



# BETTER TOGETHER

YMCA ALLIANCE OF  
NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND  
2024 IMPACT REPORT

# YMCA ALLIANCE OF NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND

## OUR MISSION

The Alliance supports collaboration amongst the YMCAs and community partners in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont to increase our impact and advocate for positive change in our communities.

## OUR VISION

A visionary and unified Alliance of YMCAs leading change, supporting impactful leaders, and developing healthier communities.



## OUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITIES

The Alliance focuses on four key priority areas to maximize our collective impact across the region: **Chronic Disease Prevention & Management, Hunger Relief, Mental Health, and Youth Development.**

## OUR TEAM

Meagan Hamblett  
Chief Executive Officer

Meg Helming  
Chief Operating Officer

Paige Binfield  
Director of Development

# MEMBER YMCAS

## MAINE

Bangor Region YMCA  
Bath Area Family YMCA  
Boothbay Region YMCA  
Central Lincoln County YMCA  
Down East Family YMCA  
Kennebec Valley YMCA  
Mount Desert Island YMCA  
Old Town-Orno YMCA  
Penobscot Bay YMCA  
Sanford-Springvale YMCA  
State YMCA Camp of Maine  
Waldo County YMCA  
YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston  
YMCA of Greater Waterville  
YMCA of Southern Maine

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Carroll County YMCA/Camp Huckins  
Keene Family YMCA  
Southern District YMCA  
Takodah YMCA  
The Granite YMCA  
YMCA Camp Belknap  
YMCA Camp Coniston  
YMCA of Greater Nashua

## VERMONT

Berkshire Family YMCA/Bennington Branch  
Greater Burlington YMCA  
Meeting Waters YMCA

# THANK YOU TO THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS



Northern New England Leadership Conference Sponsors

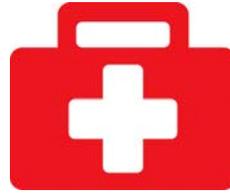


These statistics represent the collective work of the 25 YMCAs across Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont last year.



**6,700**

school-aged children in before/after-school programs at 89 sites



**300**

Y staff trained in Mental Health First Aid



**207,340**

members served



**4,500**

staff employed at the Y in Northern New England



**19,000**

youth learned swimming and water safety skills



**2,910**

adults participated in chronic disease prevention and management programs



**\$4.1 million**

in financial aid provided to individuals and families



**30,000**

children in day and overnight camps



**2,590**

kids in early childhood education programs



**1.2 million**

meals and snacks served to kids



# NOURISHING

# COMMUNITIES

The YMCA's food programs work year-round to help address food insecurity. In our region, nine Ys participate in the Child & Adult Food Care Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), both of which are federally funded nutrition programs through USDA. Many more Ys provide meals and snacks to youth in their care by leveraging grants and volunteer networks. Together, we can make sure every child is safe, healthy, and fed.



## ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

**The Granite YMCA** - through its Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) - has provided 168,059 meals during their 2023-2024 fiscal year, averaging 850 kids served monthly. "I love that the meals are made fresh daily, and that they have access to fresh produce. My son loves the variety of food, and now he frequently tries new foods at school and at home," shared one YMCA parent. The Granite YMCA of Manchester's Food Pantry program has also served approximately 75-100 individuals bi-weekly since opening in fall of 2023.



## COOKING WITH CONFIDENCE

When schools bring their students to visit the FARMS at the Y kitchen at the **Central Lincoln County YMCA** in Damariscotta, they learn to enjoy cooking and healthy eating, while bolstering their culinary skills. With raised garden beds and a robust teaching kitchen, kids learn how to harvest fresh vegetables, prepare and cook nutritious recipes, and sit down to share a meal with their peers and educators. In 2023, more than 1,000 students learned how to cook in the FARMS at the Y kitchen!





# IMPROVING

# HEALTH

In communities across Northern New England, the Y is a leading voice on health and well-being. Over the past 15 years, the Y has driven innovation in prevention and control of chronic disease and disability to save lives and reduce health care spending. For every state of life, the Y offers programs and services that support people in changing their lifestyles, managing stress levels, and adopting fitness and nutrition behaviors.



## STRENGTHENING MENTAL WELLNESS

The **Boothbay Region YMCA** recognizes the importance for youth to engage in physical activity and increase social connection through programs that help promote mental, emotional, and social wellness. For the last two years, the Y has invested in hiring a Mental Health Specialist to support the staff and 200+ summer campers. Key Y staff are also trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing to recognize and respond when they notice someone struggling when in the Y's care.

## INCREASING STAMINA

"Several years ago, I started 'feeling old.' My wife suggested that we start exercise classes at the **Bangor Region YMCA**. At first, I would keep glancing at the clock, wondering how an hour could take so long. Slowly but surely, I found myself having more zip. Eventually, it got to the point where class would start and then, seemingly moments later, it was over. The environment at the YMCA is welcoming and accommodating. I know everyone in our class by name, and we chat with each other before and after classes. The trainers are knowledgeable, communicate clearly, and listen carefully to everyone. I celebrated my 78th birthday last month, but I don't feel 'old.' My quality of life is greatly improved. I can't thank the Y enough."

## PRIORITIZING COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

The **Keene Family YMCA** is dedicated to supporting community mental health through initiatives like the second annual Mental Health Resource Fair, which provides the community with access to crucial resources and support. The Y is also proud to participate in the InSHAPE program, in collaboration with Monadnock Family Services, to improve physical health and mental well-being for those with mental illness. This comprehensive program combines fitness, nutrition, and community integration to foster lasting positive change in participants' lives.

The Y offers several chronic disease prevention and management programs, including:

Enhance®Fitness

Healthy Weight & Your Child

LIVESTRONG at the YMCA

Moving for Better Balance

Pedaling for Parkinson's

Rock Steady Boxing

Walk With Ease

YMCA's Diabetes Prevention Program

YMCA Weight Loss Program



# SERVING

# OUR HEROES

In August 2023, the YMCA Alliance announced a partnership with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Maine Healthcare System to provide Maine veterans with access to YMCA facilities across the state. With a referral from their VA Maine primary care physician, qualifying veterans can join their local YMCA free-of-charge. In the first year of the partnership, 15 YMCAs across Maine served 484 veterans.



## FEELING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Bill Eilers of Wiscasset, ME served his first duty assignment in Vietnam in 1967 where he supervised construction projects such as airfields, buildings, roads and bridges. Following his service in Vietnam, he was stationed at Pensacola Naval Air Station for two years where he continued to work on construction projects for airfield facilities, training buildings and housing. After his active duty, Eilers joined the Naval Reserve Seabee Battalions and spent two years at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. before retiring with the rank of Commander after 20 years of service. "I attend these (water aerobics) classes five days a week [at the **Boothbay Region YMCA**] and feel it has been very beneficial to my general health and well-being. I have made many friends there, and met a number of other veterans. I would not have continued as actively with the YMCA program if it were not for the people I have met there. It is a very happy group and I think everyone genuinely enjoys the other participants as well as the instructors."

## FOSTERING CONNECTION

This year, 56 veterans found friends, connection and wellbeing at the **YMCA of Southern Maine** thanks to the YMCA Alliance Veteran Membership Program. The Y is uniquely suited to meet the needs of our veteran members, supporting physical and mental health through a variety of activities. Participants report improved lab results, reduced anxiety and most important, meaningful connections with others. "I have made many friends at the Y," shared one participant. "The health and social benefits have made me want to live longer and enjoy the golden years."





# SHAPING

# YOUNG MINDS

The YMCA provides children with safe, nurturing and enriching care, and is a critical component of our region's infrastructure to support working parents and the economy. As the largest provider of childcare in Northern New England, the YMCA operates more than 130 childcare sites annually. The Y is committed to meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of our young learners each and every day.



## SUPPORTING WORKING PARENTS

**Meeting Waters YMCA's** year-round out-of-school time programs support parents' ability to work, which helps them meet their basic needs. The Y is helping parents contribute to - and participate in - their local economy while building fundamental skills in their child(ren), such as academic enrichment, healthy lifestyle habits, self-discovery, and social skills necessary for today's world. The Y enables both parents and children reach their fullest potential - to learn, grow and thrive. One mother of five says, "These programs are such a big support to me, my children, and other families I know in my community. Y-ASPIRE and Y Day Camp are the biggest resources in our community that help to keep my single parent lifestyle achievable and cohesive.

**"My three kids go to the YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston's program in the Lewiston Housing Authority's Hillview Complex. The kids learn a lot and get help with reading, math and homework. I see them outside playing with other kids. I know they eat healthy food there and they like the snacks, which really helps me with groceries. The Y program helps me go to work knowing my kids are well cared for. It gives me time to make dinner, get laundry done, clean the house, care for my youngest child and have some time to myself as a single mom. The Y helps me out so much!"**

## INVESTING IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Thanks to the **YMCA of Greater Nashua's** innovative partnership with Nashua Community College, 18 early childhood educators have completed coursework towards their Lead Teacher Certification since August 2023. The free courses, held at the Y, are grant-funded and include instruction, books, and a laptop. This model was created as a result of the childcare employee crisis following the COVID-19 pandemic. By completing this college coursework, attendees receive their Associate's Teacher Certification, which sets them up to then independently pursue their Lead Certification in the future.

# EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS

## AMPLIFYING YOUTH VOICE

**YMCA of Greater Burlington's** Shabnam Saini served as the YMCA Youth and Government program's Governor for the state of Vermont in 2023. The YMCA Youth and Government program is an experiential civic engagement program for middle and high school students across the United States. As part of her experience, Shabnam attended a six-day conference in Washington, D.C. "Walking the halls of Congress was truly impactful. "The Youth and Government experience has inspired me to be a stronger advocate on behalf of others." This experience has even helped bring focus to what Shabnam wants to study in college - political science. "Through the Youth and Government program, I have a whole new perspective of what it could be like to work in government." Shabnam now sees that she can help ensure that voices other than her own are heard.



