



BUILDING POSSIBILITIES

YMCA OF SOUTH PALM BEACH COUNTY

The Y TIMES Newsletter | Summer 2025

MAKING WAVES IN WATER SAFETY

In honor of Water Safety Month, the YMCA of South Palm Beach County hosted two "Safety Around Water" weeks in April and May at the DeVos-Blum



Family YMCA and Peter Blum Family YMCA. Due to generous funding from the Justin Freedman & Family scholarship and the Piedt Family Swim scholarship, the Y was able to provide FREE swim lessons to children between the ages of 3-15.

Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children ages 5-14, and if an adult doesn't know how to swim, there is only a 13% chance that a child in the household will learn. These statistics underscore just how vital our YMCA's work is. By providing individuals with the tools they need to feel confident in and around water, we can help save lives—something the Y has been committed to for over a century.



Our YMCA would like to thank ALL of our partners in Water Safety who are helping our community be safer, in and around the water!

Paul & Kathy Adkins
Boca West Children's Foundation
CDC
Chick-fil-A Boca Raton
Children's Healthcare Charity /
Cognizant Classic Cares
Drowning Prevention Coalition
of Palm Beach County

Edward T. Bedford Foundation
Florida Blue Foundation
Florida State Alliance of YMCAs
Justin Freedman & Family
Honda Classic Cares
Moss Foundation
Palm Health Foundation

Piedt Family Swim Scholarship
Rotary Club of Downtown
Boca Raton
STEP INTO SWIM
USA Swimming Foundation
WaterSmart Florida
WaterSmart Palm Beach County
YMCA of the USA

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH THE YMCA



As long-time residents of South Palm Beach County, how have you seen its civic needs change?

Over the years, our area has experienced significant growth, mirroring the broader expansion across Florida. Notably, we're seeing more families with children and increased cultural diversity. These shifts have

brought additional civic needs in a wide range of areas—from housing to transportation and from healthcare to recreation—all essential to support our dynamic and evolving community.

Strong communities support the less fortunate. What causes do you personally find the most compelling?

We're most attracted to organizations that demonstrate a clear and worthy mission, strong leadership, effective execution—and can truly move the needle in their area of expertise. We believe that a healthy, resilient community must be supported across many fronts, including education, family services, healthcare, the arts, and animal welfare. Each plays a vital role in the overall well-being of our society, and we actively support efforts across all of them.

As YMCA donors, why did you select the Y as a vehicle for your contribution?

We chose to support the Y because of its role as a community hub that extends its reach through partnerships with dozens of local nonprofits. One example is how the Y hosts swim lessons for children served by other organizations – offering life skills to kids who might not otherwise have access. By investing in the Y, we're doing more than supporting a single organization, we're amplifying our impact across the broader community.

How would you describe the Y's community role to someone who's new to the area?

Our YMCA plays a uniquely powerful role in the community; it's truly a place for everyone. From early childhood programs to senior wellness, the Y offers high-quality services, state-of-the-art facilities, and inclusive programming that supports individuals and families at every stage of life. It's more than a gym or a pool; it's a vibrant center for connection, growth, and community impact.



MEET OUR ADMIN Y STAFF

Aanya Patel

Marketing & Social Media Coordinator

Education: Marketing Degree from FAU

How long have you been working at the Y?
I've been working at the Y since September. Time really flies when you're part of something meaningful!

What was your career prior to working at the Y?
Before joining the Y, I worked in marketing for both sports and tech companies. While those roles were exciting in their own ways, working here has been by far the most fulfilling. Being part of a mission that prioritizes community impact is incredibly rewarding.

What has been your favorite part about working for the Y and/or why are you passionate about working here?
My favorite part about working at the Y is getting to play even a small role in the huge impact this organization

has on the community. Whether it's supporting youth programs, promoting wellness, or helping to tell the stories of the people in our community, it's amazing to be part of a team that truly makes a difference.

Who and/or what inspires you?

I'm incredibly inspired by Tracy Sussman, our Sr. Director of Marketing. Watching her lead with such clarity, purpose, and empathy has been one of the most impactful parts of my time here. Her ability to manage the big picture while still being deeply supportive of our team is something I really admire, and certainly, it's a big reason why I love my job as much as I do. I aspire to lead like she does someday.

Anything else you would add?

I feel really lucky to be part of a team that not only values the work we do but also values each other. The culture here is special—it's collaborative, supportive, and full of people who care deeply about their community and their coworkers. That kind of environment is rare, and I don't take it for granted.

HONORING LEGACY DONORS AT ANNUAL HERITAGE CLUB DINNER

In May, the YMCA of South Palm Beach County hosted its annual Heritage Club Dinner, graciously held at the exclusive Delray Dunes Golf & Country Club, thanks to the generosity of Mary Morrell Blum.

This special evening honors and expresses gratitude to donors who include the YMCA in their long-term giving and estate plans. Nearly 60 guests attended, enjoying a lovely cocktail reception followed by a delicious dinner and dessert. New members were also recognized with the presentation of Heritage Club pins.

A highlight of the

evening was the presentation of the prestigious **Peter Blum Legacy Award to Bob and Emily Robes**, recognizing their outstanding support of the YMCA and unwavering commitment to the Heritage Club and Endowment Fund.

If you are interested in learning more about Planned Giving at the Y, visit: YMCASPBC.ORG/PLANNEDGIVING



BIG SMILES AND NEW WHEELS

Preschool graduation week was extra special at the DeVos-Blum Family YMCA in Boynton Beach and the Peter Blum Family YMCA in Boca Raton. Alongside proud moments and happy tears, our VPK graduates received an incredible surprise—brand new bikes and helmets, generously donated by the **Boca West Children's Foundation**, a non-profit organization who identifies and funds important youth initiatives in Palm Beach County.

"Our son couldn't wait to hop on his new bike!

This was such a wonderful surprise—thank you to the Boca West Children's Foundation for your generosity," shared a Boca YMCA Preschool parent.

Learning to ride a bike is more than just fun – it promotes physical development, builds confidence, teaches safety, and encourages independence. That's why our YMCA offers the YBike program, providing hands-on instruction to help kids master this important skill.

Learn more: YMCASPBC.ORG/YBIKE



PLANTING SEEDS – SIMMONS FAMILY STORY

Written by DeVos-Blum Family YMCA Board Member, Kelley Marcellus



Cameron Simmons may be the new kid in class, but his family is no stranger to the Peter Blum YMCA in Boca Raton. In fact, when the now-18-month-old son of Stephen and Monica Simmons joined the toddler preschool program in January, he became the family's fourth generation to be part of the Y. That was no accident, his father says.

"My wife and I bought our house in the neighborhood about five years ago," Stephen says. "The Y and its preschool was one of the reasons. We wanted our [future] child to have

someplace to go."

That sentiment is the same one that the Boca Y's earliest proponents operated by as well. Dick Simmons, Cameron's great grandfather, was a banker with Boca Raton Federal Savings starting in 1966. The one-time YMCA state wrestling champion of Pennsylvania worked with a contingent of other area bankers with the encouragement of Peter Blum, for whom the Y branch is named, in organizing the financial backing for the building. "There was a lot of enthusiasm," Dick says.

Stephen notes that his grandfather, now in his 90s, was known for his one-armed pull ups into his 70s, and that Dick and his wife Carol are excited for what's to come for Cameron. The youngster is already sharing a new knowledge of sign language with his parents as well as a growing Spanish language vocabulary and an affinity for basketball. The Simmonses are looking forward to enrolling Cameron in swimming lessons and community events at the Y.

"I grew up at the Y," Stephen says, noting

his first exposure was in summer camp. "I've played at that soccer field, and all of the Y's [athletic] fields."

Stephen also recounts the relationships made here including lasting childhood friendships. "The Y is a really safe place," says Stephen who notes that other friends bring their children for various activities and that he's looking forward to making new friends as the family's involvement grows. "It's a place that brings everyone together."

Dick agrees. "The Y is a great institution for kids to grow up in," he says. "They learn sports, how to get along with each other, how to participate, and how to contribute. It really helps us shape the development of children and grow them into better adults. And then they make better citizens."

Giving the Y a try is not a decision you'll regret, says Dick as he reflects that 50-plus years ago, he had no idea how far the reach would go across the community—and within his own family. "People who make a donation today might still be reaping the rewards 50 years from now," he says.

THANK YOU FOR THE GENEROUS SUPPORT FROM OUR GRANTS AND SPONSORS*

Boca West Children's
Foundation
The Batchelor
Foundation

Children's Healthcare Charity
/ Cognizant Classic Cares
Albert E. and Birdie W.
Einstein Fund, Inc

Florida Literacy Coalition
The Lattner Foundation
Lost Tree Village Charitable
Foundation

Paycom Corporate Giving
The Polozker Fund

**As of June 11, 2025*

IMPORTANT DATES

August 6, 2025

As part of Boca Chamber Festival Days in support of the Y, **Casino Night** will be held at the Delray Genesis Club in the Flagler Credit Union Stadium at FAU. Special thanks to Mario Bai, 2025 event Chair.
[YMCASPBC.ORG/EVENTS/CASINO-NIGHT](https://ymcaspbc.org/events/casino-night)

September 13-14, 2025

6th Annual Shoot for a Change, hosted at the Peter Blum Family YMCA. Thank you Event Chair, Michael Nathanson.
[YMCASPBC.ORG/SHOOTFORCHANGE](https://ymcaspbc.org/shootforchange)

October 24 & 25, 2025

Generously sponsored by Publix Super Markets Charities, the DeVos-Blum Family Y and Peter Blum Family Y will host **Halloween at the Y** for the community.
[YMCASPBC.ORG/HALLOWEEN](https://ymcaspbc.org/halloween)

November 8, 2025

Presented by JM Family Enterprises, **Corporate Cup Challenge** is our Y's premier adult field day that will be held at the Peter Blum Family YMCA.
[YMCASPBC.ORG/CORPORATECUPCHALLENGE](https://ymcaspbc.org/corporatecupchallenge)

December 6, 2025

Presented by Baptist Health, celebrate 25 years of the DeVos-Blum Family YMCA at our Evening of Enchantment event chaired by Amanda Perna, December 6, 2025
[YMCASPBC.ORG/25YEARS](https://ymcaspbc.org/25years)

December 7 & 14, 2025

Generously sponsored by Publix Super Markets Charities, the DeVos Blum Family Y and Peter Blum Family Y will host **Breakfast with Santa**.
[YMCASPBC.ORG/SANTA](https://ymcaspbc.org/santa)

Visit our website for the latest updates on YMCA events and activities: [YMCASPBC.ORG/EVENTS](https://ymcaspbc.org/events)



Friendly Otter Makes a Splash at the Y for Water Safety

To celebrate National Water Safety Month, our Y preschoolers received a special visit from Josh the Otter! Children learned essential water safety skills by listening to the story Josh the Baby Otter – A Tale Promoting Water Safety for Children and reciting the water safety pledge. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Rotary Club of Downtown Boca Raton for their continued partnership and generous support of this important initiative.



Honoring Hispanic Heritage at the Y

Baila Conmigo, hosted at the Peter Blum Family Y, came alive with vibrant Latin culture, music from Los Mompirris, high-energy sets by DJ Kris Prime, a joyful Hora Loca and more! A GRANDE thank you to our event chair, Fernanda Macedo, and to our amazing sponsors and vendors for making this unforgettable celebration possible!



A Hole in One Golf Classic

Our DeVos-Blum Family Y's 26th Annual Golf Classic was a **sold-out success**! Hosted at the beautiful Indian Spring Country Club in Boynton, this event proudly raised **over \$50k**! We would like to recognize Presenting Sponsor, Plastridge Insurance Agency for their continued support of this event each year.



Free Swim Week

A huge thank you to Justin Freedman & Family and the Piedt Family Swim Scholarship for making May's Free Swim Week possible! Thanks to your generous support, more than 80 children learned essential water safety skills that could help save lives.

