



MERRIMACK VALLEY YMCA

ADVANCING CAUSE AND COMMUNITY

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



OUR MISSION

To strengthen our communities by putting our core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility into action through programs and services that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

OUR PROMISE OF INCLUSION

The Merrimack Valley YMCA intentionally commits to facilitating positive and lasting change with our communities. Our Y focuses on providing an environment that celebrates diversity, advances equity, and reflects inclusion for all, both inside and outside of our walls. Our Y welcomes our community to show up authentically, to speak up courageously, and to create a space for all to be, belong and become.





A LETTER FROM THE CEO AND CVO

YOUR YMCA: WE'RE COMMITTED TO FACILITATING POSITIVE AND LASTING CHANGE WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

For over 140 years, our Merrimack Valley YMCA has been a beacon of hope in the Greater Lawrence community, and we have been a convenor in conversations and actions to make healthy living achievable for everyone. 2023 provided us the opportunity to further strengthen and expand our partnerships which ultimately allows us to serve more people. This year brought more people together at the Y through membership, camp participation and outreach.

The Merrimack Valley YMCA works to provide children, families and communities with the resources and opportunities they need to learn, grow, and thrive. That's why we offer a range of programs and services to meet the unique needs of each community we serve. The breadth and scope of our program variety incorporates all ages, abilities, and diverse groups.

In this annual report, you will learn more about our three major areas of impact:

- Youth Development
- Healthy Living
- Social Responsibility

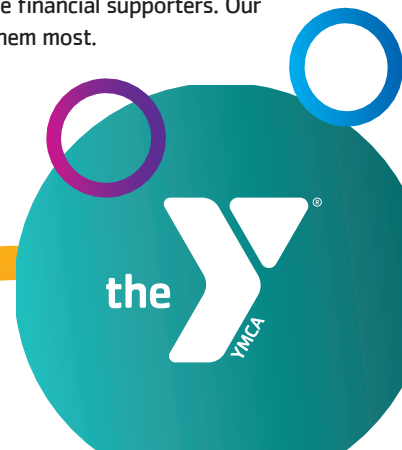
Of the many touchpoints over the past year, we chose these three meaningful stories to share where participants reflect on how the Y has made their lives better. Some additional 2023 highlights:

- We are proud of our work in expanding and operationalizing our Y's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. This continued focus allows us to better represent the community, ensuring we are making good decisions for those we serve. Our Board of Directors and Branch Boards are engaged in this dialogue along with our staff, and all of this leads to action. We are in the second year of a three-year plan to be a more welcoming organization that celebrates diversity and advances equity, intentionally committing to facilitating positive and lasting change.
- This was a year of growth within the YMCA program offerings, membership, and camp enrollment. Our camps are successful because of our engaged and seasoned staff, our strong programming, and the legacy of generations of families who return to camp. This, in addition to our investment in our camp facilities has helped propel us to an all-time high camp enrollment in the summer of 2023.
- We launched the "Complete the Fleet" campaign to modernize our island camp's transportation operations so our fleet of boats will continue to be safe, efficient, and modern. This is one of the most significant initiatives in the history of our overnight camps located on Bear Island in Lake Winnepesaukee, Camp Lawrence for boys and Camp Nokomis for girls.
- A strong membership base is an essential part of our organization and allows us to do the impactful work we do, both within our walls and throughout the community. Through engagement in membership, our members not only reach their wellness goals, but they also learn about volunteer opportunities, and many become financial supporters. Our members, volunteers and donors see the value of supporting critical programs and services for our young people, adults, and families who need them most.
- Together our staff and board have focused on drivers of our Strategic Plan. Together, we use this plan as a compass to ensure we are aligned with our long-term goals and our commitment to sustaining our cause.

We welcome you to reach out to us for a cause-driven tour, giving you an opportunity to see our Merrimack Valley YMCA in action, and learn how you can become more involved. Our greatest asset is our people: our members, volunteers, community partners and our dedicated staff. Working together allow us to have the kind of impact the community needs.

Francis J. Kenneally III
President and Chief Executive Officer

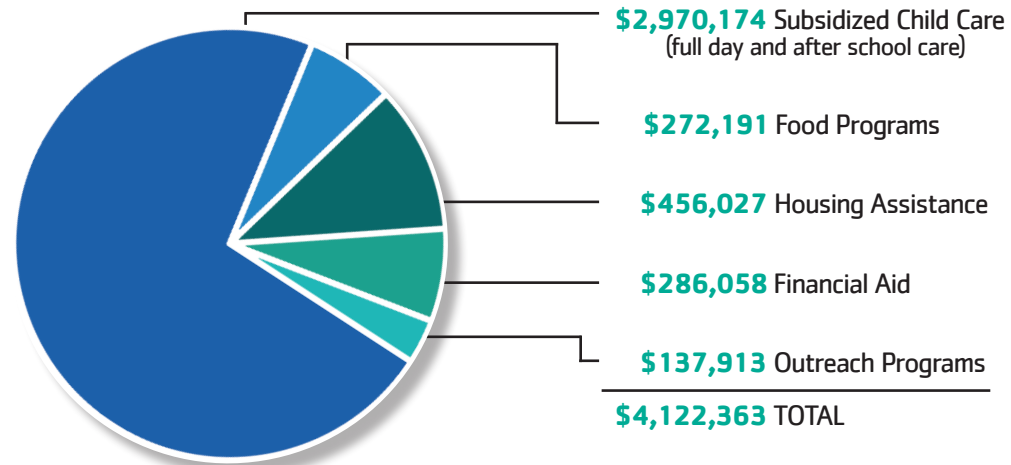
Donna Aldrich
Chief Volunteer Officer



COMMUNITY IMPACT

While we have a strategic plan for our future, who we are has not changed. Our values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility, along with our promise of inclusion are absolutely core to who we are. They continue to drive our behavior as a human service organization. Our mission embraces those values and sets a purpose for our work.

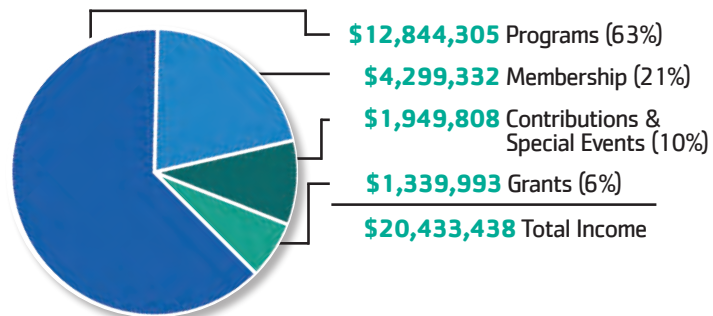
Key to this mission is our purposeful outreach to those in our community who need help to access our programs and services. In 2023, we delivered over \$4M in subsidized services, financial assistance, programs and nutrition support to children, families, adults and seniors in the Merrimack Valley.



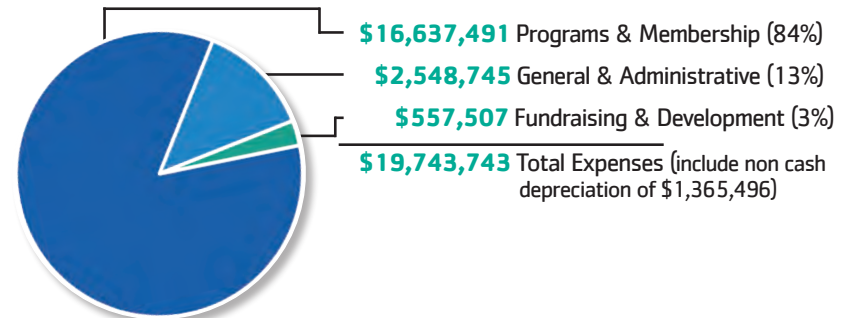
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW 2023

Merrimack Valley YMCA Consolidated Financial Statements (unaudited)
October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023

INCOME



EXPENSES



\$689,695 Net Surplus from Operations and Nonoperating Activities

Surplus/Deficit from Operations = (\$467,600)
Surplus from Nonoperating activities = \$1,157,295

MERRIMACK VALLEY YMCA LEADERSHIP TEAM

Francis J. Kenneally, III

President & Chief Executive Officer

Claudia Soo Hoo

Chief Operations Officer

Cathleen Landry

Chief Financial Officer

Mary Jane Dinsmore

Chief Human Resources Officer

Joyce Grippen

Chief Development & Marketing Officer

Trish Villanueva

Vice President of Operations, Andover/North Andover YMCA

Kelley O'Hara

Associate Executive Director, Andover/North Andover YMCA

Joseph Agosto

Executive Director, Lawrence YMCA

Lenis Perez

Associate Executive Director of Youth Development

Catherine Redard

Executive Director of Child Care

Anne Whalen

Senior Executive Director, Camping Services

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METHUEN BOARD OF MANAGERS

William Ingraham, Chair
Gulsen Sevincgil





COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

The Merrimack Valley YMCA is proud to partner with our neighbors to strengthen our community. **TOGETHER** we focus our efforts on developing youth, improving healthy living for all and fostering social responsibility to create positive and lasting personal and social change – the kind of change that can only come about when we work together to invest in our kids, our health and our neighbors. Thank you to the following donors for their support of the Merrimack Valley YMCA.

YMCA PIONEER \$10,000+

Alliance of Massachusetts YMCA
Amelia Peabody Foundation
Andover Home for the Aged
Andrew Scaplen
Anonymous, in memory of Jane Cronin and in appreciation to Carlton Cronin for his years of dedication to the YMCA
Arbella Insurance Foundation, Inc.
Borislow Insurance Agency
Cedar's Mediterranean Foods, Inc.
City of Lawrence
Cornelius Wood Trusts
Cummings Foundation
Don & Lynne Bulens
Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism
Enterprise Bank
Essex County Community Foundation
Exchange Club of Salem NH
Fun Content LLC
Highland Street Foundation
L.L. Bean
MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
MA Department of Early Education and Care
MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Nancy & Don Carlin
Saab Family Foundation
The New Balance Foundation

The Stevens Foundations
TJX Foundation, Inc.
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
Victor J. Mill, III
Walmart
Watts Water Technologies, Inc.
YMCA of the USA

YMCA CHAMPION \$5,000+

Cafua Management Co. LLC
DCU for Kids
Demoulas/Market Basket
Frank & Amy Kenneally
Josephine G. Russell Trust
Kevin St. John
Kiwanis Club of Greater Lawrence
Louis S. Cox Trust
Methuen Cultural Council
Music and Youth Initiative, Inc.
Peter & Susan Boynton
Pfizer
Pool Corporation
Raytheon
Rogers Family Foundation
Rosalyn K. Wood 2021 Charitable Lead Annuity
Trist and Claire Wilkes
Rotary Club of Greater Salem NH
Step Into Swim
System 4 Commercial Cleaning
The Howe Insurance Agency
William McCartney & Tish Bachman

YMCA PATRON \$2,500+

Adelard A. Roy and Valeda Lea Roy Foundation
Charles G. Pringle Foundation
Claudia Soo Hoo & Ben O'Leary
David Louis & Lori Howe
Donna Aldrich
Ethan VanderWilden, In memory of Kyle O'Grady
Evan Silverio
John & Patricia Fouhy
Joyce Grippen & Michael Needle
Lauren & Ryan Moore
Lawrence Cultural Council
M&T Charitable Foundation
Mike W. Murphy
Nutter, McClennen & Fish LLP
Office of MA Attorney General
Project Bread
Rotary Club of Andover
Scott & Kimberly Simpson
Thomas & Julie Childs
Timothy & Patricia MacPhee
USA Artistic Swimming Foundation
Wyley Robinson



HERITAGE SOCIETY

Members of the Merrimack Valley YMCA's Heritage Society have made a direct gift to the Y's endowment fund or a provision in their will or estate plans that will ensure a strong YMCA now and for the future.

Donna Aldrich

Carl & Mamie Berger

Elizabeth & Ralph Covino

Jane & Eric Dinsmore

George & Carolyn Fantini

Marilyn Fitzgerald

John & Patricia Fouhy

Joyce Grippen

Victor J. Mill, III

Frank & Amy Kenneally

Mark & Megan Kristiansen

David Louis & Lori Howe

Michael & Stanice Mancuso

William McCartney & Tish Bachman

Robert & Karol Needham

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Ken Weidman

Claudia Soo Hoo & Ben O'Leary

Robert & Joanne Reeves

Donald & Kathy Schroeder

Jennifer & Michael Borislow

John & Ellen Farrington

Maria Gudinas

Walter Kimball

Michael & Sharon LaChance

Timothy & Patricia MacPhee

George & Priscilla Cunningham

Stephen & Elizabeth Gruenberg

Phyllis Hamblet

James Hamblet

Alan & Deb Hope

Stephen & Lisa Ives

Deborah Parker

Clifford & Jane Howe

Jeffrey Leeds

Peter & Diane Lafond

Thomas & Julie Childs

Arlene Cox

Ronn & Kathleen Faigen



If you have questions about any of our donor categories,
please contact Joyce Grippen, CDMO at 978-651-3411

2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



In February, Camp Lawrence reached 600+ registrations! This milestone hasn't been accomplished since 2015.

2,350 people participated in swim lessons.

In April, the Merrimack Valley Y was invited by Y-USA President and CEO Suzanne McCormick to participate in an exciting pilot project for our A Nation of Bridgebuilders partnership with Catholic Charities, Habitat for Humanity and Interfaith America. Ten YMCAs from around the country were selected to participate in this pilot project designed to forge stronger more cohesive communities.

Over 390,000 pounds of food was distributed through our food pantry, mobile food market, and Y on the Fly program.



In January we sold 494 units, netting 225 new memberships. We broke 6,000 total units and our Young Adult Category exceeded 1,000 for the first time, including pre-COVID numbers. Senior membership has surpassed 1,000 units.



In February, our Y participated in legislative advocacy days both here in Massachusetts and in Washington DC. We met with legislators to gather support for childcare funding and funding for a statewide earmark for MA YMCAs that support the Achievers Program, Yo Puedo Program, Workforce Development for teens, and free water safety classes at our YMCA.



Our Lawrence Branch pool was filled with happy families and youth thanks to our partnership with Pool Corp and Splash of Joy. Hundreds of free swim lessons and swim equipment were provided to the community youth at our Splash of Joy event. Having the opportunity to share free swim lessons with our community in such a high capacity will build life-long safety around water, recreation skills, and confidence.



15,000 households were served through our food pantry, mobile food market, and Y on the Fly program.



Over 55,000 people were served through membership, programs and services.



2023 YEAR IN REVIEW



During our Holiday Toy Drive this year, we were able to extend a helping hand to more than 250 families in our community, distributing more than 1,250 gifts.

1,916 kids participated in our resident and day camps.



Over 125 students were involved in our Adelante program.

This year, Jumpstart and the Merrimack Valley YMCA teamed up to celebrate the annual Read for the Record event on Thursday, October 26. The event brings together over 2 million adults and children annually to read the same book on the same day. During this event, we had a special reading of "With Lots of Love/Com Mi Amor" by State Senator Pavel Payano in English, and Lawrence Mayor Brian A. DePena in Spanish so that all our kids could enjoy.

1,195 children thrived in our early education, daycare, and licensed afterschool programs.



On September 22, 2023, the Merrimack Valley YMCA hosted their Annual Auction Gala. Together, we raised more than \$140,000 to provide youth and teens access to the programs they need at our YMCA.

Our Complete the Fleet Campaign is moving full speed ahead with over \$1.48M raised on the \$2M goal (74% of goal).



Camp Otter had 1,916 campers this year.



At our Lawrence Branch, we had the opening day of our "Summer Eats" Site early in July. Summer Eats offers free healthy meals and snacks to the youth in our community, feeding over 50 children on our very first day. We increased our meal count since opening day to over 100 meals per day!



FROM Y STAFFER TO Y CAMP MOM: SONYA ST. PIERRE SHARES LOVE OF CAMP WITH HER KIDS

Sonya St. Pierre grew up in Lawrence. A highlight of her youth was travelling to Salem, New Hampshire, for summer camp at the JCC Camp (now called Camp Hadar), located adjacent to Camp Otter on Captain's Pond. "It was only a 15-minute ride from home, but I felt like I was going to a totally different world. I got exposure to nature and other activities that I didn't have growing up in the city. From teenage years to college life, Sonya worked for the Y as a lifeguard and swim instructor.

Sonya and her children, Bobby age 14, and Lea age 12, currently live in Salem, "just right around the corner from Camp Otter!," she said. Knowing that she wanted her children to have the same awesome summer memories, she enrolled them at Camp Otter. "As soon as Bobby was old enough to go to Camp Otter, he started in first grade for the whole summer. He loved it! His sister is two years younger and had to wait. She was so jealous!

I wanted my kids to have the same opportunities that I had at camp. I wanted them exposed to all the great things camp offers: boating, archery, swimming, and more. I didn't want them sitting watching television or on electronics, we have even had two birthday parties at Camp Otter because they loved their time at camp and wanted to share their own experiences with their friends and family".

Every summer Bobby "loves how amped up camp is. He looks forward to what's new. He is like the Mayor wherever he goes, and that certainly is the case at Camp Otter. He will talk to any adult or child and has amazing social skills. He is what camp represents. Camp gave him confidence and leadership skills."

On the off-season, both Bobby and Lea talk about Camp Otter. "They talk about camp friends and hope their camp friends come back the next summer. They have a yearning for connection with friends they made over the summer and they have great memories of the staff."

"The staff has been very understanding and supportive of my children, especially my daughter. She's artistic and camp has helped her find her own sense of self and build confidence in the areas that she excels in, art, dance and swimming. She's not as enthusiastic as my son and staff are able to get her engaged and have helped her make and maintain friendships.

The weekly Camp Otter cabin awards go a long way in helping the campers with self-esteem and helping them feel connected. Due to Lea being such a quiet child, she typically blends in and is not used to getting many accolades at school. These awards really lift her spirits and she looks forward to receiving them on a weekly basis. One summer she was in a walking boot due to breaking her leg at the end of the school year. The staff accommodated her. It was very helpful for her to go to camp, maintain the routine and be around her friends. If she's struggling emotionally, the staff let her have some space to regroup where they have been able to manage her needs. If I need to pick her up, the staff always welcome her back the next morning with this message: It's a new day, a fresh start."

KATHY AND DON SCHROEDER: FINDING COMMUNITY AND STAYING HEALTHY AT THE Y

YMCA member Kathy Schroeder loves starting her day at the Y water walking at the Andover/North Andover Branch. After she retired in her early 60s, she made this a priority. "I love water walking. It's great exercise. In this class, we are in the deep end of the pool with a floatation belt. One of my favorite classes at the Y was Water Yoga. It was wonderful. It was held in the teaching pool, and we meditated at the end of the session. We had noodles (floatation devices) and would float. The instructor would turn off the lights and we would listen to wonderful music. I didn't want to get out of the pool!," she said.

Kathy also enjoys the social part of her Y time. She shares that her husband Don calls her Water Walking Class "Water Talking!" Kathy enjoyed a career in mortgage operations, ten years of which was commuting to Boston. "My days



STORY CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

were long with the commute. I wasn't exercising at all. Once I retired, I made the commitment to get active. Being at the Y has been a nice, social thing for me to do."

"The first time I went to the pool, I knew no one. There was a group of women who had water-walked together at the Andover/North Andover Y for a long time. When I got to the stairs of the lap pool, they said 'a new person!' and swam over to welcome me." Kathy also reconnected with Elke, a friend of hers from the business community. Elke is 84-years-young and her Y time helps her stay active and healthy.

Kathy shares, "Exercise is the number one thing to do if you want maintain your health as you age. I recommend using the facility downstairs at the Andover/North Andover Y (the Active Living Center). Tai Chi and Chair Yoga classes have been great. I took a wonderful Balance Class after knee surgery. The staff work with you. They are wonderful. They will walk you through using the equipment, which can be intimidating. I highly recommend the aquatics classes. The buoyancy in the pool means you are in no pain while getting exercise with resistance. You may feel it the next day, but it's very helpful."

LEARN MORE ABOUT CLASSES AT THE ACTIVE LIVING CENTER HERE:
<https://mvymca.org/program/active-living-center-classes-andover-north-andover/>

HELPING PARENTS WITH BASIC NEEDS: YMCA'S MY KIDS CLOSET HELPS EASE FINANCIAL BURDENS

As one of the first volunteers for My Kids Closet, Heidi Gebhardt was eager to help and sees how popular and needed this service is for local families. "Back to school time is popular and winter coats, shoes, new socks warm pajamas and school uniforms are popular items."

As a former child care director and teacher at the Y, she shares, "I love my volunteer work at My Kids Closet. I see first-hand how our free clothing project benefits so many families. Parents can shop and many also give back by donating their children's outgrown clothing. I'm also a laundry fairy as all of our donations are washed and dried before going to our closet. I am an avid organizer to make the shopping experience a pleasant and dignified one for all of our clients," she said.

"One Saturday every month for over two years we have opened My Kids Closet. I'm proud of that. We are a steady resource for parents. Parents make an appointment for a shopping slot," explained Mary Ellen King, YMCA Childcare Director who oversees the program. They average about 30 client visits on the second Saturday of every month and have clothing sizes 2T through size 14. "Our support has been tremendous. This year the My Kids Closet was awarded \$2,500 from ECCF's Greater Lawrence Community Foundation. Additionally, Cathy Redard, Executive Director of Child Care at Merrimack Valley YMCA, received a generous donation from her nephew, who works at Lucky & Me, of \$6,000 worth of children's clothing including, tops, leggings, and underwear. "Our parents are so grateful," Mary Ellen said.

"My Kids Closet is an incredible program. The Y as a community resource center is wonderful. Times are so tough. Every little bit helps parents. When you're in a tough financial spot, choosing between paying for medications or paying your rent or paying for diapers or formula - taking one expense off your plate is great. Clothes are expensive. It can be overwhelming as a parent," said Jennifer Loiselle, a frequent visitor to the Kids Closet.

"It's the give and take that makes the program incredible. My kids wear clothes for a few months and I wash and return their outgrown clothes." Jennifer is President of the Tenney Grammar School PTO. "When I hear of a parent in need, I'm happy to go to bat for them and connect them to services they need. And the YMCA is a big part of that," she said.





MERRIMACK VALLEY YMCA
280 Merrimack St., Suite 500
Lawrence, MA 01843 • 978.725.6681

mvymca.org

ANDOVER/NORTH ANDOVER BRANCH

165 Haverhill Street
Andover, MA 01810
978-685-3541

LAWRENCE BRANCH

40 Lawrence Street
Lawrence, MA 01840
978-686-6191

CAMPING SERVICES BRANCH

165 Haverhill Street
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