worked on getting past lingering shoulder and back pain I had from a car accident twenty years ago. My weight specialist says I've gone from having the metabolism of someone in their 90s to someone in their late 50s.

I don't intend to go back there or, for that matter, leave the Y.

**BEFORE**



**AFTER**





## 2016 - 2017

## MERIDEN YMCA HEAD START PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

### Funding

Federal: \$1,177,660, State: \$163,881, School Readiness: \$255,024. The federal approved budget:

- Personnel - \$752,591 which consists of salaries for program managers, content specialists, teachers, teacher's aides, and nutrition services, substitutes, clerical and fiscal staff;
- Fringe benefits - \$248,542 which consists of taxes for social security, federal, state, workman's comp, health, dental, life insurance;
- Supplies - \$19,843 which consists of office supplies, child and family service supplies, food service, disability supplies, assessments, paper products;
- Contractual - \$8,938 which consists of contracts services, computer financial support software to assist with budgets, monthly statements;
- Other costs - \$147,746 which consists of utilities, insurance, general building maintenance repairs, local travel, staff training, child services consultants, parent services, accounting, legal services, publications/ advertising and other minor expenses like the audit, payroll services, employee hiring, and administrative support.



# HEAD START PROGRAM

## Enrollment

We are funded for 161 children and fully enrolled on first day of school. The program served 177 children over the course of the year. The average monthly funded enrollment was 83.5% with actual monthly enrollment at 84%. There were 99.5% income eligible families and 5 of those were children were eligible due to being in foster care. Our 1 over income family was a child was receiving special education services through the Meriden Board of Education.

100% of enrolled children attending in the program are currently up to date with medical exams; except 1 for whom we are waiting for past due medical documentation. 100% of enrolled children attending have documented dental care. Vision screenings were done and of the children referred 14 children were diagnosed as needing prescription glasses not previously identified.

We expanded collaborative efforts with CHC Meriden for both on-site behavioral health therapy for families (started spring 2016), and dental hygiene services for

families (to start in the fall 2016). Two Dental providers (1 private practice & UConn Dental School/Farmington) as well as a number of dental students came for on-site visits with children and classrooms doing dental health and oral exams/topical fluoride varnish.

## Parent Workshops

Parents were actively involved and received training/workshops on: Pedestrian Safety; fatherhood nights; asset building including budgeting, banking information & saving workshop; early childhood; child development; health education; dental family literacy promotion; kindergarten transition and the breakfast with the principals event. cancer awareness; healthy cooking; basic first aid care; nutrition; oral hygiene, and adult vision screenings. Additionally WIC started coming to our school monthly to help educate & enroll families into the program. Additionally, newsletters were sent out on child passenger safety, pedestrian safety, foot care, oral health, nutrition, and just recently summer safety. We offered three workshops for parents and children who will be entering Kindergarten in the fall. We





discussed topic such as Literacy, Math and Science. At each meeting parents meet other families, ask questions about Kindergarten and with their child do activities around that certain topic.

## Preparing Children for Kindergarten

One of our goals is to prepare children for Kindergarten. Our program develops school readiness goals based on the Head Start Early Learning outcomes Frameworks, Head Start Performance Standards, State Standards, and end of year Pre-K Expectations, Kindergarten Readiness profiles, observations and Parent input. There were 12 specific identified school readiness goals. They focused on Approaches to Learning, Language, Communication and Literacy, Perceptual, Motor and Physical Development, Social and Emotional, and Cognitive / Mathematics Development and Scientific Reasoning. These are assessed and reviewed three times a year to ensure we are on target. Teacher's also plan kindergarten school readiness skills that are aligned to the CT Early Learning and Development Standards, such

as writing their name, patterning and some children begin learning site words. We continue to work with the Board Of Education. For our parents at Head Start we held our Annual Breakfast with the Principals. Parent's had an opportunity to ask questions to Board of Education staff about the transition to Kindergarten. At this breakfast we had a staff member from each school as well as some from central office. At this meeting parents were able to have small group meetings with the principals from the schools their children will be attending. We also continue to use a Help Me Grow-A-Road Map to Kindergarten for all families as they enter our program. These pamphlets target three different areas that will help children be ready for Kindergarten.

## Office of Head Start

We had new performance standards that came out in September 2016. There were new standards that took place immediately, or in the coming years. Therefore we are developing new policies, implementing new systems and standards.



## **MERIDEN YMCA**

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