



YMCA of South Hampton Roads

We build strong kids, strong families, strong communities.

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YMCA of South Hampton Roads Honors Local Volunteers for Service to Youth

Norfolk – Whether a coach, board member, or just a caring member of the community, local YMCA volunteers were celebrated for being the heart and soul of the YMCA of South Hampton Roads during the YMCA's Annual Meeting at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott on January 22. The following volunteers, who played a vital role in the development of local youth this past year, were honored with a YMCA Service-to-Youth Award.

Albemarle

Jamie Woodward is the star in many children's lives at the Albemarle Family YMCA. She volunteers as a student teacher at the local elementary school during the day, and she serves as a light to their little lives in the family activity center at the Y every night. She is the one children run to, sharing the hurts or joys of the day. She can often be seen sitting on the floor engaging in a game of impromptu Uno, or braiding their hair while she hears about the details of their lives.

"For many families and children, she is "the star" of the Albemarle Family YMCA," says Dean Mattix, Executive Director of the Albemarle Family YMCA.

Jamesville

Dr. Doug Kennedy, Professor of Recreation and Leisure Management for Virginia Wesleyan College, is YMCA Camp Silver Beach's current board chair and has been committed to helping camp grow from the beginning. For five years, Doug has taught his class a valuable lesson in philanthropy. In addition to his and Betsy's personal gift, his class raised over \$16,500, pledging to raise \$6,000 more for our 2009 campaign. Doug also gives his time during work-weekends and comes to camp on most opening days to greet the campers' families.

Betsy Kennedy, Professor of Recreation for Old Dominion College and Doug's wife, is just as dedicated. Each year she organizes a golf tournament to benefit Camp's annual sustaining campaign, allowing children to have the life-changing experience of summer camping. In addition to raising \$3,700 over the past four years, she also attends many events to support Camp and is an inspiration for those attending.

Community Services

Maya-Christina McGowan was in her first golf group at age ten and later worked at the Honey Bee Golf Course as a Junior Ambassador. In high school, she learned how to be a team player when she was selected to play on the all-boys varsity golf team. Currently a junior at Virginia Wesleyan College, she came to YMCA Community Services in June as a Volunteer Golf Coach. She provided more than 70 hours of instruction to participants in this year's Junior Golf Camp.

"Her youth was a great asset because she was able to reach out to these young golfers and show them the 'ropes,' telling them what the future could hold for them in the world of golf," said Merv Pitchford, YMCA Community Services Executive Director.

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Portsmouth

Mr. Mervin McCoy is a retired school principal who has a real passion for educating children. Every day on the bus ride to and from the Effingham Street Family YMCA, he encourages children to play trivia, recite multiplication tables and learn valuable information about their city, state and country. Mr. McCoy believes in the reward system; at the end of each grading period, he gives the children prizes for making good grades and improvements in their study habits.

“Bus 19 is more than a ride; it is a learning experience they will always remember because Mr. McCoy believes in laying the foundation for tomorrow’s leaders,” says Gina Schafer, Executive Director of the Effingham Street Family YMCA.

The First Tee of Hampton Roads

Dick Parrish, a retired Navy professional, has been volunteering for the past three years and has become a tremendous asset to The First Tee of Hampton Roads YMCA’s program. He has a great way of working with kids and really connects with them. He is involved with teaching all levels, from the Pre-Par 5 year-olds to the Championship class, which teaches high school-age golfers. He is also committed to working through The First Tee Life Skills curriculum to become a recognized The First Tee Coach. Dick volunteers as a captain for the annual giving campaign too.

“We are very fortunate to have someone like Dick Parrish to help kids learn the game of golf and the life skills associated with it,” said Mike Vinsand, Executive Director of The First Tee of Hampton Roads YMCA.

Great Bridge

Kenneth “Kenny” Adams, a volunteer with the Great Bridge/Hickory Family YMCA’s Youth Sports for over two years, coaches his son’s teams each season, including basketball, football and soccer. Kenny takes the time to ensure all players learn sports skills, but more importantly, life skills and developmental assets of responsibility, teamwork and integrity. This past spring, Kenny’s house was damaged in the violent tornado that hit Suffolk. Yet, the next day he was coaching his son’s soccer team with the attitude that “the world must go on.”

“The example Kenny set was truly uplifting to the kids and families that day,” said Bill Zazynski, Executive Director of the Great Bridge/Hickory Family YMCA.

North Greenbrier

Susan Blatnik was not only the most successful Major Gifts Chair for the Greenbrier North YMCA’s *We Build People* annual giving campaign, but also a board member and volunteer who truly cares. She wrapped several presents for our angel tree during Christmas, as well as collected gift cards from grocery stores, Wal-Mart and Target for those in need over the holidays.

“Susan has a big heart and will do whatever it takes to help raise money for those who need help in our community,” says Jennifer Cass, Executive Director of the Greenbrier North YMCA.

Greenbrier

Mauricio Perez has been a treasured Youth Sports Coach at the Greenbrier Family YMCA for the past three years. He has a love for teaching children, and it shows in all that he does. He helps the youth learn valuable life skills through fun, engaging sport activities.

“Seeing that the children have learned motivates me to keep on teaching. I’ve always been a leader and there is no other program in the world that would compare to what I’ve been a part of here at the YMCA,” says Perez.

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Hilltop

Lee Jennings has coached soccer and basketball for the Hilltop Family YMCA for at least five seasons. A role model, he shows enthusiasm and reliability each day. He is caring toward all, especially to our youth. Each season he is requested by returning and new parents to coach their children. He places the value of leadership, sportsmanship and over-all skills above winning.

“Coach Jennings is a great person with many valued qualities and we are so fortunate to have someone like him. He has definitely set the standard high for all of our coaches,” says Emily Rice, Executive Director of the Hilltop Family YMCA.

Indian River

Amy Doss has been a Salem YMCA Family Center parent for the past several years with three children enrolled in YMCA programs. She has seen a lot of transition in the center within the past year, supporting the changes with open arms. Amy has always stepped in to help out, whether it was donating supplies in her kids' classes or giving her time at events such as Mother & Daughter Tea and the Fall Festival. Every day she comes in the building, she acknowledges not only her children's teacher and counselors, but all the Salem staff.

“It is parents like Amy that make our job worth every minute,” said Amber Giancola, Executive Director at the Indian River Family YMCA.

Mt. Trashmore

Victoria Alexander is a staple in the Mt. Trashmore Family YMCA Preschool classrooms. From September 2007 to April 2008, Victoria volunteered in all four rooms daily. Victoria assisted in food preparation and small group projects, and read books to the children. According to the children, what they like most about Ms. Vicky is that she plays in the kitchen with them! We have truly appreciated her help, from the small tasks of making copies, to her invaluable assistance in making each child feel special.

“We enjoyed our time with Victoria so much that she was hired in April 2008 as a child-care aide,” said Kelly Bridgman, Executive Director of the Mt. Trashmore Family YMCA.

Norfolk

Officer Courtney Smith helped recruit kids from Park Place to participate in YMCA Swim Lessons, while Officer Mary Radecker provided the transportation for the youth to the Blocker Norfolk Family YMCA. In 2008, 75 youth attended lessons, thanks to the assistance of Officers Smith and Radecker. Their hard work and dedication were key to the success of the Park Place program and partnership, and we will be forever grateful for their help.

Onley

Steve Bilicki has been an important part of youth programming at the Eastern Shore Family YMCA. He coached soccer for two seasons and has been very active in all other programs in his free time. During camp, Steve made presentations on Marine Archaeology, exposing the children to a science they may never learn about otherwise without Steve's generous gift of time and expertise.

“He is always approaching us with ways to better the community to ensure all children can participate in fun activities. Whether it's collecting cleats and shin guards for children in need or practicing swim strokes with kids who want to be better swimmers, Steve always has time for the children in our community,” says Danny Vestal, Eastern Shore Family YMCA Executive Director.

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Outer Banks

Cheri Martin jumped in and helped out with the Outer Banks Family YMCA Swim Lesson program this past year. She gave special time and encouragement to each student swimmer, while reinforcing the proper swim skills and good swimming habits. Cheri also assisted with water safety instruction in the preschool lessons.

"She was a good example of selfless volunteerism and community support for the Outer Banks Family YMCA," said Larry Porter, Executive Director of the Outer Banks Family YMCA.

Suffolk

Kenneth Morgan volunteers his expertise in many areas at the Suffolk Family YMCA, but his unmatched commitment to the success of all things Aquatics stands out the most. Mr. Morgan's strong work ethic and commitment to excellence is evident in everything he does. He is a volunteer who is always on call, ready, willing and able to do what it takes to make our members' experience the best it can be.

"He is a positive role model for everyone he comes in contact with. Mr. Morgan is a member, a volunteer and our friend who lives our Suffolk Family YMCA core values of caring, honesty, respect, responsibility and faith," said Rick Matthews, Executive Director of the Suffolk Family YMCA.

Western Branch

Melody Mondell always lends a hand to help make each youth's experience the best it can be at the Taylor Bend Family YMCA. Melody started volunteering for the Taylor Bend Family YMCA during the 2008 *We Build People* campaign. She was instrumental in raising "friends" and pledges. On opening day of our aquatic center, she helped deliver programs for the children. During the summer, she also created and led an arts & crafts program, organizing the supplies and lesson plans for two different age groups. Being an educator, her love for the children's education spilled over into creating a tutoring program in the fall.

"These programs have been successful because of Melody's commitment. We now look forward to Melody joining the Board," said Keaton Finch, Executive Director of the Taylor Bend Family YMCA.

A YMCA volunteer's time and talent go a long way. Every hour spent as a YMCA volunteer translates into: the caring attention a child or teen needs to grow up healthy and resilient; support for families so they can be successful and strong; healthier lives for people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and incomes; and a safer, more viable community in which to live and work.

Volunteer-led and volunteer-driven, the YMCA of South Hampton Roads hopes this recognition of leadership and selflessness will inspire others to become more involved in our community, realizing that one person can make a powerful difference. For more information about volunteer opportunities with the YMCA call 962-5555 or visit www.ymcashr.org.

The YMCA of South Hampton Roads is a nonprofit, community-based health and human services organization that serves over 200,000 children and families each year. More than 17% of those families receive financial assistance through the Open Doors program, helping them achieve their full potential in spirit, mind and body. The YMCA's doors are open to people of all ages, backgrounds, abilities and incomes.

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