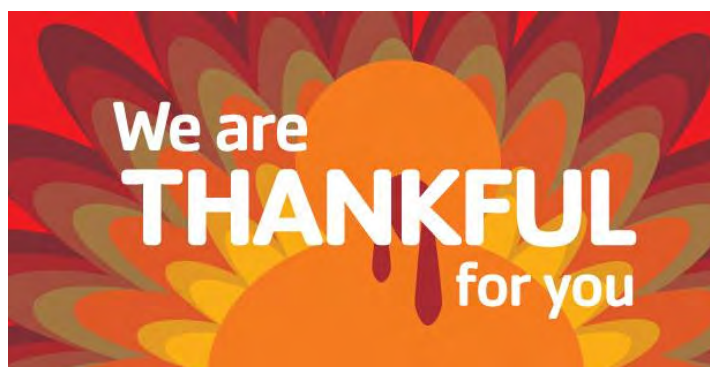


NOVEMBER 2021 • VOL. 6

# DEFINING OUR Y

YMCA OF KANAWHA VALLEY



## Message from the CEO

Greetings from the YMCA of Kanawha Valley-

It is hard to believe that Thanksgiving is just a few short weeks away! We hope you are able to gather with family and friends whom you are thankful for this holiday season.

We know that our Y family is incredibly generous and this month we will be collecting non-perishable food items for those in need. Last year, we were able to donate over three truckloads of food to the Union Mission. We hope that you will help us continue to serve our community by donating to our Thanksgiving Food Drive from November 1st -November 15th.

We hope that you take time to reflect on all of your blessings over this holiday season. We continue to be thankful for each of you and your dedication to the Y!

Kindest Regards,  
Sarah Bolyard, President & CEO



@ymcaofkv

---

Message from the CEO

---

Spirit of the Valley Scholarship Spotlight

---

Staff Spotlight

---

Upcoming Events

---

Healthy Living

## Spirit of the Valley: December 15th, 2021



**NEW**  
**SPiRiT of the VALLEY**  
A YMCA Initiative  
RETIRED MAJOR GENERAL  
JAMES HOYER  
2021 SPIRIT OF THE VALLEY  
**NEW DATE**  
December 15, 2021 at 12:00pm  
Charleston Coliseum &  
Convention Center

# Spirit of the Valley Scholarship Spotlight

When you make a donation to the Spirit of Valley, you make a donation to ensure that someone like Asmael Saifo has an opportunity to enjoy the Y!

## Finding My Identity

"By joining the YMCA, and volunteering, we got a new home and identity." -  
Asmael Saifo

In 2013, Asmael and his wife moved from Syria to Charleston. They did not have an income, relatives, friends, and did not know English. Without the possibility of returning to Syria because of the war, they decided to make Charleston their home. "Step by step, I found that Americans are honest, generous, and helpful to anyone, we have had many opportunities for volunteer work and language learning," he said. Asmael and his wife began learning English in 2014 and started volunteering at the Covenant House and Manna Meal. Asmael's background is in agriculture, he has put his expertise to work in several church and urban gardens in Charleston.

Asmael and his wife have been members of the YMCA since 2015. He believes that the YMCA is "one of the most advanced and sophisticated international (family) organizations and it is very helpful for all". They have several friends here at the YMCA that he feels are more like family. "Now we feel as if we have our new home and identity. Everyone is helping us, and we must help others too".



**The Spirit of the Valley initiative is the YMCA's largest funder of scholarship support to ensure that all those living in the Kanawha Valley have access to Y facilities, programming, and our incredible community of members. Please consider making a tax deductible contribution at [www.ymcaofkv.org](http://www.ymcaofkv.org) or by texting SPIRIT21 to 44-321.**



**We hope you will join us at the 2021 Spirit of the Valley luncheon on Wednesday, December 15th, at the Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center. Tickets can be purchased at [www.ymcaofkv.org](http://www.ymcaofkv.org).**



# STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## KARLEIGH FELLURE



Karleigh Fellure serves as the Executive Director of Youth Development for the YMCA of Kanawha Valley. In her role, she oversees all Child and Youth Development as well as Summer Camp and Afterschool programs for the Charleston Family Y and the Cross Lanes YMCA Child Development Center.

How long have you worked at the YMCA of Kanawha Valley? I have been with this association for 12 years; however, I started my career with the YMCA in 2002 as an After School Site Director and Summer Day Camp Counselor. During my time with the YMCA of Kanawha Valley, I have served as the School-Age Director and Branch Director for our Cross Lanes YMCA Child Development Center branch. I am now very happy to serve as the Executive Director of Youth Development for this association.

What do you like most about your job? There are so many things that I love about my job. The YMCA has become my home away from home. I have had the opportunity to watch so many children grow and build lifelong relationships that I will forever cherish.

What got you interested in working with children/childcare? I always knew that I wanted to help children in some capacity. I walked into the YMCA in 2002 looking for ways to volunteer while I was in college, pursuing my degree in Special Education. I never would have imagined that I would still be with the YMCA, nearly 20 years later, but here I am. And I believe I am exactly where I am supposed to be!

What is the best career lesson you've learned? I have learned that a strong leader practices respect, compassion, and good communication. This goes for children and adults. Everyone deserves these three things.

What would you do (for a career) if you weren't doing this? Working in Special Education.

What's a fun fact about you? I have been to hundreds of concerts.

Where's your favorite place in the world? At a music festival.

What is your motto or personal mantra? Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry...

If you could meet anyone in the world, dead or alive, who would it be and why? Barack Obama for deep conversation. Jimmy Fallon for a good laugh. Together would be even better!

Three words to best describe you: Empathetic, laid back, open-minded

If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Teleportation

What is one food that you cannot resist? Anyone who knows me well will know the answer to this one...All. The. Food. Haha!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Food Drive - November 1st to November 15th
- Thanksgiving Themed Silver Sneaker Lunch and Learn - November 10th at noon
- Monthly Self Care Session with Presteria - November 10th
- Veteran's Day/National Day of Service for Military Families and Veterans - November 11th
- World Diabetes Day - November 14th
- YMCA/YWCA Week of Prayer - November 7th to November 13th
- American Education Week - Third Week of November
- Thanksgiving Day - November 25th
- Giving Tuesday - November 30th
- Diabetes Awareness Month
- National Military Family Month
- Indigenous Heritage Month



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT\*  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# A HEALTHY HOLIDAY FOR FAMILIES IN NEED 11/1-11/15



**Thanksgiving is a time for families to gather together and share a meal. For many in our community, access to healthy, affordable options is an ongoing hardship.**

Help us change that by donating items that will create the perfect holiday spread. The YMCA of Kanawha Valley will work with local food pantries to deliver non-perishable food items to those in need this holiday season.

## CALL FOR DONATIONS

- Flour (2lb bag)
- Vegetable Oil (48 oz)
- Stuffing (bagged or boxed)
- Chicken Stock
- Gravy (packets or jars)
- Canned Pumpkin
- Salt & Pepper
- Tinfoil
- Disposable Roasting Pans
- Non-perishable food
- Canned fruits and vegetables

# HEALTHY LIVING

With Thanksgiving right around the corner, let us be reminded to be mindful of what we consume. We encourage our members, staff, and volunteers to engage in activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle. Healthy living involves exercise and being mindful of what we put into our bodies. Check out this month's healthy Thanksgiving-inspired recipe for Keto Stuffing.



## Ingredients:

- 4 Slices Keto Bread (or rolls), crumbled
- 3 tbsp Butter, melted
- 2 stalks Celery, chopped
- 1/4 cup Leeks, chopped
- 1/2 tsp Garlic, minced
- 1 tsp Italian Blend Seasoning, dried
- 1/4 tsp Sage
- 1/2 tsp each Salt & Pepper
- Olive Oil
- 1/2 tsp Celery Seasoning, optional
- 1/2 Cup Chicken broth

## Directions:

1. Crumble the keto bread, drizzle with olive oil and bake for about 5 minutes until lightly browned.
2. Saute chopped veggies in olive oil for a minute or two to bring out flavors.
3. Mix together with melted butter and chicken broth
4. Bake on 350 covered with foil for 10 minutes and uncovered for 5 minutes.
5. Serve!

## NOW HIRING:

When you love your job, it doesn't feel like work. Working at the Y means knowing that you're positively impacting people's lives each day. We currently have openings in: Creative Care, After School Counselor/Shuttle Driver, Member Services, Lifeguards, Swim Instructors, and Aquatics Director. Apply today at <https://ymcaofkv.org/aboutus/> #ABetterUsStartsWithU



**VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME AT THE Y! INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING? CONTACT PORTIA SMITH, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY DIRECTOR, AT [PSMITH@YMCAOFKV.ORG](mailto:PSMITH@YMCAOFKV.ORG)**

**QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, IDEAS:  
EMAIL: [INFO@YMCAOFKV.ORG](mailto:INFO@YMCAOFKV.ORG)**