

“Having this free program where kids can express themselves is really important.”

~ Ryan McVann, who invites children to take part in the Y's Music Clubhouse

McVann soars to new leader of Methuen Y

By Christine McLaughlin Howell
MethuenLife Writer

The Methuen YMCA's new Associate Executive Director Ryan McVann is committed to connecting the community through sports, arts, science and outdoor activities. From ukelele lessons to basketball and archery, the Methuen YMCA offers something for every child. The key to engaging today's youth, he said, is giving them opportunities to express themselves and participate in activities.

“As an organization, we specialize in figuring out what the community needs, staffing it with local kids and getting everyone involved,” McVann said.

McVann, 24, replaced 10-year Executive Director Anne Whalen, who is now the Merrimack Valley YMCA's executive director of Camping Services. McVann is continuing the programs she created and adding some of his own.

Active in several roles since 2012, McVann is applying experience he gained as the Merrimack Valley YMCA's Sports and Teen director and assistant director of Camp Otter while utilizing his bachelor of science degree in sports medicine and master's of science degree in exercise and



After holding various roles since 2012, Ryan McVann is now the associate executive director of the Methuen branch. Courtesy photo

sports science from Merrimack College for Active Science classes. His keen interest in pairing science with sports began at Merrimack College where he collaborated with the YMCA on a learning tool for students called STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) which uses a tablet to deliver science lessons with

physical activity.

“Ryan has established himself as a strong leader in the organization very quickly. In addition to his demonstrated success and education, Ryan has all of the intangibles that we are looking for in our executive team,” stated Frank Kenneally, CEO at the Merrimack Valley Y.

One of the Methuen Y's newer classes is archery, which McVann headed up last spring and is continuing this fall. He said that he wants to bring the camping experience to everyone while keeping costs down, and the archery program is one of the ways to do it. Students “nok their arrows” every Tuesday evening and learn the fundamentals while having fun popping water balloons and playing games.

McVann is a Peabody resident who grew up playing youth basketball at the Metro North YMCA. As the former Sports and Teen director, he coached basketball, soccer and baseball, but is quick to point out that Methuen YMCA's programs are not strictly sports-based. The Music Clubhouse, under the direction of Alex DeLorey, is a unique free program where children ages 6 to 12 and teens ages 13 to 18 can take instrument lessons, voice lessons, beat making and

record their performances in the state-of-the-art recording studio. McVann explained that DeLorey provides structured lessons while also allowing young musicians the freedom to exercise their creativity.

“Having this free program where kids can express themselves is really important,” he said.

Another aspect of community involvement is the role of Methuen High School student-athletes in the Rising Rangers Summer Classic and youth basketball program. MHS basketball players coach and referee the games and, more importantly, become mentors for the young players. Instead of just calling penalties, McVann said, the high school students use that opportunity as a teaching moment - to “slow it down and break it down” and improve the young players' game.

With a few weeks in as associate executive director, McVann said he is eager to grow the existing programs, as well as work on establishing new programs such as volleyball and possibly a computer coding class.

“We want to utilize our facility to best serve the needs of the community,” he said.

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Buffet Style Menu: Ham and Baked Beans, Hot Dogs, Macaroni & Cheese, Tossed Green Salad, Potato Salad, Coleslaw, Rolls and butter. Dessert – Vanilla Ice Cream with Strawberries and/or Hot Fudge. Beverages – Coffee, Tea, Lemonade
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