



# THE PRESIDENT'S NEWSLETTER



President and CEO  
GENE JONES

## JULY 2020



### NEW EARLY LEARNING CENTER

The Bonita Springs Early Learning Center will welcome up to 150 children ages six weeks to five years of age providing an opportunity for children to build a foundation for education and prepare for kindergarten. Thank you to our local community, donors and board members for their support that made this dream a reality. The center will also provide employment opportunities for up to 30 staff. Lee County families will have another option to provide an opportunity for their children to learn, grow and thrive. As a nonprofit, the Y does not turn anyone away because of inability to pay. Early childhood education is critical and sets the foundation for children to develop a passion for learning. The new early learning center will provide a robust curriculum with activities in the areas of literacy, math, science, technology and character development. In addition, swim lessons and other activities will be offered allowing children to develop critical life skills necessary for their growth and development. The Tadpoles software will allow parents to be engaged and remain informed of their child's learning progress through an app. The center will have ten classrooms and provide opportunities for children as young as six weeks through VPK. We thank our donors for providing critical resources that will allow children in Lee County to have a safe and engaging environment to reach their God-given potential.

### DEAR FRIENDS,

As we continue to navigate these challenging times our nation and communities are facing, The SKY Family YMCA will be guided by its values of caring, honesty, responsibility and respect. Our Y is and always will be an all-inclusive organization for every person within the communities we serve. Everyone is welcomed and valued as a part of our Y family and we will keep providing programs that help individuals reach their full potential.

Each day I see our communities demonstrate the desire and willingness to come together to meet the needs of those around us. Even during this time of unrest, together we continue to persevere, uplift and inspire. As we move forward, our Y will continue **creating healthy families and communities** and lead the way to a brighter future by following our belief that we are stronger when our doors are open to all.

Together, we can rewrite the narrative and create thriving communities where barriers are broken down and opportunities are endless.

Join us for the ribbon cutting ceremony as we celebrate this amazing accomplishment on August 6<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM at the Bonita Springs YMCA.

### HAPPEHATCHEE

The Sky family YMCA is thrilled to provide a plethora of activities and programs thanks to a partnership with the Village of Estero at the Happehatchee Center in Estero, Florida. The Happehatchee Center is a 5+ acre outdoor facility where children will engage in summer camp programs and other activities. Our goal is to foster their appreciation of nature, help them develop character and teach them life skills such as teamwork, shelter building and much more. Environmental education programs, canoeing and archery will be the core of the activities and services provided at the Happehatchee Center. The Y will also provide additional services and programs related to health and wellness for adults, including yoga classes and opportunities for staff retreats for organizations and businesses. Through this partnership, the YMCA will be able to expand our services to families in Lee County and positively impact the lives of more children and families.

### TRY THE Y

On Saturday, July 11<sup>th</sup> we hosted "Try The Y Day" at all six of our SKY Family YMCA locations as a way to welcome back our members and allow them the opportunity to see new group exercise offerings. The day featured the latest releases of popular classes like Les Mills BodyPump, BodyCombat and GRIT, as well as 30-minute demos of many of our other favorite group exercise classes.

We will restart some of our Health Innovation programming this month including Enhance Fitness, Parkinson's Wellness classes, Pedaling for Parkinson's and Rock Steady Boxing. Safety protocols are being taken for these programs including separate entrances for participants (where possible), in addition to sanitizing of space and equipment before and after each class. Masks will be worn by participants, staff and volunteers when social distancing is not possible, excluding people who are engaged in cardiovascular exercise.



### UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENT

The Charlotte County YMCAs (Franz Ross and Punta Gorda) will be hosting the **4th Annual Harbor Nights Event**, dinner and auction at 5:00 PM on Saturday, March 6, 2021 at Gilchrist Park. Sponsorships start at \$1,500 and individual tickets are available for \$125 per ticket. The funds raised at this event will provide scholarship assistance for children, families and seniors in Charlotte County.