

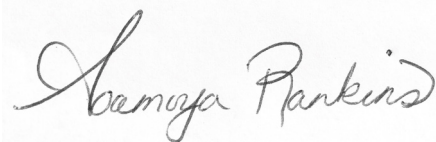
**In  
this  
Issue** YWCA Youth Learning Center Gets a New Space  
Volunteers Support Our Mission  
A Woman In Transition Graduates From CPCC

## Dear YWCA Family and Friends:

As development of all kinds continues to boom in the Queen City, we must ask ourselves, “what kind of Charlotte do we want to be?” While our jobs may not be one of a city planner, we do know that if we simply let development happen, without a vision for our whole community, what we get will not be what we need or want.

Many of us are learning for the first time that zoning was used as a tool in the past to segregate neighborhoods. When we visit some of our beloved communities that were built in the 1920’s and 1930’s, close in to center city, we see single-family homes beside duplexes, with a quadruplex across the street, all peacefully co-existing in a highly desirable, walkable neighborhood. This housing mix naturally occurred prior to zoning ordinances of the 1940’s that helped to perpetuate segregation and exclusion.

If zoning was used in the past as a tool to segregate neighborhoods, we can address racial and class inequities with that same tool today. What kind of Charlotte do we want to be?



Soamoya N. Rankins  
Board President



Kirsten D. Sikkelee  
Chief Executive Officer

## Students Sharing Messages

The 2019 We Believe Luncheon allowed YWCA to share our affordable housing goals, open up conversation about what individuals in our community face when seeking permanent housing, and unexpectedly gave a new voice to the youngest group we serve, the students of YWCA’s Youth Learning Centers.

After the We Believe Luncheon, the mailboxes that served as centerpieces, designed by Johanna Cathey at *To And From*, needed a new space and purpose, so staff members dispersed them among the Youth Learning Centers.



“The students have been using the mailboxes almost on a daily basis,” Veronica Davis, Assistant Coordinator at the Willow Oaks Youth Learning Center said. “I receive letters at least twice a week.”

At first Coordinators used the mailboxes as a way to expand vocabulary lessons. Words like empower, dignity, justice and equality were placed in the label holders, tying the decorative pieces to YWCA’s mission. After learning what the words meant, students would leave letters in the boxes sharing how certain individuals empowered them that day, or how they saw an example of justice.

Today the centers use the mailboxes to

build community in the classroom. Students leave each other messages throughout the week, and have even opened up to Coordinators in a brand new way. At Willow Oaks two sisters opened up about a family concern one day.

“Building a relationship with our kids is important,” said Veronica. “Some days we get very busy but they know that all they need to do is slip us a note in the mailbox and we will check it by the end of the day and respond.”



## Standing Up For Community

YWCA’s Stand Against Racism events and efforts with the national theme ‘No Hate. No Fear,’ focused on the intersection of immigrant rights and racism and how that impacts the Charlotte community.

In honor of the event, staff members put together snack packs for clients served by Refugee Support Services. Another group of staff members dropped off the snack packs and spent their morning at the center; assisting with meal prep in the kitchen, divviing out produce and canned goods for refugees to take home, and supporting the day’s lesson for students in the center’s ‘Love & Learn Kids’ Corner’.

The following day, Thursday, April 25th, YWCA held the racial justice forum, ‘Hitting Close To Home: A Community Conversation on Immigration’. Panelists

discussed the reality of the border rather than the way it’s depicted in media, the various types of immigrants, the impact of ICE on the Charlotte community and brought awareness to pending legislation, as well as the psychological effects and difficulty of adjusting to a different culture. Panelists included Jorge Millares from Queen City Unity, Councilmember Dimple Ajmera, Rachel Humphries from Refugee Support Services, Dr. Gina Navarrate from Charlotte Women’s March, William Joseph Haynes from Queens University of Charlotte, Leila Mirabal from Comunidad Colectiva, with Judith Barriga from Norsan Media moderating the discussion.

The public Stand Against Racism event in Uptown Charlotte was rescheduled due to predicted storms and took place on



Friday, June 14, featuring multicultural performances like a Chinese Lion Dance presented by Thundering Wave Martial Arts, the Capoeira dance from the NC Brazilian Arts Project, a Kickboxing demo, Native American Drum Circle, and spoken word poetry. The League of Women Voters had a table to register individuals to vote and Charlotte Women’s March provided our community with information around immigration.

# Fitness Highlights - Summer

See more offerings online at [www.ywcacentralcarolinas.org](http://www.ywcacentralcarolinas.org)



## Meet Our Aquatics Manager

Jeff Nerret, YWCA's Aquatics Manager, has always had a passion for water. The drive to be around a pool began when he was just four years old, enrolled in swim lessons and admiring the lifeguards, hoping to one day become one himself. Who knew how far that hope would lead him?



Jeff's aquatics career began 20 years ago, starting as a lifeguard at the age of 15 on Memorial Day Weekend. He began coaching swimmers when he was 17. After graduating from Wingate University in 2007 with a degree in Sports Management, he became an Aquatics Director at several pools and locations while organizing various youth and sports programs. After seven years of multiple pools and positions, Jeff moved back to Maryland to be closer to his family in a time of need, but still worked part time at a year-round outdoor pool.

He soon moved to Charlotte, working different part-time jobs at Mecklenburg County's Parks and Recreation Department's pools as well as managing neighborhood pools and working at local gyms. It was one of these part-time positions that offered Jeff a connection to the YWCA and he's happily been a manager on the YWCA Central Carolinas fitness team for two and a half years.

"I love this job," Jeff said, "because it gives me purpose. I get to teach children and adults how to swim, promote water safety, and plan fun activities for kids like Scuba Santa, Underwater Easter Egg Hunt, Flick N' Floats and more!"



As Aquatics Manager, Jeff is in charge of the pool pump chemicals keeping the pool's clarity and hue. He gives private, semi-private and group lessons, manages the Orange Crush Swim Team, coaches and manages the Spring Swim Clinic, and created a Swim Instructor program, to train any potential Swim Instructors to join YWCA's Fitness Team.

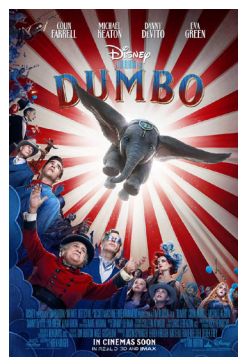
"I think our membership is more of a close knit family than other fitness centers," Jeff said, thinking of what he likes most about YWCA's Co-Ed

Fitness Center. "And I do really enjoy the light switch moments in swim lessons, when a child realizes they really can swim. A lot of work goes into it, but it's worth it."

See all lessons, programs and aquatics events on our website, or contact Jeff Nerret at [aquatics@ywcacentralcarolinas.org](mailto:aquatics@ywcacentralcarolinas.org) to learn more about the Swim Instructor program and swim lesson bookings.

## July Flick N' Float

We'll be watching Dumbo (2019) while floating in the indoor pool on **July 19 from 6pm - 8pm!** Register your child by **July 18** for just \$5 in person or online (<https://tms.ezfacility.com/OnlineRegistrations/Register.aspx?CompanyID=2694&GroupID=2468749>). Your child must be able to float unsupported for at least five seconds and be able to swim five yards of front and back crawl without assistance. Children must be nine years or older. (For children younger than 9, an adult must accompany them.)



## Take Your First Step

Join Coaches Mark C. and Jody F. for a 6-week run/walk training program. A training plan will be provided with group runs and optional participation in the Yiasou Greek Festival 5K on August 24th. (Individuals must register on their own.)

Meets **Saturdays 9am-10am, from 7/13 - 8/17.**

Rates:  
YWCA Members: \$50  
Non-Members: \$70

Register online:  
[www.industrialstrengthfitness.com/classes](http://www.industrialstrengthfitness.com/classes)

Questions? Contact Jody F. at [ydubtriclub@gmail.com](mailto:ydubtriclub@gmail.com)

## HIIT Swim

Have fun with Coach Lisa F. in a 60-minute high intensity swim class! Get your heart rate pumping and strengthened with exercise intervals while increasing endurance.

Register for the series or drop in for a class!

Meets **Wednesdays 7pm-8pm, from 9/4 - 10/2.**

Rates:  
YWCA Members: \$45 (\$15 drop in)  
Non-Members: \$65 (\$20 drop in)

Register online:  
[www.industrialstrengthfitness.com/classes](http://www.industrialstrengthfitness.com/classes)

Questions? Contact Jody F. at [ydubtriclub@gmail.com](mailto:ydubtriclub@gmail.com)

### group exercise and aquatics schedule - Pool is open to all YWCA members during swim lessons.

monday	tuesday	wednesday	thursday	friday	saturday	
				7am - 7:50am Deep Water Work		<p>★ Pop Up Classes continue so that you may try new classes! View classes on the website via the monthly event calendar.</p> <p>★ Visit the website for details on Swim Lessons!</p> <p>Pool Hours Mon-Thurs 5:45am - 8pm Fri 5:45am - 7pm Sat 8 am - 4:45pm Sun 1pm - 4:45pm</p> <p>12:00pm - 1:00pm Mon-Fri Additional Lap Lane</p> <p>Childcare Hours Mon-Thurs 9am - 12pm &amp; 5pm - 7pm Fri 9am - 12pm Sat 9am - 12pm</p> <p>Get our email updates! sgarguillo@ywca centralcarolinas.org</p>
8am - 8:50am Deep Water Work	8am - 8:50am Deep Water Work	8am - 8:50am Deep Water Work	8am - 8:50am Deep Water Work	8am - 8:50am Deep Water Work		
9am - 9:45am Move & Groove		9am - 9:50am Deep Water Work		9am - 9:45am Move & Groove	9:15am - 10am Spin	
	9:10am - 10am Aqua Arthritis Energizer	9am - 9:45am Move & Groove	9:15am - 10:15am Aqua Yoga-Shallow	9:10am - 9:50am Shallow Water Work	10am - 11:20am Yoga I: Exploring the Details	
	9:45am - 10:45am Tai Chi & Qigong (\$)	10am - 10:50am Aqua Power-Deep		10am - 10:55am Pilates	10:15am - 11am Cardio Strength	
10am - 10:55am Fusion-Lates	10:30am - 11:45am Align & Refine Yoga I/II	10am - 10:55am Pilates Fusion	10:30am - 11:25am Yoga I/II	10am - 10:50am Aqua Power-Shallow & Deep		
11am - 11:45am Cardio Strength/ Kickboxing	11am - 11:45am Tabata		11am - 11:15am Quick Tone & Stretch	10am - 10:30am HIIT		
1:30pm - 2:25pm Hydro-Maniac	5:25pm - 6:10pm Spin	5:45pm - 6:30pm Spin	11:25am - 11:55am Spin	10:35am - 10:50am Quick Abs		
5:25pm - 6:10pm Spin	5:35pm - 6:25pm Deep Water Work	6pm - 6:55pm HIIT	5:25pm - 6:10pm Spin		<b>sunday</b> 3:45pm - 4:45pm Deep Stretch Occasional Pop-Up *See email for dates	
6:00pm - 6:55pm HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training)	6pm - 6:55pm Yoga I	6pm - 6:55pm Vinyasa Yoga II/III	6pm - 6:55pm Yoga I			
6pm - 6:55pm Vinyasa Yoga II/III	6:15pm - 7pm Zumba	6:15pm - 7pm Aqua Cardio - Shallow & Deep		<b>Check the Aquatics Calendar for daily pool activity in the summer.</b>	Like and follow <b>YWCA Fitness</b> on Facebook to stay in the know about everything fitness!	

- Soamoya Rankins, president
- Whitney Simpson, president-elect
- Laurie Guy, treasurer
- Barbara Ashford
- Brittany Conner
- Sally Daley
- Loree Elswick
- Christie Gragnani-Woods
- Lauren Harkey
- Andrea Spears Jackson
- Susan McConnell
- Amy Murphy Curlis
- Shelley Smith
- Kristy Teskey
- Angela Witt
- Patricia Zoder
- Sarah Belk Gambrell, board member emeritus
- Kirsten D. Sikkelee, chief executive officer

## May's Racial Justice Forum

In January, YWCA hosted a discussion on the local justice system's use of cash bail and the ACLU's call to end that practice. On May 2, Kristie Puckett Williams, Regional Field Organizer with the ACLU of North Carolina's Campaign for Smart Justice, and Spencer Merriweather, Mecklenburg County District Attorney, continued the series on bail reform by discussing where we've been, where we are, and where we can be.



Our attendees appreciated learning about the prosecutor's role in bail determinations. We are looking forward to the next conversation around bail reform, which will be in early 2020.

The ACLU and YWCA will be hosting a Court Watch training for our community on August 15 from 6:30-7:30pm at our Park Road Facility. Court Watching is a way to create transparency and an opportunity for our community to learn more about the judicial system.

## Cooking Up A New Future

On May 10th, the floor of Bojangles' Coliseum was packed with the 2019 graduating class of Central Piedmont Community College (CPC). The ceremony began and Desiree Kinker, graduating from the Culinary Arts Program, stood to make the Commencement Address. Desiree is also a participant in YWCA's Women In Transition (WIT) program, and shared her story of finding stability in the art of cooking with the coliseum's audience that morning.



In her speech, Desiree shared the hard moments. She talked about what it was like to grow up having to constantly move in her childhood, she shared the success of reaching sobriety and finding what makes her feel at home again, which is cooking. When remembering the experience of speaking at graduation, she said the crowd was overwhelming at first, but when it came to the microphone and talking about her life experience, it all felt natural.

"Really it was a conversation with the crowd,"

Desiree said. "It was about who I was talking to and for, the speech wasn't about me. Yes, I shared my story, but it was about everyone overcoming their problems."

Though Desiree was only five months into the WIT program upon completion of her Culinary Arts studies, she did say that the safety and stability of YWCA's transitional housing helped her finish her degree. The meetings she'd have with her case worker, Amy Rose, held her accountable for setting goals and having a room to herself allowed her to thrive in a whole new way.



Today Desiree is continuing to save funds for permanent housing. She hopes to stay in Charlotte and have her son move in with her while she continues to cook and one day open a soup kitchen style food truck: serving out hope, one dish at a time.

## Sugaw Creek Youth Learning Center On The Move

In 2018, YWCA's Sugaw Creek Youth Learning Center got a call from our great partner, Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation, sharing news of renovations starting May 2019. With sections of the building the center was located in shut down, and renovations predicted to take a year to complete, YWCA needed to find a new space for students.

With help from the Parks and Recreation Department, Sugaw Creek Youth Learning Center was able to successfully move to Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School during the Rec Center's renovations.

Thanks to enormous support from the school's principal, Jennifer Dean, our program has great, dedicated space. For the summer session, students will be in a classroom with access to two gymnasiums, a dance room, a full refrigerator to stock snacks, and storage in multiple rooms. Principal Dean, who worked with Dr. Sheila Ijames, YWCA's Regional Director of Youth Programs early in her career, has also put out recruitment flyers on MLK Middle's website, letting parents with younger children know about YWCA's program.

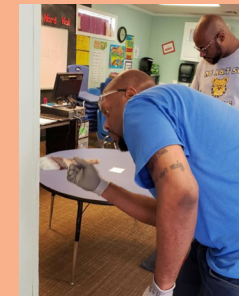
With support from Principal Dean and the new space for students to thrive, our students are not displaced, but well placed.



## Volunteer Appreciation

During April's Volunteer Appreciation Week, Wells Fargo volunteers worked with our Youth Learning Centers for their Days of Caring. One group visited our Sugaw Creek Youth Learning Center and hosted an Easter Egg Hunt, with one volunteer dressing as the Easter Bunny and taking pictures with the children! Another group visited our Albemarle Road Youth Learning Center to decorate Easter Eggs with students.

Frito Lay volunteers did a deep clean of our Southside Youth Learning Center. They cleaned the carpets, disinfected toys, picked up litter, repainted the walls, added new molding to the pillars, changed out overhead lights, planted flowers, re-mulched the yard, and played games with students.



Volunteers from Atrium Health played literacy games with students at our Park Road Youth Learning Center and crafted bookmarks, adding a bit of fun to their daily lesson.



In June, St. Peter's Catholic Church tended to our flower and vegetable gardens, teaching some of the Women In Transition participants the art of gardening, and also hosted a breakfast for them.

We appreciate all of our wonderful volunteers! If you're interested in supporting us by volunteering, contact Brittenay Causieestko-Lee at [bcausieestko-lee@ywcacentralcarolinas.org](mailto:bcausieestko-lee@ywcacentralcarolinas.org)

Thank You For Supporting Our Mission



Duke Energy Foundation continues to support YWCA's Youth Learning Centers with a \$25,000 grant, helping us empower students and enhance their literacy skills.



Publix Super Markets Charities has donated \$10,000 to our Women In Transition program, supporting women in their journey to permanent housing.

## Save the Date!



November 14 - Book Club  
6pm - 7:30pm @ YWCA  
We're reading The Hate U Give by Angie Thomas

Refreshments will be served, please RSVP on our site. To learn more contact Claire Lechtenberg at 908-585-0502 or [clechtenberg@ywcacentralcarolinas.org](mailto:clechtenberg@ywcacentralcarolinas.org)