



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Date: March 14, 2014  
To: Regional YMCA Members, Staff, Volunteers and Donors  
FR: Board of Directors  
RE: **2014 Strategic Message**

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The Regional Y is so much more than a pool and a gym – we are a diverse community working to provide opportunities in health, wellness, and education for people of all ages. Since our organization was founded over 160 years ago, the Regional Y has been striving to empower youth, promote healthy fitness and nutrition habits, and to foster a sense of social responsibility throughout Western Connecticut.

As we move forward in 2014, our goal is to further impact our community with programs that allow people of all ages and backgrounds to learn, grow, and thrive.

Here's an overview of just a few ways the Y enriches the community today.

### **Toddlers & Children**

- With over 1300 children attending our education, camp, and youth development programs, the Regional Y is one of the largest providers of childcare in the state. We are recognized by local and state officials as a key education partner; statistics show that between 94 and 96% of Danbury students in our preschool program are ready for kindergarten – that's in comparison to scores of 81-86% for other Danbury students. This successful program will be expanded through a generous \$165,000 grant from the Grossman Family Foundation, allowing as many as 30 new Danbury students to enroll, and thus ensuring continued academic progress among these graduates.
- We expect another year of record attendance levels at our Camp Greenknoll, Children's Center, and ESCAPE to the Arts summer camps, which focus on both physical and mental activity and offer enrichment programs ranging from history to art to culture to geography.
- Healthy eating and fitness are key components of our childhood programs. All of our programs adhere to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards.
- Our vast aquatic programs ensure the safety of hundreds of children while building self-confidence and esteem.

### **Teens**

- The Regional Y's ESCAPE to the Arts youth programs are a great resource for teens, especially at-risk students from low-income and immigrant families. ESCAPE's staff and mentors guide participants in channeling their energies into constructive pursuits while building skills such as time-management, organization, leadership, and public speaking.
- Our After School Program, designed specifically for middle school students, combines

homework time with classes in the arts, and attendance is at capacity most days. This year, students in our Achievers and Youth & Government program will be mentored by AmeriCorps members and are scheduled to tour eight universities as a part of our college-bound programming. The students are also preparing to defend their 2013 title of "best bill" at the mock legislative conference in Hartford.

## Adults

- The Y is known for its wide range of exercise programming, from basketball to Zumba to weight lifting to spinning. But The Y more than a place to work out – we are a supportive health and fitness community. Our members enjoy a positive, encouraging atmosphere, and our staff makes getting fit and healthy fun.
- Our "Lose to Win" program turns the daunting task of losing weight into a lighthearted group challenge. Members have more fun – and more success – when they lose weight as part of a team. People make lifelong friends at the Y: a group of members have been holding a weekly pick-up volleyball game for the past few years, a few Greenknoll members launched a book club in 2013, and a group of women who met in a Y exercise class formed a walking club years ago – the club is still active today.

## Active Older Adults

- Connecticut's senior population is growing, and local seniors are more active than ever – they want to stay fit and healthy for as long as they can. Stop by the Boughton Street branch on any given morning and you're bound to see a nonagenarian member doing laps in the pool!
- More than # of our members are 65 and older, and they seek programming tailored to their health and fitness needs. They find that and more in Gentle Yoga, Senior Swim, Zumba Gold and the Healthways SilverSneakers® Program.

Member quote –

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## 2014 – Looking Forward

The Regional Y will continue to enhance programming in 2014 in order to serve the growing local population in all of its health, education, and development needs.

Our 2014 goals include:

- Growing our "Building a Stronger Community" capital campaign. Once complete, we plan to expand the 14-acre Greenknoll campus by enclosing the outdoor Olympic-size pool, expanding the Aquatics Center, and adding year-round program space.
- Evaluating downtown Danbury community's needs and assessing how we can best meet them.

- Working to combat our community's most pressing concerns of diabetes and childhood obesity by launching a significant new Diabetes Prevention Program.
- Partnering with community leaders and schools to mitigate the academic achievement gap through our childcare, summer camp, and early education programs.
- Continuing to increase awareness and philanthropic support. 2013 was a record year with \$1,400,000 in pledges and donations. Philanthropic support allows the Y to grow, enhance services, and serve more people.

The Regional Y of Western Connecticut has much to be proud of, yet there is still much to be done. We hope you will continue to partner with us for years to come and help impact our local community.

Thank you for your commitment to the Y and the many families we serve. Thank you for choosing the Y and for your volunteer time, energy, philanthropic support, and commitment.

President/ CEO

Board Chairperson