

2023 ROUND UP

What kinds of incredible things can you accomplish with a team of donors behind you? Too many to list. That's why we did the next best thing and came up with our top 10 favorite **SUMMIT AREA YMCA** stories of the past year. Here they are – in no particular order.

10 STORIES FROM THE Y

MAKING WAVES OF INCLUSION

This year, we teamed up with the Special Olympics to form a new adaptive swim team, the Summit Area YMCA Sea Lions. A team of eight teens were given the opportunity to be coached by Emily Blumstein and volunteers from the Summit Seals. The Sea Lions met once a week and learned to work together and strengthen their skills. We look forward to seeing them swim again this year!

BUILDING LASTING CONNECTIONS AMONG SENIORS

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our Program Coordinator Mary Grace McCann, we now proudly provide four additional classes to foster engagement and forge friendships among seniors. Whether it's our new Bird Watching Club, Book Club, Film Fanatics Club, or Knitting Club, we offer a diverse range of activities to suit everyone's interests.

WOOF-TASTIC YOGA

This year, the Berkeley Heights YMCA introduced downward dog with a furry twist through new Puppy Yoga classes. Not only did these classes provide our members with a zen-filled yoga session, but they also supported an amazing cause. A portion of the proceeds went toward Home for Good Dog Rescue in Berkeley Heights.

Members not only found their inner peace on the mat; they also helped dogs find their forever homes.



THE SUMMIT YMCA BEGINS A NEW ERA

This fall, the renovated Summit YMCA reopened to a community eager to come inside. Staff and members reunited in the Y's iconic brick building on the corner of Maple Street and Broad Street. Inside, residents bonded over bettering their lives through enriching activities ranging from fitness classes to volunteerism.

== RECESS REIMAGINED ==

The Summit Board of Education honored our exceptional dedication and assistance to their students and staff throughout the 2022-2023 academic year. Our staff, led by Youth and Sports Director Allison Zeimann, played a pivotal role in coordinating structured recess activities within the Franklin Elementary School at no cost.

ELEVATING EDUCATION THROUGH PLAY

At The Learning Circle YMCA (TLC), we firmly embrace the philosophy of learning through play to support our students in reaching developmentally appropriate milestones. We were delighted to introduce the Thayer Clark Rasmussen Outdoor Classroom to our TLC playground this September. Generously funded by family members Sherrerd Stewart and Eric and Susan Rasmussen, this new space promotes social interaction and play while enhancing fine and gross motor skills. It provides children with valuable opportunities for diverse educational experiences—all within the stimulating outdoor environment.

A BEACON OF INCLUSIVITY AND EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT

This fall, our new English as a Second Language (ESL) program welcomed eight high-school-aged students. Together, they engage in a comprehensive curriculum that goes beyond language fundamentals. From learning how to fill out applications to exploring American holiday traditions, our program provides practical skills for both academic and real-world success.

COMMUNITY STRONG: Our Blood Drives Providing Lifesaving Support

In 2023, the Summit Area YMCA hosted four blood drives, successfully collecting a total of 158 pints of blood. This generous contribution has the potential to save the lives of 474 individuals, underscoring the impactful role the YMCA plays in supporting community health and well-being.



ACHIEVERS ON CAMPUS

Teens from our Achievers program enjoyed a visit to the University of Notre Dame during a historic weekend when the iconic football team faced off against HBCU Tennessee State University (TSU) for the first time.

To commence the weekend, our students explored the campus and had lunch in the dining hall. South Bend set the stage with an HBCU pep rally after the tour, featuring performances by the TSU cheer team and marching band. The final day included an exclusive invitation for our students to partake in pregame festivities on the campus, culminating in the Notre Dame vs. TSU game.

A SPECIAL VISIT FROM SNOOPY

Snoopy came to the Berkeley Heights YMCA this fall to take photos with our children to promote that **Peanuts Worldwide** is partnering with the YMCA of the USA. This partnership will bring more transformational summer camp experiences and outdoor adventures to kids across the U.S. and internationally. As part of this new multi-year collaboration, Peanuts Worldwide will also be the sponsor in 2024 and 2025 for Healthy Kids Day®, the Y's national initiative to improve the health and well-being of kids and families.

