



# CONNECT TO THE CAUSE



THE IMPACT OF YOUR GIFT TO THE HIGH POINT YMCA

MARCH 2020

## EARLY LEARNING READINESS



"A strong foundation in early childhood results in better and more effective development later, a weaker foundation really puts us behind," said Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D., Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. The Early Learning Readiness (ELR) Program at the High Point YMCA assists in building that foundation by providing an environment for children to play and learn while developing their physical, verbal, and social skills. Margarita and her son Eden, age 4, have been participants in

the program since Eden was 7 months old. While Eden has grown by leaps and bounds in many different ways, his verbal communication skills have been the one thing that has seen the greatest improvement. For the first three years of the program, Eden did not speak at all, but through constant attendance and participation (circle time is his favorite!), he is now the most verbal child in the program and he speaks fluent English. As the youngest child of three, Margarita can see a big difference in Eden's overall development and kindergarten readiness through the skills he has learned in ELR. He knows all of the ABCs, can count to 30, knows numbers and letters by sight, can write down letters from memory, and he can write his own name. Her oldest child, who did not have access to a program like ELR, was not able to write his name at the same age. For Margarita, ELR is "a very good program to prepare your children for kindergarten and it's FREE!" She is excited to see the great things he will do as he enters kindergarten next year!

### WAYS TO PARTNER

Did you know there are many ways you can give to your local Y? How about gifting stock, matching gifts through your employer and more. For information visit [ymcasuncoast.org/give-better-us](http://ymcasuncoast.org/give-better-us) or contact Brad Barnes at [bbarnes@suncoastymca.org](mailto:bbarnes@suncoastymca.org) or (727) 507-9622.

### TAKE A TOUR TODAY!

Please contact Brad Barnes, Executive Director, at [bbarnes@suncoastymca.org](mailto:bbarnes@suncoastymca.org) or call (727) 507-9622 if you would like a personal tour of the High Point YMCA!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### Basketball

- Ages 6 to 7 **April 13 - May 18**  
Mondays 6 to 7pm
- Ages 8 to 10 **April 15 - May 20**  
Wednesdays 5pm to 6pm
- Ages 9 to 11 **April 15 - May 20**  
Wednesdays 6pm to 7pm
- Ages 11 - 14 **April 15 - May 20**  
Wednesdays 6pm to 7pm

#### Soccer

- Ages 6 to 7 **April 18 - May 23**  
Saturdays 9 - 10am
- Ages 8 - 10 **April 18 - May 23**  
Saturdays 10:15am - 11:15am
- Ages 11 - 14 **April 18 - May 23**  
Saturdays 11:30am - 12:30pm

Our mission is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

# MOMMY AND ME YOGA



A new program at the High Point YMCA called **Mommy and Me Yoga** is a great way for children and families to engage in physical activity together. This innovative class is a special time for mothers and children to explore movement, yoga, and fitness in a fun and creative way. The adults receive the benefits of learning strengthening poses and stretches that can help restore balance, improve posture, and increase energy levels. For the toddlers, yoga can build strength and flexibility, and

increase body awareness, balance, and coordination. For one of the participants, "It's the best time to connect with my grandson!" Lily, the Mommy and Me instructor says, "It's not just yoga—it's everything; games, meditation, breathing, dancing, and the children observing the mothers working out!" A win-win all the way around, Mommy and Me Yoga gets everyone moving and having fun!

## Making a Difference

"There is always a child who can benefit from interacting with you. You have no idea the impact a smile, a sincere interest, and genuine concern can have on a person. If you want to make a difference, stop by the Y to see how you can help - it is my favorite place to volunteer. They greet everyone with open arms."

Kathleen Beckman was born and raised in Michigan where she graduated from Western Michigan University. After marrying her high school sweetheart, Kathleen and her husband, Bryan, moved to Indiana, and Kathleen turned her love of education into an English Education Degree from Purdue University. Kathleen has always loved to volunteer; when raising her three children she enjoyed being a park district soccer and floor hockey coach, and serving as a PTO President. When her youngest son entered second grade, Kathleen became a high school English and Journalism teacher. After working hard and raising their children, Kathleen and her husband chose Clearwater as their retirement destination. Not one to sit at home, Kathleen immediately became involved with a variety of non-profits.

"There are so many opportunities to make a difference in our community. So many ways to help those less fortunate," Kathleen said. "I especially love working with children and families." Kathleen originally became involved with the YMCA as a volunteer swim team coach. She recently joined the High Point Advisory Council to help promote the mission of the Y and to increase community engagement. Kathleen hopes other people realize how welcoming the Y is to volunteers, and that each one of us can choose a way to give back and make a difference.



## SUPPORTING OUR CAUSE

Every year it is our goal to impact as many as we can that want to be healthier, who battle chronic disease, who need a safe place to go after school, and who need to be safe in and around water. If you know of an individual or business that would be interested in connecting to our cause and giving back to our community, please contact Brad Barnes at [bbarnes@suncoastymca.org](mailto:bbarnes@suncoastymca.org).

## ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jacob Stowers\*

Royce Haddad

Kathleen Beckman

Jane Schiebner

Stephanie Shermeta

Adam Talley

\*Advisory Council Chair

## MAKE A LASTING IMPACT

Your support of the YMCA of the Suncoast will help our community learn, grow and thrive for generations to come. For more information on planned giving, please contact Ben Prewitt, Philanthropy Advisor at [bprewitt@suncoastymca.org](mailto:bprewitt@suncoastymca.org) or (727) 467-9622.