

DECEMBER 2021 • VOL. 7

# DEFINING OUR Y

## YMCA OF KANAWHA VALLEY



### Message from the CEO

Greetings from the YMCA of Kanawha Valley-

How can it possibly be December? It is hard to imagine that we will be saying goodbye to 2021 very soon.

The last year has presented both challenges and triumphs for our Y. Membership has grown every month since January after taking a substantial hit in 2020. Childcare has fulfilled a tremendous need for hundreds of families in the Valley and our Seniors are participating daily in our Silver Sneakers classes. We know that we are not out of the woods yet with the pandemic but we see the light at the end of the tunnel. None of this would be possible without your support and we are forever grateful.

I wanted to also take a moment to share my appreciation to our incredible staff team who are steadfast in their commitment to serve others at the Y. I am incredibly honored to stand beside them as we continue to further our mission in the community.

Finally, to each of you that have generously opened your pockets over the last year and made a donation to the YMCA of Kanawha Valley we say THANK YOU! Because of you, we are able to ensure that all those in our community have access to our facilities and programming vital to personal growth. You have helped shape the future of our community and our Y!

We hope that each of you enjoy this holiday season and take the time to reflect on all of the good in your life over the last year. We look forward to seeing you in 2022!

Happy Holidays,  
Sarah Bolyard, President & CEO



@ymcaofkv

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Message from the CEO

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Spirit of the Valley Scholarship Spotlight

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Healthy Living

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



# 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 Dustin Hanning has an opportunity to enjoy the Y!

## The Y Saved My Life

"I am very grateful for the Y; the Y saved my life"-Dustin Hanning

Dustin Hanning praises the work of the YMCA of Kanawha Valley. He continuously mentions how grateful he is to be a member of the Charleston Family YMCA. Dustin struggled with drug addiction. His life was not where he wanted it to be. "I would never want anyone to go through what I went through," Dustin mentioned. Dustin sees the Y as an avenue for positivity away from the streets, partying, and drugs. Dustin feels that the Y allows him to focus on himself and has increased his confidence. Dustin has been sober now for three and a half years.



**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

## ANNE ABDUL-JALIL

Anne Abdul-Jalil serves as our Senior Member Services Coordinator. She is the face of the front desk staff. She is always willing to help a member or prospective member make their decision.



How long have you worked at the YMCA of Kanawha Valley? Since March 2016.

What do you like most about your job? The members. We see many of them daily and they let us into their lives and vice versa. I get to interact and build bonds with people from all walks of life. As a Muslim woman, I can look "different" from everyone else but at the end of the day, I'm really just Anne, doing my job like everyone else. Of course, I can't leave out my co-workers. Our Member Services Staff is 100% committed to the Y and it shows in everything they do.

What got you interested in this type of job? The Y was like a second home for me and my children for many years. I was here six to seven days/week as a swim mom, so it was a natural transition for me to start working here as my children got older!

What is the best career lesson you've learned so far? Keep on your toes and be willing to learn new things every day.

What would you do (for a career) if you weren't doing this? My kids always say that I should have been a middle school English or Math teacher so perhaps something in education.

What's a fun fact about you? My family is wildly diverse and inclusive, representing multiple cultural groups, ethnicities, and religions. Also, and completely unrelated, I'm a fairly decent field hockey player, and even more unrelated, once upon a time I drove six hours to see Prince play at Madison Square Garden.

Where's your favorite place in the world? The beach but since I can't get there every day, then I'd just say the great outdoors where I can get my power walks in.

What is your motto or personal mantra? The only way up or out is through.

If you could meet anyone in the world, dead or alive, who would it be and why? I'd really like to go back in time and meet previous generations of my family. It would be fascinating to see what elements from those earlier times shine through in my immediate family today.

Three words to best describe you: Patient, Loyal, and Grounded.

If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Flying, no question.

What is one food that you cannot resist? Chocolate, of course!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Toy Drive - December 1 to December 13
- Monthly Self-Care Session - December 8
- Silver Sneakers Lunch and Learn - December 8 at noon
- Spirit of the Valley Luncheon - December 15 at noon



YMCA OF KANAWHA VALLEY

# Toy Drive



Accepting Donations From

Wednesday, Dec. 1st, 2021 to Monday Dec. 13th, 2021



Please donate new, unwrapped toys for local children ages 0-12 for the holiday season!

Drop-off Location:

**Charleston Family YMCA** 100 YMCA Drive,  
Charleston, WV 25311

# HEALTHY LIVING

The holiday season is upon us. 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 holiday recipe - Chicken Kale Salad.



## Ingredients:

- 2 smoked chicken breast fillets
- 350g pkt kaleslaw salad kit, including seed packet & dressing
- 1 Small brunch watercress, rinsed, sprigs picked
- 1/2 cup fresh mint leaves
- 2 tbsp dried cranberries

## Directions:

1. Thinly slice or shred the chicken
2. Arrange the chicken, salad mixture, watercress, and mint leaves on a large platter. Scatter with the dried cranberries and seed packet.
3. Drizzle with the dressing to 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 Janitorial Staff. 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)**