

SUMMIT AREA YMCA



ANNUAL CELEBRATION



APRIL 2026

NO PLACE *Like This Place*



We believe we're all better off when we're part of an us and we are grateful to the many who invest in our community through program participation, partnerships, and philanthropic support of the Y. Together we uplift our communities and continue to make opportunity accessible to all.



OUR MISSION

For 140 years, the Summit Area YMCA has served as a vital support system working to provide children, families, and individuals of all ages with the resources and opportunities needed to learn, grow, and thrive.



Our purpose is dedicated to enhancing the physical, mental, and social well-being of our community. At the Y, you'll find a supportive environment that fosters personal growth, improves health, empowers youth, and builds meaningful connections.

140 YEARS STRONG. 175 YEARS OF IMPACT.

In 2026, the Summit Area YMCA (SAY) marks 140 years of serving its community, alongside 175 years of the YMCA of the USA strengthening communities across the country.

In 1886, the Summit YMCA began with a simple but powerful idea: that the community needed a place where people, especially young people, could come together with purpose. Early members gathered in borrowed spaces, offering programs, conversation, and connection at a time when such opportunities were limited. What started as a small, local effort quickly grew, expanding facilities, introducing new programs, and responding to the changing needs of a growing community .

Over the decades, the Y has both reflected and helped shape progress in Summit, from expanding access and embracing inclusion, to supporting working families through the creation and growth of early childcare, to building programs that strengthen health, confidence, and connection across all ages. Through every chapter, one thing has remained constant: a commitment to meeting people where they are and helping them move forward with dignity.



That spirit continues today. The SAY's flagship location, the Summit YMCA, has been reimaged for the future after a transformative renovation in 2023, ensuring it remains a welcoming, modern space for all who walk through its doors. In 2025, the Summit Area YMCA received Praesidium Accreditation® for achieving the highest industry standards in abuse prevention.

More than a milestone, this anniversary is a celebration of the generations of people who have found a place here, built strength, and created lasting connections. It is a legacy still being written, grounded in community and driven by a shared popular belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



1,096

Students were inspired to learn, play and grow in our early education and school age childcare programs



1,201

Youths tried new activities, made lasting friendships, and gained independence at summer camp



243

Teens learned found a sense of belonging through free recreational programs like 7th Grade Initiative, Achievers & Girls Night In



2,400

Kids spent time in Kid Zone expanding social skills under safe care while their parents participated in activities at the Y



1,233

Children enrolled in swim lessons where they developed strength, water skills, and confidence



1,174

Young athletes advanced their determination and sportsmanship through youth sports programming

HEALTHY LIVING



638,565

Total visits to our Y supporting members in reaching their fitness goals and maintain healthy habits



108,552

Group fitness class reservations for building strength, staying active, and remaining healthy



130

Individuals reclaimed their mental health and physical strength in our recovery programs like LIVESTRONG® at the YMCA and Parkinson's Exercise



176

Participants improved their quality of life becoming more active and engaged through our active older adults enrichment programs



707

Adults gained agility, endurance, speed, friendships, and their love for the water in our aqua fitness classes



412

Pickleball players upped their skills and found friendly competition in a social atmosphere

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



1,240,339

Dollars in financial assistance awarded ensuring that cost is not a barrier to wellness and community



4,994

Meals provided to families through our food distribution programs meeting critical needs and lifting stress



2,306

Locals found joy, celebration, and new friends attending our community-strengthening events



4,753

Hours served giving back and supporting our neighbors through volunteering



598

Dedicated staff committed to furthering the Y's mission as a vital support system in the community



15,874

Total members finding connection, opportunity, and empowerment through Y programs and services



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Community Partnership Award

The Community FoodBank of New Jersey

Lifetime Achievement Award

Ruby Hollingsworth

Shuart Reed Memorial Award

Thomas Hall

ACHIEVERS AWARDS

Frederick J. Watts Scholarship

Kelsey Chacho

H. Leon Cross Scholarship

Julia Gumny

Dwight Giles Scholarships

Emari Miles

Yarel Moctezuma Salazar

Jaenelle Osei

Aylin Sandre

Tiffany Shaw

Ashley Toxtle

Kayla Vargas



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

This award celebrates an outstanding organization for their partnership in fulfilling the Y's mission to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.



Community FoodBank of New Jersey

The Summit Area YMCA is proud to recognize the Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ) as this year's Community Partnership Award recipient. As the state's largest anti-hunger, anti-poverty organization, CFBNJ has been a vital partner to the Y since 2017, working together to provide nutritious food, fresh produce, and essential hygiene supplies to neighbors in need.

What grew from as an urgent response to the COVID-19 crisis has expanded into an ongoing partnership, now serving approximately 450 families across Summit, Berkeley Heights, Gillette, Millburn, New Providence, Short Hills, Springfield, and Stirling. Twice each month, with the support of more than 50 dedicated volunteers, the Y distributes food to families, seniors, and individuals, including many participating in the Y's financial assistance program.

Together, CFBNJ and the Y also support families through the Family Pack program. For almost 10 years, the partnership has been providing weekend meals for children who qualify for free and reduced lunch, with distributions coordinated through local Summit public schools.

For more than 50 years, CFBNJ has expanded its impact statewide addressing not only food insecurity, which affects over 1.1 million New Jersey residents, including 270,000 children, but also its root causes through job training and nutrition education. Under the leadership of CEO Elizabeth McGovern, the organization continues its commitment to supporting underserved communities and breaking the cycle of generational poverty.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

This award celebrates our exemplary retirees who have dedicated more than 20 years of service to the Summit Area YMCA.



Ruby Hollingsworth

It is our honor to recognize Ruby Hollingsworth as she celebrates her upcoming retirement from the Summit Area YMCA. Ruby currently serves as Senior Program Director of Pre-K and Kindergarten at The Learning Circle YMCA (TLC) and previously led the Infant and Toddler Care program. She joined the YMCA in 2012 through the merger with the Summit Childcare Center.

Ruby has dedicated her entire career to children and education. She began teaching in her home country of Guyana as a first-grade teacher before moving to the United States in 1986, where she continued her work in early childhood education. While her first teaching experience in Brooklyn was challenging, it only strengthened her commitment to the profession she had always known she was meant to pursue.

Deeply understanding the impact educators have on young lives, Ruby often shares that children “are like sponges... it is great to know you are impacting them. They come to us not knowing anything; then they come to know so much.” Through her leadership, TLC has remained a place where children are nurtured, supported, and inspired during their most formative years.

In retirement, Ruby looks forward to spending time with family both in Guyana and the United States. Guided by the values instilled by her mother, she plans to explore charitable work and continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

SHUART REED AWARD

This award is given to an extraordinary individual who exemplifies Shuart Reed's commitment to the betterment of our community.



Thomas Hall

It is our honor to present Thomas Hall with the 2026 Shuart Reed Award in recognition of his unwavering dedication to the Summit Area YMCA for more than 20 years. Tom first became involved with the Summit Seals Swim Team as a parent, serving as a timer and later as an official beginning in 2007. He went on to serve on the Swim Team Board for several years, ultimately becoming Board President.

Tom's leadership at the Y spans 12 years on the Board of Trustees, including service on the Executive Committee, as Board Vice Chair, and as Chair of the Board. His involvement has touched every dimension of the Y's work, with committee service across Board Governance, Strategic Planning, Audit, Finance, Advancement, and Facilities, chairing both the Advancement and Facilities Committees.

During Tom's tenure, the Y experienced significant growth in key areas, including an expansion of financial assistance, strengthening its commitment to serving the community. His leadership coincided with several major milestones, including the construction of the state-of-the-art Berkeley Heights branch and community pool, renovations to the Summit facility, the establishment of a partnership to operate the Springfield Community Pool, and navigating the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Professionally, Tom has built a 25-year career with Merck, with experience spanning finance, business development, strategy, commercial operations, and integration management. He currently serves as Head of Finance for Merck Research Laboratories, leading a global team responsible for financial oversight and decision support.

SAY ACHIEVERS

The Achievers Program is a free YMCA college and career readiness program that empowers high school students to discover their potential and define their future. Through mentorship, leadership development, and real-world exposure, students gain the guidance, confidence, and opportunities needed to pursue their personal, academic, and professional goals.



FREDERICK J. WATTS SCHOLARSHIP

The Frederick J. Watts Scholarship is bestowed annually to a member of the Summit Area YMCA Achievers Program toward higher education or vocational training after completion of high school graduation. The candidate shall reflect the values that Fred Watts embodied through his family, professional career, and love for the YMCA movement. In particular, the candidate should show an interest in civic service through giving back to their respective community.



**Future Graduate of
Cornell University**

Kelsey Chacho

Kelsey is a Jonathan Dayton High School student who joined the Achievers program during her freshman year. She will attend Cornell University's Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, where she plans to study business, finance, and economic strategy. Achievers experiences such as visiting Deloitte, attending the Montclair University Hispanic Student College Institute, and participating in workshops on resumes, financial literacy, and leadership helped shape her academic and career goals. She also credits the program with helping her secure her first Office Assistant position through networking. Kelsey has been deeply involved in leadership, volunteerism, and service, including tutoring, organizing drives, and working as a YMCA swim instructor. She plans to continue living out the YMCA values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility, and equity through leadership, community involvement, and creating meaningful impact in the future.

H. LEON CROSS SCHOLARSHIP

The H. Leon Cross Scholarship is bestowed annually to a member of the Summit community toward higher education or vocational training after completion of high school graduation. The candidate shall reflect the values that H. Leon Cross embodied through his professional career of community service and his love for the YMCA movement.



Julia Gumny

Julia is a Summit High School student who has participated in the YMCA Achievers program since joining as a sophomore. Through the program, she developed a stronger understanding of the college search process, scholarship opportunities, and the skills needed to successfully transition to college. Outside of Achievers, Julia serves as a student leader for the Summit Free Market, where she helps organize donations, train volunteers, and support families in need through the redistribution of household items. Her work has shown her the power of service, sustainability, and communities working together to create meaningful change. Julia is passionate about helping others and creating lasting impact, and she plans to carry the values of leadership, equity, and compassion into her future endeavors.

DWIGHT GILES SCHOLARSHIPS

The Dwight Giles Scholarship is an achievement-based award that recognizes exceptional students for their academic commitment, active participation in Achievers, and meaningful contributions to the Y and their community. Recipients are selected based on a reflection essay and recommendations from mentors who have supported their journey.



Emari Miles

UNDECIDED



Yarel Moctezuma Salazar

FUTURE GRADUATE OF RIDER UNIVERSITY



Jaenelle Osei

UNDECIDED



Aylin Sandre

FUTURE GRADUATE OF RIDER UNIVERSITY



Tiffany Shaw

FUTURE GRADUATE OF SAVANNAH COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN



Ashley Toxtle

FUTURE GRADUATE OF MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY



Kayla Vargas

FUTURE GRADUATE OF SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

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