



# STRENGTHENING DELAWARE

YMCA OF DELAWARE 100 West 10th Street | Suite 1100 | Wilmington, Delaware 19801 | ymcade.org

SPRING 2018

SERVING DELAWARE BY ADVANCING OUR MISSION OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, HEALTHY LIVING AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



Dear Friends,

2017 was a great year for the YMCA of Delaware and 2018 is promising to be even better. We started the year by hosting our Annual Campaign kickoff event. This year our goal is to raise \$2 million dollars, which will ensure we can continue our many efforts of supporting

individuals and families in communities across the state of Delaware.

Additionally, we celebrated the one-year anniversary of the Middletown Family YMCA grand opening. You can read more about the growth and progress at our Middletown location in the following pages. Stay tuned because in the coming months we plan to announce more news about "what's next" with our presence in the Middletown, Odessa and Townsend communities.

Also, we recently hosted a hardhat tour for the community and members at our Brandywine Y. This project is making great progress and you can now see the second floor of this vertical expansion from Route 202. Take a look at page three for recent photos.

We look forward to the months ahead and are preparing for the busy seasons of Spring and Summer.

As always, I thank you for your continued support of the YMCA of Delaware.

Yours in service,

Deborah Bagatta-Bowles, Chief Executive Officer  
dbowles@ymcade.org | 302.571.6907



Senator Carper stopped by the Annual Campaign kickoff event and spent time speaking to our Youth In Government students. He generously shared his advice on keys to success in politics and life.



# MIDDLETOWN FAMILY YMCA CELEBRATES ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

It's hard to believe it's already been a year, but members of the Middletown Y, community partners, and government officials were recently invited to join the Middletown Family YMCA for its one-year birthday celebration and open house.

January 1st, 2018 marked the one-year anniversary of the grand opening of the Middletown Y located on North Cass Street. Since the doors first opened, the Y has grown by offering additional programs and services including:

- **Youth programming** like Summer Camp at Silver Lake Elementary and Before and After School Care at Cedar Lane and Bunker Hill Elementary Schools

- **Swim lessons** and pool access at Silver Lake Park
- **New group exercise classes** including Power Up Circuit Training, Spin and Strength, Family Yoga, Abs and Glutes, POUND, and Senior Strength and Stretch
- **Family events** like Parents Night Out, Movie Night, Zumba Glow Party, Healthy Kids Day, and Member Pool Party

It was a nice and memorable event and we are looking forward to creating more excitement around our plans of building a greater Y presence in Middletown.



Some of our Y youth joined in the fun by decorating the Kids Zone area.



The celebration was well attended by members of the community.



Deborah Bagatta-Bowles, CEO, talks about the past year and the future of the Middletown Y.



Lieutenant Governor, Bethany Hall-Long, expresses her passion for the YMCA.



David Halley, Center Director, welcomes the crowd.

## “RAISING THE ROOF” AT THE BRANDYWINE YMCA

Big things are happening at the Brandywine YMCA! The vertical expansion project is well underway and we have also had a change in branch leadership (see page 6).

Phase one (of three) of the construction project is finished, and we have welcomed members back into the front lobby, movement studio, preschool rooms and babysitting area - much of which has a new look and feel. Currently, there is a massive steel structure resting on the roof of the original YMCA. By late spring, this will be the brand new fitness center and another movement studio (phase two of our project).

The last phase of the expansion will include a renovation of the first floor existing fitness center, which will be converted to the new babysitting area, youth wellness center, spinning

room and movement studio.

Stay tuned for more updates on our progress as we are currently slated for completion in the summer of 2018.

If you are interested in supporting the Brandywine expansion project, please contact Matt Clements, Director of Philanthropy, at (302) 571-6962 or [mclements@ymcade.org](mailto:mclements@ymcade.org).





# EXPANDED COVERAGE FOR YMCA'S DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield now covers the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program as a preventive benefit for group customers. This landmark announcement ensures the YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program is a covered benefit for the large majority of Delawareans who are insured under Highmark.

According to the News Journal article, "Highmark to Cover YMCA Diabetes Prevention Program," studies have shown that if a person with prediabetes eats healthier, increases physical activity and loses weight, nearly 60 percent can prevent or delay type 2 diabetes.

More than 85,000 adults in Delaware have diabetes and the prevalence has almost doubled in the past two decades, going from 4.9 percent in 1991 to 11.5 percent in 2015. Nationwide, more than 29 million US adults have diabetes, and 84 million US adults are living with prediabetes.

The disease has also cost the state millions: The American Diabetes Association said in 2012 that the total cost burden for Delaware was around \$860 million. Highmark officials believe the YMCA's Diabetes

Prevention Program could help employers save \$400 to \$1,300 per member each year when a participant reaches their weight loss goal.

The Y of Delaware has offered the Diabetes Prevention Program since 2010 and in that time 2,000 people

**THE PREVALENCE OF DIABETES HAS ALMOST DOUBLED IN THE PAST TWO DECADES IN DELAWARE, GOING FROM 4.9 PERCENT IN 1991 TO 11.5 PERCENT IN 2015.**

have participated. The class is led by a trained lifestyle coach and covers topics such as healthy eating, how to incorporate physical activity, overcoming stress, staying motivated and reducing the amount of fat in the diet.

After 16 weekly classes, participants meet with their group twice a month for 3 sessions, then monthly for the rest of the year to maintain progress. The Y also offers a complimentary four-month YMCA membership for participants.

Tricia Jefferson, Director of Healthy Living and Strategic Partnerships

says, "Prediabetes is a serious health condition that increases a person's risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, but it is reversible, so it's important that we address it. Participants in the program meet in a group based setting. This is an important component of the program because

they are more likely to stick with the program when the group is supporting them in lifestyle changes. Some groups even continue to meet after the program is completed."

The program is also available to people who are not insured by Highmark. It costs \$429 and financial assistance is available for those who qualify.

To learn more about the Diabetes Prevention program, contact Kat Luebke, Health Integration Coordinator, at (302) 572-9622 or [healthyliving@ymcade.org](mailto:healthyliving@ymcade.org).



# YMCA OF DELAWARE RECOGNIZED AT DELAWARE STARS 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Four child care sites across the YMCA of Delaware Association were recently recognized by Governor John Carney and the Office of Early Learning for participation in the Delaware Stars Program.

The YMCA of Delaware Early Child Care and School Age programs joined the Delaware Stars program at its inception in 2008. Currently, there are 41 YMCA after school sites and four YMCA preschools throughout the state. Most of these locations participate in the Delaware Stars program.

For the past 10 years, the Delaware Stars program has worked diligently to improve and maintain quality child care throughout the state. In 2008, Delaware had a number of early learning programs volunteer to

join a system that would greatly improve the quality of early care and education. Thus, Delaware Stars was born.

Delaware Stars has gone from 41 programs 10 years ago to just shy of 500 today. These 500 programs have made a commitment to ensure that children and families receive the highest level early care and education through continuous quality improvement, curriculum development, ongoing assessment and personalized technical assistance.

In celebration of the 10 year anniversary of Delaware Stars, the State of Delaware recognized the programs which have led the way and inspired others to improve outcomes for children.



Pictured above with the Governor are (from left to right): Bonnie Haigh, Kerri Faulkner, Jen Reid and Pam Kennedy (Western Giant Step Half Day Preschool and Meadowood Full Day Preschool Program); Tamisha Hopkins and Shannon Neal (Shield Elementary/Sussex Family YMCA); and Krystina Schneider (Walnut Street Y).



## SUSSEX FAMILY YMCA WELCOMES TAMISHA HOPKINS AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The YMCA of Delaware is pleased to announce Tamisha Hopkins as the new Executive Director of the Sussex Family YMCA located in Rehoboth Beach, DE. Tamisha, a

Pennsylvania native and graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania, joined the Y seven years ago and initially served on the Wellness Team at the Bear-Glasgow Family YMCA in Newark, DE. Over the years, she transitioned into the Membership Department, then into leadership roles such as Youth Wellness Director and Senior Membership Director, where she continued to demonstrate tremendous impact.

As the new Executive Director of the Sussex Family Y, Tamisha joins an exciting team and will oversee all branch operations. "In addition to bringing strong membership

recruitment and retention skills, she also brings leadership expertise and a new level of energy and enthusiasm to the Sussex Y," said Jim Kelly, Chief Operating Officer for the YMCA of Delaware.

Tamisha, and her husband Damon, are the proud parents of three beautiful children. She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc., loves serving the community, and on weekends can be found spending time with her family, watching movies, and the food network.

## BRANDYWINE YMCA WELCOMES LINDA RISK AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The YMCA of Delaware is pleased to announce Linda Risk as the new Executive Director of the Brandywine YMCA. Linda has been employed by the YMCA of Delaware for more than two years as the Vice President of Marketing and Communications, and has been serving as the Interim Executive Director of the Brandywine YMCA since June of 2017. In her new position as Group Vice President, she oversees the Brandywine Branch operations and continues to provide strategic direction for statewide marketing initiatives.

Prior to her employment at the YMCA, Linda worked in the non-profit sector leading marketing, public relations and development for the Delaware Multiple Sclerosis Society and Kent County Tourism. Linda also has a background in television news as an anchor, reporter, host and producer for CN8 The Comcast Network and WMDT-47, a local ABC News affiliate.

Linda graduated from the University of Delaware with a degree in Leadership and Consumer Economics and received her Master's Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing Management from Goldey Beacom College.

As Brandywine's new leader, Linda joins the team at an exciting time with a five million dollar expansion project currently underway. "Everywhere I look at Brandywine,

I see opportunity," said Risk. "The expansion isn't just about a beautiful new building and shiny equipment, but more about the unlimited possibilities to advance our mission and better serve our community for generations to come. The staff is working diligently on new programs, classes and schedules that are relevant and appeal to all age groups, families and individuals of diverse backgrounds and abilities. We want to be the best, most trusted community resource for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility," she continued.

Born and raised in Dover, Linda has been a proud, active member of the YMCA since she was a young child. She currently resides in the Pike Creek area with her husband, Dennis, daughter, Morgan and son, Evan.



**"Coming to the Y makes me feel independent again, and everyone here is so supportive, not just the staff, but the members too!"**

*- Bruce Drainer*

Six years ago, after undergoing back surgery for bulging disks, Bruce Drainer lost his vision. It took months for him to overcome the initial shock and resentment he felt. He had to learn how to move around without vision, and things that were once simple became a big ordeal. At times, he would just stay in bed and not leave his house.

With the support and encouragement of his girlfriend Nancy, Bruce started getting out of the house more. "The first time I walked around the block by myself, I was ecstatic." His new found independence motivated Bruce and he began asking himself what else he could do.

"I used to love lifting weights at the Y so I decided to rejoin. Coming here makes me feel independent again, and everyone is so supportive, not just the staff, but the members too!"

Since rejoining the Y, Bruce has lost weight, gained strength, reduced diabetic symptoms and he even met a new buddy, Ronnie Felton. Ronnie drives Bruce to the Y and they work out together several times a week. The Y has provided Bruce with a place to be independent, make new friends, be part of a community, and has given him a new outlook on life.



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