



the

FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

HEROES AMONG US

2022
Annual Report
DARIEN YMCA



HEROES AMONG US

Dear Superheroes, Friends & Supporters,

2022 was a remarkable journey filled with challenges, triumphs, and inspiring moments. As we reflect on our past accomplishments, we are energized and excited about the future.

Thanks to **OUR SUPERHEROES**, we witnessed the incredible resilience and adaptability of our community. As the impact of the global pandemic continued, we remained committed to our mission of strengthening community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility. It is with great pride that we share some of our significant achievements from the past year.

Youth Development:

Despite challenges with staffing (felt nationally), we were able to provide a safe and enriching environment in our youth programming including, summer camp, after-school care and early learning programs.

Healthy Living:

We promoted healthy lifestyles and holistic wellness for all ages and abilities through innovative fitness classes, personal training, and wellness programs in our newly renovated fitness facilities.

Social Responsibility:

We actively engaged in community service and organized volunteer initiatives, collaborating with other local nonprofits and addressing pressing social issues such as food insecurity and mental health.

Looking ahead, we will continue to enhance our programs, leverage technology, and foster diversity and inclusivity. We will create an environment where everyone feels welcome, respected, and valued. Through strategic partnerships, collaborations, and active engagement with our stakeholders, we will drive positive change in our community and beyond.

We are grateful to our staff, volunteers, members, and partners - **our HEROES** - for their unwavering support. Together, we will contribute to our community's overall well-being while ensuring everyone has access to the essentials needed to learn, grow and thrive.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Gardner, CEO



Henry Decsi, Board President

”

A hero is someone who is concerned about other people's well-being and will go out of his or her way to help them, even if there is no chance of a reward. That person who helps others simply because it should or must be done, and because it is the right thing to do, is indeed without a doubt a real superhero.

– Stan Lee, legendary comic book writer

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MY LIFE BACK ON TRACK

My name is Marissa Herbers, and I am a CA native who now lives in Darien with my husband and 2 beautiful children. To give you some background, 10 years ago I was pregnant with my daughter Reagan and in excellent health. I was someone who was involved in sports my whole life, was in good shape, and enjoyed my 7am fitness classes. Classes my husband also pretended to like until he was sure we were in it for the long haul.

Well, 2 kids and 6 moves later (yes- 6. Ever need packing advice, I'm your girl!), the wheels completely fell off the bus. When we moved to town 5 years ago, I had visions of grandeur, that, as with any fresh start in life, I could join a gym and easily get back into the shape I was in before kids. Unfortunately, it turns out those next 5 years were eerily similar to the 5 years before that.

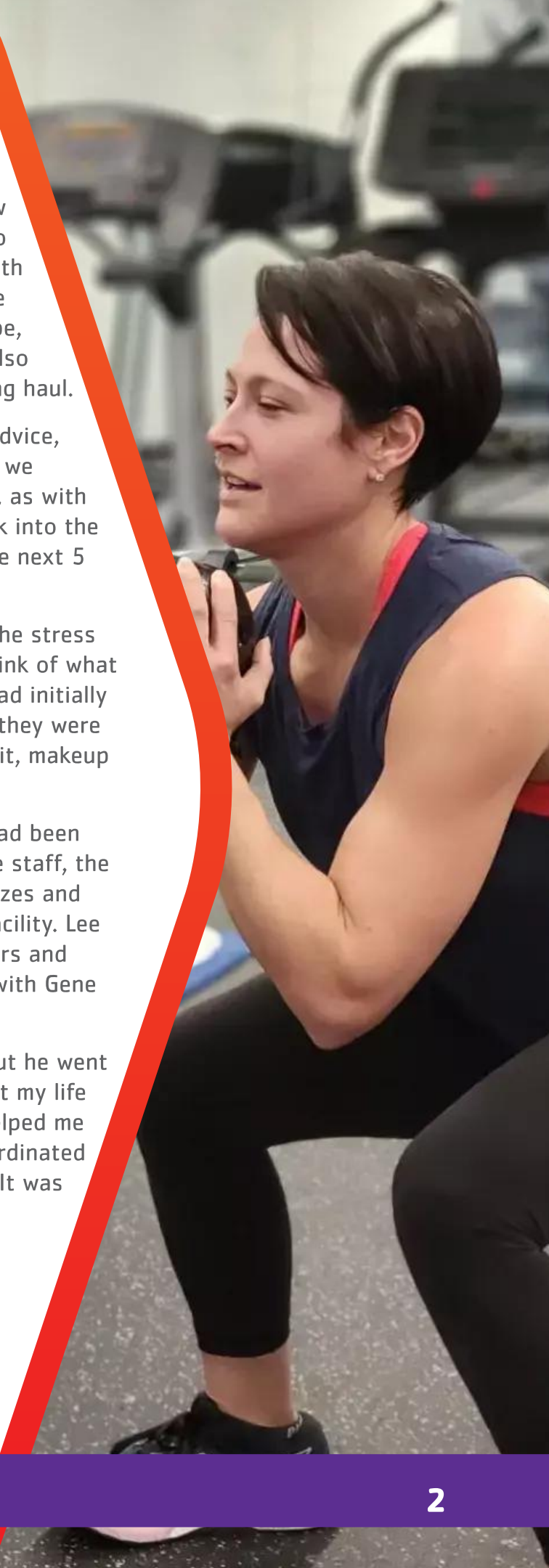
So, in July 2021 I woke up 35lbs heavier, exhausted from the stress of the pandemic, 3000 miles from my family, and on the brink of what felt like a mental health crisis. It was time for a change. I had initially refused to join a gym here in Darien because I was certain they were the kind of places where I would need a matching gym outfit, makeup and hair done and the vibe would be very cliquey.

But, from the moment we took the tour of the Y, I knew I had been completely wrong. We were met with smiling faces from the staff, the facility was incredibly clean and people of all shapes and sizes and walks of life were working their butts off throughout the facility. Lee gave us a great tour, and my husband and I became members and took the recommendation to sign up for training sessions with Gene DeNota. It was that introduction that changed my life.

It would be easy to say that Gene was just doing his job, but he went above and beyond to help me reach my health goals and get my life back on track. He helped me get my confidence back. He helped me set goals and crush them. He laughed with me in my uncoordinated moments and always helped me to have a growth mindset. It was never that...

READ THE FULL STORY, VISIT:

<https://darien-ymca.org/marissa-herbers-story/>



HEALTHY LIVING IN ACTION

Our mission, centered on the balance of spirit, mind, and body, provides programs and resources that encourage healthy living.

We try to make it easy for all by having knowledgeable staff who care, resources and equipment that motivates healthy living, and a welcoming, supportive community who encourage your well-being.



REVIVE CANCER WELLNESS PROGRAM



Our REVIVE program made a comeback in 2022. Although participants were still cautious, 5 individuals joined in our REVIVE program. This is a 12-week program available to any cancer survivor within our community at no cost and is designed to help improve the patient's ability to cope with the mental and physical stress following cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Beginning in the Fall of 2023, the Darien Y will transition REVIVE to a new program, LIVESTRONG at the YMCA. This unique, research-based program offers people affected by cancer a safe, supportive environment to participate in physical and social activities focused on strengthening the whole person and where they can connect with each other during treatment and beyond.



PICKLEBALL CRAZE

Pickleball is all the rage — and it's easy to see why! The sport, which is a combination of tennis, ping pong, and badminton, is fun to play, simple to learn, and suitable for all ages and skill levels. In fact, it's so popular that pickleball was recently named the fastest growing sport by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association. In 2022, the Darien YMCA introduced Pickleball in our indoor gymnasium and our members are loving it.

GIVING ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES

Ben Wychulis, a junior at Darien High School, always had a passion for baseball. When he was growing up, Ben's family was fortunate enough to afford everything he needed to participate in sports, including baseball. "In this area, there are families and kids who don't have what I had. They don't have access to all the opportunities I did. And it just doesn't seem fair," said Ben.

Ben plays club basketball at the Darien YMCA with Joe Marzano as his coach. He loves coming to the Y with his friends and playing in the club basketball league. So, when Ben came up with the idea for a baseball equipment drive, he asked Joe if the Darien YMCA would be willing to help. And of course, Joe said YES, along with many donors who have contributed over 40 items to Ben's baseball equipment drive. Ben also reached out to the New Canaan YMCA and set up a similar donation drop-off. In addition, Ben will be working with local sports organizations in nearby Norwalk and Bridgeport to ensure the equipment gets into the hands of kids in need.

The Darien YMCA is thankful to young adults like Ben, who are civic-minded, generous, and caring. Thank you, Ben, for supporting the Darien Y's mission to strengthen the foundation of the community through programs, services, and relationships that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. And thank you to all the fantastic community members who contributed to Ben's baseball equipment drive.

BEN WYCHULIS, DARIEN COMMUNITY MEMBER



At the Y, we give young people a safe place to belong, to build confidence and to learn positive behaviors from strong role models who exemplify the core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Whether it be childcare, early education, youth swimming and sports, camp or mental health, our programs and staff provide the support and opportunities needed to help our youth learn, grow, and thrive.



NEW PLAYGROUND

Most of us have cherished memories of racing out the door to play on the school playground. We did more than swing, climb and slide. We were able to leave the constraints of the classroom behind and set out on new adventures, make new friends, play make-believe, be in constant motion and use our imaginations.

With the help of two state grants and a private donor, the Darien YMCA was able to replace our old, worn-down, wooden playground and replace it with an age-appropriate, bright, and safe playground where kids from our Holly Pond School and summer camp can develop crucial physical, social, emotional, and imaginative skills necessary to gain self-confidence, improve coordination, and advance critical thinking capabilities.

NEW WATERFRONT EQUIPMENT

Because the YMCA is located on the shore of beautiful Holly Pond, an inlet of the Long Island Sound, we are in a unique position to offer not only swim lessons in our pools, but opportunities and experiences for youth to learn the skills needed to participate safely in sailing, canoeing, kayaking and paddleboarding. And in a coastal community like Darien, learning to remain safe in and around water is an essential life skill.

With the help of a grant from West Marine BlueFuture Fund and a private donor, the Darien YMCA was able to purchase a new rescue boat, a new sailboat (coming in 2023) and additional canoes, kayaks, and life jackets to give more youth access to confidence, comfort, and safety on the water.



MINDFULNESS PROJECT

In 2022, the Darien YMCA Summer camp implemented a mindfulness enrichment program for our K-2 grade campers in partnership with the Community Mindfulness Project (CMP). We found campers of this age had significant behavioral issues due to the lingering effects of COVID-19. CMP stepped in and helped deliver a variety of mindfulness and heart-opening practices to help our campers with their physical, psychological, emotional, and social well-being. CMP also trained our camp counselors and gave them tools to help campers with mindfulness practices. Many counselors noted the difference in behavior of this particular age-group, and we are hoping to continue this partnership with CMP for camp and with additional youth programming.



SWIM ACROSS AMERICA

Making Waves to Fight Cancer: Swim Across America Fairfield County (SAA FC) brought Olympians Elisabeth Beisel and Craig Beardsley to the YMCA on April 23, 2022, to host a clinic with our Piranha swim team followed by a community meet and greet with questions, autographs, and photos. Shout out to SAA FC for putting on this wonderful event and for funding cancer research, clinical trials, and hosting charity swims.

OLYMPIC ATHLETE APPEARANCE

On March 4 & 5, 2022, Olympian Paige Madden stopped by the Y to spend some time with the Piranhas! Paige suited up and jumped in the pool with our Piranhas to give them some instruction on their strokes. She also included stories and tips about growing up as a swimmer and of course, swimming in college and the Olympics. After signing caps and photos taken, she left the athletes with this advice - "Work hard, handle adversity and believe in yourself!" Great advice both in and out of the pool!



OUR UNOFFICIAL AMBASSADOR

.....

If you've been involved at the Darien Y at any time in the last 7 years, you've likely seen member Erin Lumpkin and her family around the building. Erin initially joined the Darien Y when she had a toddler and an infant. She was new to town and looking for an activity she could do with both of her kids, and that's when she found the Y's Tumble Bees gymnastics class: she found she could participate in the class with her toddler while her infant was happily strapped to her chest! From there, Erin's family became permanent fixtures at the Y: they have participated in gymnastics, swimming, soccer, karate, tennis, golf, volleyball, kayaking and sailing, and summer camps. All 3 of Erin's children went through/are going through Holly Pond School, and both Erin and her husband work out at the Y regularly. Erin is at the Y so often and is so knowledgeable about the programs we offer; many people think she is a Y employee! She's not, though she may qualify as the Darien Y's "unofficial ambassador".

Though there is no doubt Erin's family continues coming to the Y because there is always programming to meet her family's changing needs and interests, it's clear from speaking with Erin that she and her family are closely connected to the PEOPLE at the Y. Having participated in such a wide variety of programming, Erin counts several staff members among her friends, and has developed core friendships with other parents she got to know while watching kids' activities. Erin's children are clearly at home here at the Y, too. Erin told us about preschool teachers, swim instructors, gymnastics coaches, front desk staff, and many other staff members with whom her kids feel a bond. With family 1200 miles away, the relationships the Lumpkin family has made here at the Y feel like a "second family."

READ THE FULL STORY, VISIT:

<https://darien-ymca.org/erin-lumpkins-story/>



SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN ACTION

As an organization dedicated to serving and strengthening our community, we inspire members of the community to make a difference in the lives of others with small and large acts of kindness.

Your support helps others who are less fortunate to access our life-changing opportunities.

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ENGAGING COMMUNITY, ENCOURAGING VOLUNTEERISM AND ENSURING EQUITY- REFLECTING ON OUR YEAR:



COFFEE WITH A COP

The Darien Police Department partnered with the YMCA to host a Coffee with a Cop event in our lobby. Coffee with a Cop brings police officers and the community together, over coffee, to discuss issues and learn more about each other. These events help to break down barriers between police officers and the citizens they serve.

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVES

The Darien YMCA hosted a total of 3 blood drives in partnership with the American Red Cross. As a result, 96 pints of donated blood saved close to 300 lives.



FULL COURT PEACE

In 2022, the Darien Y partnered again with Full Court Peace, a local nonprofit that repairs neighborhood basketball courts in underserved communities. On July 16, Darien youth basketball players and family members descended on Ludlow Park in Norwalk, CT to refurbish a local basketball court. We are so grateful for all the families and individuals who donated to ensure we could cover the costs of supplies and deliver some positive impact to a community in need.

BASEBALL EQUIPMENT DRIVE

Ben Wychulis, a junior at Darien High School, came up with the idea to gather equipment after reflecting upon how fortunate he has been to be able to afford and participate in sports throughout his life. Ben collected over 40 pieces of equipment.





HUMANITARIAN AID FOR UKRAINE:

Our YMCA gymnastics coaches and friends helped organize much needed supply drives to assist and support the people of Ukraine. We collected hundreds of pounds of medical supplies, non-perishable food, socks, underwear, hygiene products, flashlights, batteries, first aid kits and more.

We were in awe of the generosity shown towards the people of Ukraine. Our community never fails to meet the call to help those in need even when they are thousands of miles away. Your donations of food, medical supplies, clothing, and other staples made a huge difference. Thank you to all who donated!

A special thanks to Mothers for Others and Kathy de Graaff for donating over 3,000 diapers!



"It's so heartbreaking to see what's unfolding in Ukraine. It's unbelievable. My friends and family are scared for their lives. I feel helpless. But I'm doing my best to do something and helping to organize a humanitarian aid drive here at the Darien YMCA is making me feel a bit better. If we all come together, we can make a difference and help the innocent families of Ukraine caught in this devastating conflict."

- Iryna K.

PERSON-TO-PERSON

P2P continues to be an essential and valued partner in the Darien community. Darien YMCA members eagerly sign up to help when called upon by P2P. In 2022, YMCA members volunteered at various P2P clothing and food distribution projects and events. Our YMCA members also donated food, toys, clothing, and backpacks to support P2P's community drives.



FLU CLINICS:

Together for Your Health: The Darien YMCA teamed up with Grieb's Pharmacy on October 19 to offer much needed flu shots to staff, Y members and the community. Over 50 individuals signed up and protected themselves and their families from the flu.



2022 COMMUNITY EVENTS



HEALTHY KIDS DAY

Health Kids Day returned to the Darien YMCA on April 29, 2022, after a hiatus. It's part of the Y's nationwide effort to enhance the well-being of kids and families, promoting an active lifestyle during the summer. In Darien, the day included sports, swimming, rock climbing, healthy eating, relaxation, story time, kayak rides, and a kids fun run. These activities aimed to encourage kids to stay active and help families establish routines for better mental and physical health. **Thank you to our Sponsors:** Darien Sport Shop, Palmer's Market, Matrix Fitness, Darien Dental Arts, Darien Running Company, Kumon, Whole Foods, Stop & Shop

FAMILY FUN DAY

Each year the Darien YMCA's Holly Pond School hosts Family Fun Day, an annual fundraiser to support enrichment programs at the preschool. This family event is always open to the public and designed for preschool and elementary school kids. In its 26th year, this fun-filled day included a bounce house, inflatable obstacle course, face painting, tattoos, magician, balloon artist, pumpkin decorating, crafts, rock wall, hands-on pottery station, Uncle's Deli hot dog cart, Heights Pizza, bake sale, candy shop, DJ music, and games galore!



HALLOWEEN PARTY

On Friday, October 28th, the Darien YMCA transformed into a bewitching wonderland, where laughter and screams of delight filled the night. The event allowed over 300 kids and families to come together, embrace the spirit of Halloween, and create memories. The night included decorated treat stations around the YMCA facility, Superheroes, popcorn, movies, games, and a haunted playground.

Abilis - ProjectSEARCH Partners

We celebrated our first Project SEARCH intern class, partnering with Abilis, a non-profit supporting individuals with special needs. Project SEARCH is a 9-month internship for young adults (18-30) seeking competitive employment. Our inaugural class of 4 interns gained valuable skills working with our teams in facilities, wellness, childcare, marketing, and membership. After graduation, 2 interns joined the Darien YMCA: Alexandra Furmin as a classroom aid at Holly Pond Preschool and Christian Young as a welcome desk associate in Fitness & Wellness. Congratulations to Alexandra, Christian, Dorian, and Mohammed on their achievements!



2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

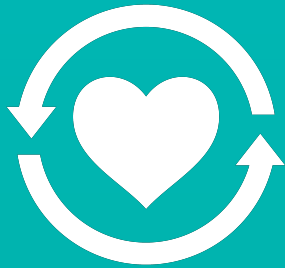
18

free YMCA Community memberships were giving to Darien Police, Darien EMS Post 53, Darien Clergy, and ABC House participants.



4

interns graduated from Project SEACH, a nine-month job skills internship program in partnership with Abilis, for young adults with developmental disabilities.



5 Individuals joined our REVIVE Cancer Wellness Program. This is a 12-week program available to any cancer survivor within our community at no cost and is designed to help improve the patient's ability to cope with the mental and physical stress following cancer diagnosis and treatment.



392

volunteers worked over 7,700 volunteer hours together to strengthen our community for ALL.



376

individuals raised over \$267,000 to continue the work of bringing our neighbors to the Darien YMCA



13

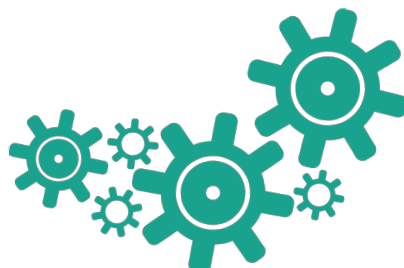
community-based organizations were provided space to conduct classes, meetings, and practices that saved \$174,000 in expenses.

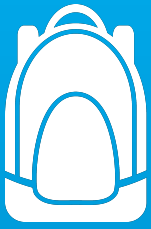


Over

\$313,000

in financial assistance made it possible for over 430 members of our community to have a safe space to belong, get healthy, and stay connected.





131

kids thrived in our Kids Club after-school program, where caring and dedicated staff engaged with kids through games and activities, learning opportunities, and through acting as positive role models.



195

students participated in the YMCA's early education programs and Holly Care at Holly Pond School, where children had the ability to discover their potential and develop their skills.



1,284

kids attended summer camp and made new friends, enjoyed games, participated in mindfulness activities, and made life-long memories, including 25 campers with special needs.

1,300

children received group swim lessons, teaching them to be safe around water and building strong, confident swimmers. We certified over 50 individuals in CPR and 55 lifeguards in collaboration with Darien Parks and Recreation and Soundwaters, making our entire community safer.



4,000+

young athletes learned teamwork & stayed active in youth sports. Through these programs, young athletes build values, self-confidence, respect, and teamwork.



5,000+

Facility visits were up 24% over 2021, keeping over 5,000 members engaged in fitness, wellness, sports, education, and aquatics to find their better selves.



6,000+

personal training sessions helped members regain their confidence, increase their strength, mobility, and flexibility, and improve their balance.



653

older adults engaged in educational sessions, improved their health through group exercise classes, and stayed connected with friends.

THANK YOU

2022 DONORS

For those that donated to the Y or volunteered their time and resources, we are **so grateful**. Because of you, the Y is able to serve and strengthen our community.

CHAMPION

\$10,000+

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Melissa O'Brien
Tamara & James Pardo
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Eileen & Edward Ryan
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Alicia & Matt Sable
Stephanie & Pramod Sanaga
Kathleen Dowling Sartorius
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Masha & Rodger Smith
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Sarah Walker & David Spitz
Tobey & Christian Wallace
Deborah Witherspoon & William Marbach
Matt & Nicole Woeste
Laura & Ben Wyatt
Annie & Damian Zajac

GIVING MATTERS

Our donors make it possible for children, families and adults of all ages to have access to Y programs that are vital not only to them, but to our community. Donations allow the Y to open doors our community regardless of their ability to pay.

This Annual Report includes gifts received by the Darien YMCA between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of our lists. If your name has been misspelled, listed incorrectly, or omitted, please accept our apologies and contact our Development office so we can correct our records.

Karen A. Ford
Development Director
203.655.8228 ext.1358
kford@darien-ymca.org

Thank you for your support!



2022 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
REVENUES AND OTHER SUPPORT			
Program Service Fees	\$6,681,718	\$291,580	\$6,973,298
Membership Dues	2,380,644		2,380,644
Annual Campaign	255,275		255,275
Contributions	14,385	248,795	263,180
Sale of Supplies	11,138		11,138
Investment Return, Net	(114,197)	(25,885)	(140,082)
Gain on Disposal of Land, Building, and Equipment			
Other Revenue	20,274		20,274
Net Assets Released from Restrictions	462,922	(462,922)	
Total Revenues and Other Support	9,712,159	51,568	9,763,727
OPERATING EXPENSES			
Program Services	7,636,626		7,636,626
Management and General	1,167,753		1,167,753
Fundraising	158,195		158,195
Total Operating Expenses	8,962,574		8,962,574
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	749,585	51,568	801,153
NET ASSETS - Beginning of Year	12,784,581	374,385	13,158,966
NET ASSETS - End of Year	<u>\$13,534,166</u>	<u>\$425,953</u>	<u>\$13,960,119</u>



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**THANK YOU
YOUR SUPPORT
MATTERS**

DARIEN YMCA
darien-ymca.org

**2420 Post Road
DARIEN, CT 06820
203-655-8228**