

I was taught how to swim at the Yarmouth YMCA over 40 years ago by Marg Nickerson. I would guess that she taught most Gen X'ers and Boomers in this region how to swim. My children were taught at the YMCA and later how to competitively swim by Ginny Smith and many of her volunteers. My kids have attended yoga, daycare, fun nights, birthday parties, team parties at the YMCA. They made friends and were influenced and cared for by the Y Community. As a result, of my involvement in the Y, I was part of helping others in the community learn how to swim. The Y welcomes people from all walks of life and everyone was made to feel welcome and to participate no matter what their financial status was. It was a community center after all and being part of something like this will often influence a person to pay it forward, like it did for me. That is just one of the benefits of a community center to a region.

I was born and raised in Yarmouth County and lived and raised my family here. I have owned properties and a business in the Town of Yarmouth and Tri Counties. I have contributed to this region personally and financially to every local charity or non-profit that asked during my working career. I am telling you this because many residents of this region do the same. We are really good at helping each other and our community at large and I love that about us.

The YMCA is an establishment that does not draw lines around a person's race, background, education or financial status. It certainly does not draw lines at any municipal boundary either. It is an inclusive gathering place, a place of wellness.

I understand all the reasons why such a place with old bricks and worn out mortar is a financial burden. However, here in this region when there is a crisis such as closing a place we have enjoyed and taken for granted the past 160 years we need to rally. The YMCA should be designated as essential to a community and simply off-limits to closing the doors.

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