

2018 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.

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 over 11,000 members and the Meriden-New Britain-Berlin YMCA employs 832 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 1 100 meals on Thanksgiving Day, and on Christmas Day, plus Santa gave toys to families
- Opened a new child care center with 27 preschool and 24 infant and toddler spots to help working families
- Completed the rigorous NAEYC accreditation process for The Meriden YMCA Early Learning Center in South Meriden serving infants and toddlers
- Hosted Family Fun Community Events including Dr. Seuss Night, Movie Night at Mountain Mist and Family Fun Day at Mountain Mist, Misty Night Halloween, Breakfast with Santa, and Free Scuba Discovery Days to learn about scuba diving
- Provided over 400 campers per day with the opportunity for outdoor fun and friendship during 10 weeks of summer camp with over 45% of our campers receiving financial assistance
- Added new performance area for summer camp theater program at Mountain Mist Day Camp
- Added enrichment programs for homeschool 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
- Offered free Friday Night Play Time for members at Exploration Station children's play area
- Added more Healthy Living offerings including Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program, PiYo group exercise classes, and Cooking Light classes
- Continued to break the cycle of childhood obesity by providing our free program to local families referred to us by their pediatrician
- Expanded gymnastics class offerings to include adult fitness class, and ninja warrior/pseudo-parkour class for teens
- Offered our Rec Express program in two locations (bringing camp to inner city locations)
- Added more CrossFit classes and hosted competition which included participants from CrossFit boxes across the state
- Added CrossFit All Stars Sports Conditioning program providing off season conditioning for softball, football, and soccer teams and leagues
- Added new STEM offerings such as Lego Robotics, Just Coding, and STEM Engineering and new summer STEM camps
- Expanded program offerings to include sports programs for older children and revamped youth basketball and youth flag football programs, and added volleyball travel teams New England Shock and New England Jolt
- Helped our local elementary school students have healthy brains and bodies as they participated in STEM, swimming and CrossFit Kids activities in their extended school day program
- Increased program offerings and helped promote events at the Augusta Curtis Cultural Center which is managed by the Meriden YMCA.

### NEW BRITAIN AND BERLIN

- Continued to offer New Britain Y fitness hours 24 hours 7 days per week for the convenience of our members
- Association members enjoyed access to three locations and a variety of programs and group exercise classes
- Completed Enhance Fitness certification to offer additional healthy living program for seniors
- Added new group exercise classes including POUND, Strength, PiYo, Kids Yoga to our new Berlin YMCA fitness location at 1 176 Farmington Avenue
- Helped members lose weight and improve their health in the Biggest Winner Weight Loss Challenges
- Repaved and made improvements to the parking lot for our members and guests

# COMMUNITY IMPACT AND IMPROVEMENTS

## NEW BRITAIN AND BERLIN

- Expanded offerings at Camp Thundermoon to include musical theater and STEM camps
- Served up to 40 students in our school readiness preschool program at the New Britain YMCA at 50 High Street and included a free family membership and food program with enrollment
- Offered Little Chefs and American Red Cross Babysitting classes at the Berlin YMCA
- Offered before and after school enrichment programs to Berlin elementary schools including Kids Yoga and Intro to STEM
- Added Pre Swim Team program for swimmers to improve their swimming and experience what a swim team experience is like to determine if they would like to join the Seals swim team
- Offered a fun family movie night at the pool called "Dive-In Movie" to offer a fun and inexpensive night out for families to spend time together
- Provided a home for up to 88 adult male Members-In-Residence at the New Britain-Berlin YMCA's Hart House Residency offering a caring, clean, safe, affordable, and enjoyable experience to those in need
- Provided swim lessons to over 300 kids and families
- Renovated Parker Hall Conference Center
- Renovated Women's Locker Room
- Painted the gymnasium and purchased new bleachers
- New signage on the outside of the building / landscaped
- Provided a day camp experience for over 200 kids per session at Camp Thundermoon.
- Opened a new Fitness Center in Berlin
- Provided youth sports programs at both New Britain and Berlin locations
- Provided before and after school care to over 480 children in the New Britain and Berlin communities.
- Provided adult volleyball and basketball leagues in New Britain
- Provided field trips to the elementary schools in New Britain
- Provided the end of year graduation party for Griswold School in New Britain





## Sadowski Family's Story

**From Andrea Sadowski**

My Y story starts with my Dad. He was on the board of the Berlin YMCA and they saw a need for a summer camp for the children of our town. A few years later Camp Thundermoon was born and has been a great place for the children of Berlin and New Britain to spend their summers ever since. My younger sister and I started there as campers and then worked for Camp Thundermoon as counselors every summer up through college. It was an amazingly rewarding experience for both of us and I am so happy that my kids now get to share in that experience as well.

My 11 year old daughter Madelynn and her 8 year old twin brothers Zachary and Brandon have done many programs at the Y, starting with Little Explorers and swimming lessons and moving on to basketball and soccer. It was here that they began to develop their love of sports and their competitive spirit. They were taught the basic fundamentals of the game and more importantly about fair play and what it takes to be a good teammate. This winter my boys tried the Alton Brooks Basketball League for the first time and my husband Dan was an assistant coach. He met some amazing people and I think that he had just as much fun playing in the pick-up games with the other coaches after practice as my boys did.

The staff of the Y are amazing, caring and compassionate. You can see in their faces that they really love kids and have such a great time working with them. They always greet you with a smile and more importantly I love to see how my kids' faces light up when they see them. Their swimming instructor Miss Ashley is terrific. It is not easy keeping 2 eight year old boys engaged and focused for an hour but she manages to do this and keep them smiling at the same time. My daughter said that even though swimming lessons are boring, Miss Ashley always finds a way to make them fun. All three of my kids are confident and skilled swimmers now and for that I am grateful.

Last but certainly not least is Camp Thundermoon. My kids attend all summer and I love that they come



home completely exhausted and in desperate need of a shower. I also love the diversity my kids get to experience here meeting wonderful friends from all different backgrounds. Their favorite part is participating in the specialty sports camps and getting to compete against Camp Mountain Mist of Meriden at the end of the session.

We have referred many, many people to the Y for various programs and it has and continues to be a great resource for our family.

## Evan's Story

### From his mom Jennifer Resto

I can't express enough what a blessing and wonderful experience being a part of the Meriden YMCA Martin Gaffey Child Care Center at 66 Crown Street has been. Evan was born 10 weeks early weighing 2 ½ pounds. We expected him to have delays and possibly be disabled so we immediately enrolled him into Birth to 3. At about 18 months we decided to enroll him in daycare to give him an opportunity to be around other children and different experiences. Due to his slow process and disabilities he had 3 staff members from Birth to 3 and the hours covered most of the day.

At around two years old he was diagnosed with Autism. We had a meeting with his staff and they prepared us for challenges we could expect. This included Evan not being able to talk and encouraging all of us in the household to learn sign language. They explained Evan would not make eye contact with others, he would not enjoy being around people or make friends like other children his age. We pictured a very sad and difficult future for our precious child. From age two to three Evan remained in daycare and did ok. He was learning new things and he was always very serious but was talking a little bit.

Before his 3rd birthday we started discussing preschool. We toured multiple programs and met with the Meriden Public Schools because he was going to be receiving special education, speech and other services. We instantly felt most confident with the YMCA on Crown Street but we were going to have to be placed on a waiting list for several months. While waiting to be called the current daycare unexpectedly shut down leaving us with the decision to put Evan in one of the other schools or keep him home until Crown St. had an opening. With concerns of him falling behind we enrolled him one of the programs that had an opening. As a parent we try to teach our children as much as we can, as a mom that works full time I have to trust that I'm leaving my child in a safe environment that's best for him. After just one day I knew it was not the right fit for Evan and we pulled him out and decided to wait for an opening on Crown Street.

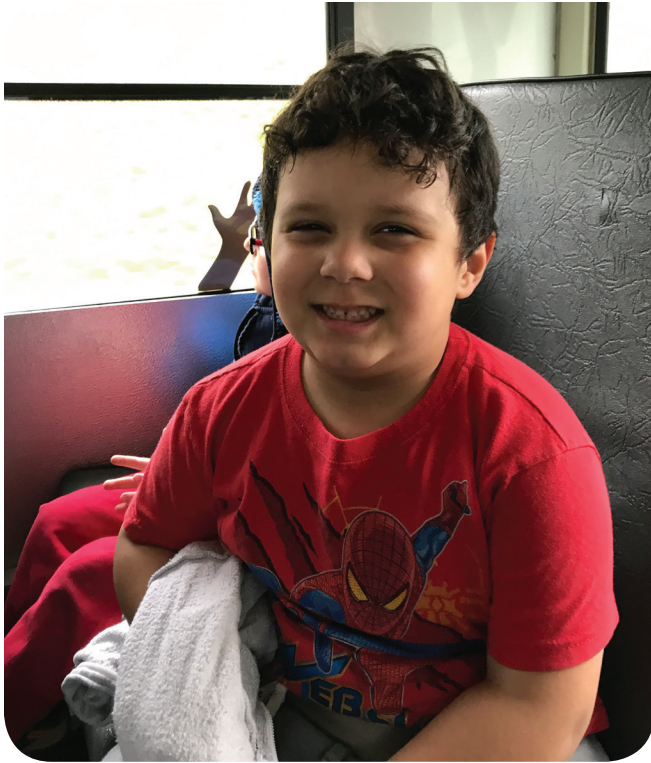
Evan started at Crown Street in July of 2015 and



adjusted quickly. For the first few months his class went through some staff changes but as a parent I felt Ms. Mary Jo had the children's best interest in mind. We started noticing changes with Evan almost immediately. He started talking a lot more, he was bonding with staff and other students. He was developing a new personality and coming out of his shell.

When Mr. Ed came on as a teacher I was not sure how Evan would handle a male teacher. Mr. Ed fit in quickly, the children all loved and respected him. Shortly after that Evan was ready for his new class with the older kids. In my mind Evan was not ready, I had this idea that he would always need that extra care, extra attention and handled differently due to his disabilities. Evan did not like the transition to the new class, he was used to play time for most of the day and now he was in a classroom that was more of a learning environment. Evan started acting up before school and expressing to me he wanted to go back to Mr. Ed's class.





I spoke with staff and they felt Evan was ready for his new class and needed to be prepared for Kindergarten. As a parent it was very hard to watch my child express a dislike but remain hands off. It was very hard for me to “trust” others opinions on what was best for my child because in the past I felt certain agencies (not YMCA) made decisions based of their needs, not my child’s. I was in a mindset that Evan has a disability and he can’t, so let’s not push him. After a few weeks Evan adjusted very well into his new class. In my opinion I think the staff looked at Evan just like every other child in his class. They provided an equal learning experience and that challenge allowed him to grow.

Over the past year I have seen my child grow into this smart, amazing, loving, outgoing, funny, caring little boy who makes friends with everyone who passes by. Evan is like every other child in his class, he talks, he reads, he understands, he listens, he comes home every day and tells me about what he learned in school. I truly believe if I had left selected a different path for Evan and didn’t

wait for Crown St to have an opening I would have an entirely different little boy today. Other programs that were suggested for Evan had lower expectations, they were more set up as play groups, less learning. I believe in the other programs he was offered he would have grown mentally but the YMCA encouraged him to excel and develop equal to his peers.

When Evan was in Birth to 3 he was receiving close to 35 hours a week of support, the MPS dropped that down significantly with much protest from me. At the most recent PPT meeting in March it was a much different meeting and experience. I was able to express how proud I was how Evan has developed so much over the past 2 years and he has exceeded all my expectations. At the PPT we mutually agreed his services could be lowered and in the fall when he starts kindergarten they may possible be lowered even more. I also need to add that I am very grateful Mary Jo and one of Evan’s teachers have always attended PPTs at my request. They offer valuable feedback and support to both Evan and to the MPS staff.

I am amazed at how much he has grown, I am so proud to say my child is a part of the YMCA Preschool program. I feel much of that credit should go to YMCA staff because they have always treated all of the children equally, they make learning fun and challenging. They have provided a wonderful experience for all the children and have set them up for success going into elementary school.

My child knows all the staff throughout the school, he loves and respects each person not just his direct support. All the staff in the building interact with the children and ensure they feel safe and loved. I share my story with other parents and I encourage them to get their child involved in YMCA preschool at the age of 3. I feel because of this program and staff and the support of MPS coming in to his class he has developed much more than we ever expected. I am no longer concerned about Evan starting Kindergarten in the fall. Evan is ready because of the staff and his experience in the Meriden YMCA Child care program. I write this fully from my heart with gratitude that can never be expressed program and to the staff.

## J'Na's Story

**From her mother Pat Hill**

J'Na is a student in the Head Start program. Her two older sisters also went to the program. All three of my daughters love it and I do too.

The staff is great. The teachers are very attentive and really listen to the kids. This is the second year J'Na is in the program and she has really blossomed. She is always outgoing and a bundle of energy and they bring out the best in her. She loves being in the center of everything and really enjoys playing with her classmates.

The teachers are terrific. They teach the children so many things including how to act with their friends, how to communicate, how to resolve differences, and how to get on the school bus (like when they go to CrossFit Kids class). They did a segment on signs and my daughter recognized signs as we went through town and talked about what color the sign was and what kind of sign it was. She was very excited about it.



J'Na loves school and is disappointed when there is no school. On a snow day when school is canceled or on the weekend she says "Mom we have to go to school the teachers will be looking for me." I love that she wants to go to school all the time.

Teachers always have stories for me about J'Na's day and activities. I only have good things to say about Head Start. It is a great preschool program.

## Amaal's Story

**From her mother Rukiya Maulidi**

Amaal is a student at the Meriden YMCA Head Start Preschool.

I heard about Head Start through an outreach agency that was working with my daughter. Both of my daughters have gone through this program. I am very, very sad this is our last year at Head Start.

My favorite part is the way the teachers treat the kids. It is very good, very nice. If my kid is happy I am happy. If you have a really nice teacher like she has you feel your kids are safe.

She has learned so much. She can count 1 to 20, color, spell, write her name down and more. My daughter loves it so much she cries if she cannot go. On weekends she wakes up and asks if she can go to school. It will be hard to leave.







Meet Jim and Carol Ann Nettleton, Y members, car enthusiasts, and proud grandparents. Jim is also a Vietnam Veteran and Purple Heart recipient. Thank you for your service Jim.

Jim and Carol Ann attend the Silver Sneakers Classic classes twice per week. Their grandchildren attend Mountain Mist Day Camp and are excited about Mountain Mist Cooking and Sports Camps this summer.

**Carol Ann:** I started with the water classes and did those for about 5 years. My daughter-in-law's mother encouraged me to come and I am glad I did. I was not sure about it and did not want to be seen in a bathing suit. She told me not to worry no one notices. I am so glad I came to the Y!

The water classes were fun and I met some great people. Then I wanted to try something different. My friend Pat from the water classes told me about the Silver Sneakers classes and I love them. I told my husband Jim about them and said he had to try them.

**Jim:** My muscles used to cramp up in my legs from working all day (on my feet in a factory) and then working on cars (my hobby.) Once I started the classes I felt a lot better and it is very rare that I get leg cramps now.

I think some men think the classes are just for women. I tell my friends that there are a few men in the class and they should try it, they would feel much better.

**Carol Ann:** We see Y members who are twenty years older than us and in great shape. That's what we want and is something to motivate us. We want to be here as long as possible, especially for our grandkids.

What we really like about the Y is it is a community within the community. It feels like Meriden is a small town because you meet all different people that you may not normally meet, everyone is friendly, and very encouraging.

# HEAD START PROGRAM

2017 – 2018

## MERIDEN YMCA HEAD START PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

### Funding

Federal: \$1,189,247, State: \$158,604, School Readiness: \$255,024. The federal approved budget:

- **Personnel** – \$762,863 which consists of salaries for program managers, content specialists, teachers, teacher's aides, and nutrition services, substitutes, clerical and fiscal staff.
- **Fringe benefits** – \$241,066 which consists of taxes for social security, federal, state, workman's comp, health, dental, life insurance.
- **Supplies** – \$19,847 which consists of office supplies, child and family service supplies, food service, disability supplies, assessments, paper products.
- **Other costs** – \$165,471 which consist of travel, contracts services, computer financial support software to assist with budgets, monthly statements 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.

### Office of Head Start

In the fall of 2018 a brand new monitoring system came out that reflected the ongoing monitoring of the new performance standards that came out in 2016.

Shortly after the release of this new two part tool, programs that were due for a review were notified if they were going to be having either focus area one or focus area two or both, which was based on a programs previous reviews, strengths or areas to work on. At that time we were informed that the decision was made that based on our past strengths and program reviews we would be only having focus area two of the tool. A few days later we received our letter notifying us that we would be having a focus area two and a class review and they would be out in 60 days.

As part of the process, reviewers came out and conducted the class observation review and a focus area two monitoring of the Head Start program. As part of our ongoing monitoring and continuous improvement for the 2018 Head Start fiscal year, we continue to work with the training and technical assistance staff provided to all head start programs to ensure high quality services outlined in the head start performance standards and the class observation tool, in order to always ensure our continued full compliance.

### Enrollment

We are funded for 161 children and fully enrolled on the first day of school. The program served 179 children over the course of the year. The average monthly funded enrollment was 82.6% with actual monthly enrollment at 83.3%. We were at 100% of our children who were in the income eligible category.





## Health

One hundred percent of our enrolled children received medical exams. We had all but one child who parents refused the exam, receive a dental exam. We had 42 children identified with dental decay who needed follow up services. We expanded collaborative efforts with CHC Meriden for both on-site behavioral health therapy for families, and dental hygiene services for families. Two dental providers (1 private practice & 1 @ UConn Dental School/Farmington) as well as a number of dental students from UConn Dental School came for on-site visits twice this year working with children and classrooms. Oral exams were done twice, and topical fluoride was applied once. An oral health workshop for the children was done as part of this learning experience both times. Children dressed in lab coats, and brushed puppet teeth as the dental students talked about oral health and oral health habits. We had 100% of children receive a vision screening. We referred 9 children and 7 needed glasses. We had 100% of children receive a hearing screening. We had 20 children identified for hearing concerns and needed follow up services.

## Parent Workshops

Parents were actively involved and received training/workshops/resources on: Pedestrian Safety; fatherhood nights; stress management; child development; kindergarten transition; cancer awareness; basic 1st aid; parent literacy; mental health resources; health education; early education; dental family literacy promotion; healthy cooking; nutrition; oral hygiene; adult vision & blood pressure screenings; healthy cholesterol. 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.

Again this year, we offered parent's workshops of Kindergarten readiness and making sure the parents are aware on how to help their child succeed in all areas of school such as social emotionally, Literacy, math and Science. We had over 30 parents and children join us for our readiness night on Social emotional readiness for Kindergarten.



**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 to see what children are expected to know when entering Kindergarten. This year our annual Breakfast with the Principals was turned into a city wide event that the School Readiness and Board of Education hosted. Our families attended a dinner along with other families in the community to learn about the new on line registration process. Our Family Advocates continue to assist parents in the online registration format, when needed parents have used the computers at our program to complete the registration. 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 targets 3 different areas that will help children be ready for Kindergarten.

## **MERIDEN YMCA**

110 West Main Street

Meriden, CT 06451

P 203-235-6386 F 203-634-6517

[meridenymca.org](http://meridenymca.org) | [facebook.com/YMCA.Meriden](https://facebook.com/YMCA.Meriden)

## **MERIDEN YMCA HEAD START**

398 Liberty Street

Meriden, CT 06451

P 203-238-9166

[meridenymca.org](http://meridenymca.org) | [facebook.com/YMCA.Meriden](https://facebook.com/YMCA.Meriden)

## **NEW BRITAIN-BERLIN YMCA**

50 High Street

New Britain, CT 06051

P 860-229-3787

[nbbyymca.org](http://nbbyymca.org) | [facebook.com/nbbyymca](https://facebook.com/nbbyymca)

## **BERLIN YMCA PROGRAM CENTER**

362 Main Street

Berlin, CT 06037

P 860-357-2717

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