

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

The Milford Youth Center



Illustration by Mary Owanesian is based on a photograph by Jim Calarese

What the
Milford Youth
Center
provides



A place to
belong



A place to
learn



A place to
thrive

History

The Milford Armory, now home to the Milford Youth Center (MYC), was built in 1911 using Milford pink granite that was sourced from quarries on East Main St.

The Armory was home to variously designated units of the Massachusetts National Guard until 2005. At that time, the MYC occupied a couple of rooms in the building. The Town recognized the need for a forever home for this much needed program, a dream of the late James F. DiAntonio.

For years, the community, the United Way of Tri-County, the Select Board and other local politicians lobbied the State to enable the purchase of the building to become the permanent home for the Youth Center, after the National Guard left. This dream became a reality in 1998 and we have been able to see it flourish ever since.

The MYC currently operates in a unique sustainable partnership with the Town of Milford and the United Way of Tri-County, who serves as the fiduciary, and has multiple other funding streams. Due to the help of an Armory Renovation Committee, followed by Town Meeting approval, the Center went through a major, multi-million-dollar renovation in 2016. We have been able to see even more building improvements, through donations, grants and other town and state allocations.

We are thankful to every individual, business and organization who has been part of our MYC journey and we look forward to an even brighter future!



Milford Youth Center Mission Statement

The mission of the Youth Center is to provide a safe environment that promotes self-esteem, builds character, and fosters the notion of community and the importance of respecting and serving others. By providing Milford youth with programs and a safe environment during the after school hours and during our monthly events, we hope to address adolescent risk factors as well as promote the partnerships among community members to ensure a comprehensive vision and plan for the health of the youth in the town of Milford.



MYC administration and leadership

MYC ADMINISTRATORS



Emily Stienstra
Assistant Director



Jennifer Ward
Director



Joanna Abrantes
Program Coordinator

MYC YOUTH COMMISSION BOARD



Brendan Rickert
Chair



Stacy Darling
Vice Chair

MYC YOUTH COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ariea Bryan
Angelo Calagione, Esq.
Jonathan Capece
Christine Crean
Darlene Dulude

John Dulude
William Farrell
Gail Jussaume
Steve Sousa
Jason Vaz

A Letter From The Milford Youth Center Board

Written by Brendan Rickert, Chair & Stacy Darling, Vice Chair
Milford Youth Center Board

On behalf of the staff and board of the Milford Youth Center, we would like to thank the students, citizens, local businesses and elected officials of this incredible town for their ongoing support.

Without your commitment, we would not be able to deliver on our promise to provide quality programming and activities to Milford's youth—and citizens of all ages—at affordable prices.

We believe that the Youth Center is one of Milford's greatest treasures, providing a safe place for children to go after school and during the summer months, while also creating employment opportunities for teens to build their leadership skills. But we do not stop there, our goal is to create an environment where every resident can see themselves, with programs for adults during school hours and cost-effective building rentals for local residents and clubs.

2023 was an incredible year for the program, and this annual report marks the first time we have pulled together highlights, on an annual basis, to showcase the impact the program has had on the community.

With your help, we are committed to having an even greater impact in 2024 and beyond.

Your gifts in action



AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

We offer a 10-month, free after school program for Milford residents and/or students attending Milford Public Schools, ages 8-18. The program had **632** unduplicated registered members, who were offered 2-3 structured programs a day, along with open gym, game room and a cafe/lounge. We offer a free snack and dinner program, due to the collaboration of CACFP, Hockomock Area YMCA, and the Milford School Food & Nutrition Services Department. This year, we served **4,928** dinners and **4,880** snacks!

"The people at the MYC are nice, staff is great, the food is free and good, and it's a warm safe place to play basketball!" —Alex C., age 16



COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVES

The MYC is always partnering with local organizations to provide more opportunities for the youth we serve. Our collaborations this school year included Milford Regional Medical Center, Milford TV, Milford Town Library, Give Kids the Arts, Greenleaf Jr. Gardener Club, New Human, FitFun Carly, Milford Federal Bank, Connected & Inspired, District Attorney's Joseph D. Early's Office, Annie's Kindness Blankets, Cornerstone at Milford, Army National Guard, Wayside MetroWest Community Services and Massachusetts 4-H Foundation! This year, we have been able to offer once/month Life Skills Programs including substance use education, youth financial literacy, "Friends and Family" Basic CPR, woodworking and cyber safety.



SUMMER CAMP

The MYC offers an affordable, six-week summer camp every year. Activities include weekly field trips and fun in-town activities. We had **100** families participate this year and provided **\$3,350** worth of scholarships due to the generosity of local banks, organization and individuals. The Center also served **306** free breakfasts and **993** free lunches to campers due to the collaboration of SFSP, Hockomock Area YMCA and the Milford School Food & Nutrition Services Department.

"We have been using the Milford Youth Center for almost 3 years. My daughter has gone to the summer camp for the past 2 summers. She loved it. She is already asking me if I will sign her up for next summer. It is a fantastic program. The counselors are great and the children are kept busy with a lot of different activities. They do something different almost every day. To their credit, the Milford Youth Center runs one of the best youth programs that I have ever used." —Bill Meehan



FOOD PROGRAMS

We work with our community partners and strive to best serve our members by offering supplemental food programs. We are pleased to partner with Lovin-Spoonfuls, to provide weekend groceries to families in need and with the Hockomock Area YMCA to offer a monthly Mobile Food Pantry. This year, we distributed **3,682** lbs. of rescued food and **374** bags of groceries through these collaborations!

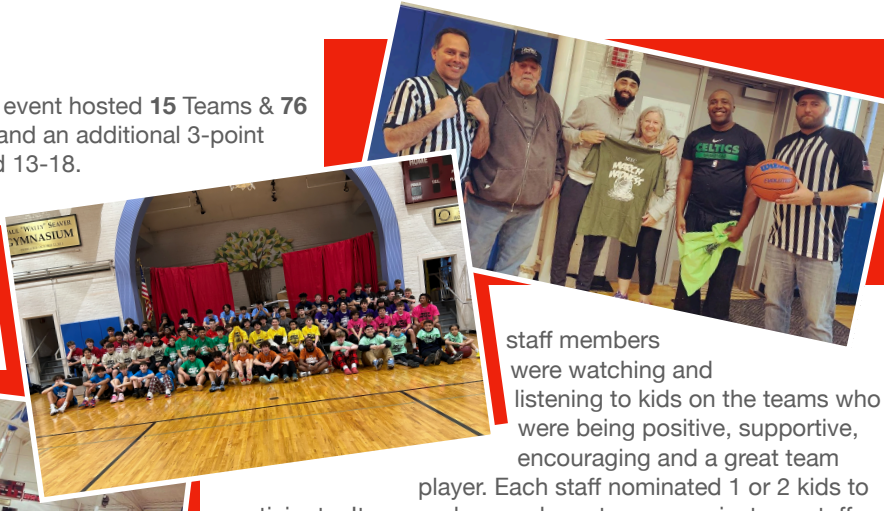
All of our programs are 100% financed by private donations and fundraisers held throughout the year.

Making a difference in the lives of our youth

March Madness

This popular, month-long event hosted **15 Teams & 76** after-school participants and an additional 3-point contest for ages 8-12 and 13-18.

New this year, the staff thought it would be fun to have a Staff vs. MVP game. Throughout the March Madness games,



staff members were watching and listening to kids on the teams who were being positive, supportive, encouraging and a great team player. Each staff nominated 1 or 2 kids to participate. It was a close and great game against our staff team, but the staff ended up with the win!



Backpack Giveaway

We are very fortunate to be able to offer program participants each year brand new backpacks filled with pens, pencils, notebooks and virtually everything students will



need to start the new school year! This year we distributed **60** backpacks donated by the United Way of Tri-County and the Hockomock Area YMCA.



Thanksgiving Dinner

The MYC Thanksgiving Dinner, held on November 21st, was a huge success! We served over **130** kids and over **50** special guests, volunteers and staff members. An amazing array of traditional



Thanksgiving food as well as other local cuisine provided by local restaurants was served. We would like to thank the following businesses and/or individuals who donated sides and/or monetarily towards this event:



Holiday Gift Giveaway

Due to the amazing generosity of our community, this year the MYC distributed an estimated **\$30,000** worth of gifts to over **200** youth and their families! We would like to thank



all the businesses and individuals who sponsored youth and/or held collections for our center including the United Way of Tri-County, Waters



Corporation, Goldfish Swim School, West Street Autobody, Cornerstone at Milford, MassCor Industries, Barbell 88 (partnered with New Human, Red Devils C.C, Lunas' Place, JT's Diesel Performance, Bella Mena's Hair Salon, Hard Knocks Barbershop, The Garrison Speed Shop, and Evolve Fitness and Training), Advanced Restaurant Equipment, Tamara Palmer, Mary Pratt, Carrie McGrath, Kayte Lenahan, Alyssa Bibeau, Janelle Provencher, Brit Roy, Kara Rossetti, the Duludes and an anonymous donor!



Gail Jussaume and Youth Council members: Kris, Madalyn, Cassidy and Miguel!

PizzaChef, Prezo Grille and Bar, Garden Pizza, Oliva's Market, Catering & Gourmet Gifts, Gene's Variety, Casa Brasil, Milford Pizza Palace, Red Heat Tavern, Wendy's, Whole Foods Market of Bellingham, Thai Pepper, Shaw's, Barbell 88, New Human, Cornerstone at Milford, Milford Food Service Department, Becky Ayuso, Andy Barron, Darlene & John Dulude, Stacy Darling, Ariea Brya, Lisa Capuzziello, Silvia Goncalves, James Brevigleiri, Susan Dykoff, Judy Tusino,

MYC Fundraisers

MYC 1st Annual Golf Tournament

We were so excited to hold our first ever MYC Golf Tournament Fundraiser at Shining Rock Golf Club on May 5, 2023! This event would not have been possible without the help of the Hockomock Area YMCA, who helped us plan this event from beginning to end! We would like to thank Lou and his team at Shining Rock Golf Club for allowing us to have the event and for being so accommodating! We would like to thank the staff at Shining Rock, the 25 foursomes (100 golfers), volunteers and to everyone who donated raffles and/or auction items! Thank you to our amazing Golf Committee!



We would like to give a special thank you all of our amazing sponsors:

- 🏌️ Presenting sponsor for \$5K - Central One Federal Credit Union
- 🏌️ Gold Lunch & Putting Contest sponsor for \$3K - Petro Home Services
- 🏌️ Cinco Party Package Sponsor for \$1.5K - Ayr Wellness
- 🏌️ Golf Cart Sponsor for \$1K - Hillview Equipment
- 🏌️ Beverage Sponsor for \$500 - Plumb House Inc.
- 🏌️ Beverage Sponsor for \$500 - Rockland Trust
- 🏌️ Hole in One Sponsor for \$300:

- * Milford Girls Softball League
- * Hockomock Area YMCA
- * Signs Plus
- * Teacher's Driving Academy
- * Frank's Appliance Service

🏌️ Tee Sponsor for \$150:

- * Milford Girls Softball League
- * BluSky Restoration Contractors
- * Honey Dew Donuts of Milford
- * Crystal Roots Energy Medicine
- * Central Tavern
- * Braza & Mancini Inc.
- * Middlesex Savings Bank
- * Milford Audiology
- * Tamagni Wealth Advisors
- * Accent Limousine
- * Nutriforia Nutrition
- * Morin's Studio of Photography
- * Hockomock Area YMCA
- * Imprint Graphics, Inc.



**\$19,000.00
RAISED!**

13th Annual MYC Fundraiser!

Our 13th Annual Fundraiser was held on September 15, 2023 at CraftRoots Brewing and included great beer and food, live music, raffles and community awards.

We also would like to thank every monetary donation and/or raffle prize:

CraftRoots Brewing (\$500), John & Darlene Dulude (\$300) Ariea Bryan (\$300), Butter's House, LLC (\$200), Consigli Design Co. (\$100), Ken Rosa (\$100), Braza & Mancini, Inc. (\$100), Lena Pires (\$100), Paul & Hilda Johnson (\$100); Misc.

donations: Donna Rowe, Dale Hava, New Horizons Family Dental, William & Colleen Allen, John Erickson, Joseph D. Early Jr., Worcester County District Attorney's Office, Kim Mu-Chow & Lester Chow and Mary Pratt. Thank you to the following individuals and/or businesses who helped us complete 50 raffles, valued at over \$5,000 worth of prizes: The Ward Family, Ariea Bryan, Brendan Rickert, CraftRoots Brewing, Boston Beer Co. and Dogfish Head, Chuck Calagioni, John and Darlene Dulude, Nutriforia Nutrition, E-Z Way Car Wash, Emily Stienstra, Jay's Classic Barbershop, Ken Rosa, Kimberly Vanderpoel, Christine Crean, Gail Jussaume, Garden Pizza, Kim Mu-Chow and Lester Chow and the Stachowski Family! Very special thanks to Rail Trail Flatbread Co, Edible Arrangements and our Board Members for providing food for our guests!



\$8,000.00

Congrats to our 2023 Awardees!



State Representative Brian Murray presenting Madison and Sam Bonvino with 2023 Individual Appreciation Awards!



State Representative Brian Murray and Select Board Member Paul Mazzuchelli presenting Commonwealth Corporation and The MassHire Central Region Workforce Board with the 2023 Community Appreciation Awards!

Giving Tuesday!

We would like to extend a HUGE thank you to everyone who donated towards our annual GivingTuesday Campaign on Tuesday, November 28, 2023 with an initial goal of raising \$2,500!

**WE DID IT
#GIVING TUESDAY
THANK YOU**
**\$4,061.00
RAISED!**

Thank you to our wonderful donors:

- * Stacy Darling & RTX - \$2,000
- * Anonymous - \$500
- * Milford Permanent Firefighters Assoc. - \$250
- * Middlesex Federal Savings - \$206
- * Jennifer Oliva - \$200
- * Marc Richard - \$200
- * Brendan Rickert - \$100
- * John and Lisa Ferrucci - \$100
- * The Callahan Family - \$100
- * Carrie McGrath - \$100
- * Baystate Marketing - \$50
- * Francheska Ocasio-Serrano - \$50
- * Nadia Peterson - \$50
- * Lisa Capuzziello - \$50
- * Marisa Evirs - \$50
- * John and Cheryl Merryman - \$25
- * Diane Salvi - \$25
- * Roselle Hiatt - \$5

Community Fundraisers!

We are very fortunate to have multiple different organizations and/or businesses hold fundraisers for us throughout the year!

This year we would like to thank:

- * Nutriforia Nutrition
- * New Human
- * Shaw's "Give Back Where it Counts Reusable Bag Program"



MYC Rentals & Additional Programs

The MYC is available for rental purposes, which helps sustain our 10-month free after school program and staffing costs. This year, the Center received over \$40,000 of rental revenue to support our programs. The rooms we have available to rent are the gymnasium and/or stage area, conference room, dance/fitness room, boxing room/gym and batting cages. The Center is also looking forward to the completion of our future multi-purpose media center, to add additional programs and rental space, anticipated in 2024. Finally, the Center also offers some morning and evening programs for the community!

Senior Walking: Throughout the year the Center opens our gym, at no cost, during morning hours, for Milford Senior Residents to use the gym for walking. This provides them a safe place to get their steps in while also giving them the opportunity to connect with each other and enjoy a cup of coffee and/or tea! During 2023 we had **21** seniors use our facility!



MYC Kid's Play: MYC Kids Play is a program run by our program coordinator, Joanna Abrantes, on Thursdays throughout the school year. The program includes activities, crafts and structured playtime while adults socialize and meet other families in the community! We had **14** families attend in 2023!



Adult Open Gym - Pickleball: Pickleball Open Gym is a program that launched during the summer of 2023! This program provides three courts, classified for beginner, intermediate, and advanced players, for the local pickleball community to come in and practice on! We had **64** individuals participate in this program in 2023!

Adult Open Gym - Basketball: Basketball Open Gym gives any 18+ individuals the opportunity to play pick-up basketball in the gym! This is an open gym, casual program that opens the building to the community and young adults who once attended our after school program! In 2023 we had **124** individuals participate in this program!



"For several years now, we have been bringing my parents to senior walking. The roads outside can be uneven and the weather can be too harsh for them to walk outside, so this is a great, safe, indoor environment to get them out and moving. They enjoy being able to socialize with other people their age. The staff is so kind and have started serving light refreshments for patrons. The MYC does an amazing job all around with community engagement. My parents really look forward to walking each week."

—Dana and Valerie Tessicini



"My son Ezekiel has been looking forward to the play sessions every week ever since his first play session a year ago. Joanna made us feel at home the second we walked in the door and we have loved seeing her each week since! Attending kid play once a week has helped him with independent play, sharing, communication and motor skills. I love being able to attend these sessions with him. They not only help him but they have also helped me in many ways. Being able to be around other parents with kids in a similar age range is just amazing. The best part is bringing home their little crafts and hanging them up on the wall!"

—Francheska Serrano



Teamwork makes the dream work



Volunteers: With the help of over 115 volunteers in 2023, volunteering over 1,325 hours, the MYC has been able to successfully accomplish many events, programs, collections of donations, fundraisers, and more! We are so proud that over 55% of all our after school programs are offered by either volunteers or outside services from our community partners! In addition to volunteering to run programs, some other volunteer efforts include dedicating time to participate in our monthly Board Meetings, Annual Golf Tournament Fundraiser and/or Committee, CraftRoots Fundraiser, March Madness tournament, serving our annual Thanksgiving meal for our after school members, package meals for our summer camp, after school program and/or weekend bags from Lovin' Spoonfuls and preparing raffle baskets for our events! To help put their impact into perspective, the hours volunteered are equivalent to over \$42,000 in saved staffing expenses, according to the Independent Sector! Without volunteers, we would not be able to achieve all the things we have and plan to do in the future so THANK YOU!



Community Engagement: The MYC is always looking for ways to work with local organizations and coalitions to help provide more opportunities for the Youth we serve! Some events and community groups were participated in this year are: Milford Beautification Day, Milford Veterans Day Parade, CHNA 6, Stacy Middle School Council, Milford Public Schools Wellness Committee, Hockomock Area YMCA Board of Incorporators, The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts Community Outreach Committee, Milford Public Schools Equity Audit, Gallery of Arts and Crafts Fair, Woodland Potluck Dinner and all of the Milford Public School Open Houses. Finally, we held a collection for donations for the Milford Humane Society, donated raffle prizes for various different community fundraisers and participated in numerous community events, forums, trainings, and educational presentations!



MYC Staff: The MYC has an amazing Part Time Staff team, made up of local youth, that help run our after-school program, summer camp, rentals, front desk, youth programming, and events. Most of our staff grew up coming to

the Center which gives our younger members the opportunity to see how they can grow and maybe one day work for us too! These positions are supported through donations, fundraisers, rental revenue, and grants like YouthWorks! We were also able to create new positions this year: Marketing and Communication Assistants and Health Coordinator positions! We can't forget about Cora! The heart and soul of the Center and our unofficial mascot!



Senior Scholarships: The MYC wants to find as many opportunities as possible to invest into the youth of the Milford Community. We want to further our support to the youth of Milford as they age out of the programs and start pursuing further education/ vocational training, launching a small business, or any goals and aspirations they might have to create their future. Every graduation year the MYC will elect two individuals to be the recipients of a \$500 Milford Youth Center (MYC) Scholarship/ Grant. This year, we also announced the creation of a second scholarship opportunity, that the Youth Commission added in honor of a dedicated, long time board member and volunteer, Sandy Caproni. The scholarship was named the "Sandra Caproni Good Citizen Award." The recipients of our 2023 scholarships were: Lauren Handley-Bucchino, Ashlynn Ringo and Guymonley Saintyl.



Financial Report

The MYC is currently responsible for raising funds to continue programming and this is why monetary donations are so important! Without individual donations, rental and summer fees, fundraising, grants and support from the Town of Milford (funds the salary of the three full-time staff along with utility and maintenance expenses) and the United Way of Tri-County, we would not be able to provide our programs to the community. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the 2023 Town Meeting Members for approving the appropriation of funds to purchase a 12-passenger van!

REVENUE		FY22		FY23
	Fundraising	\$	2,377	\$
Donations	\$	3,392	\$	7,595
Rentals	\$	23,083	\$	44,743
Summer Camp	\$	43,633	\$	56,559
United Way	\$	975	\$	1,099
	\$	73,460	\$	148,961

EXPENSES		FY22		FY23
	Staffing: Part-Time	\$	51,648	\$
Staffing: Summer Camp	\$	13,149	\$	4,713
MYC Transportation	\$	2,100	\$	2,752
MYC Summer Camp Acts.	\$	6,008	\$	5,868
Fundraising Events	\$	68	\$	13,744
Misc. Program Expenses	\$	5,661	\$	21,400
	\$	78,634	\$	120,108
Profit (Loss) from Revolving	\$	* (5,174)	\$	28,853

Other funding (Grants & Gifts funds)				
Grant Revenue	\$	113,492	\$	178,228
Grant Expenses	\$	84,615	\$	211,212
Net activity - Grants	\$	28,877	\$	(32,984)
Gift Revenue	\$	26,897	\$	21,000
Gift Expense	\$	2,100	\$	5,125
Net Activity - Gifts	\$	24,797	\$	15,875
Profit (Loss) all Sources	\$	48,500	\$	11,744

* Post-Covid financial impairment

Donations: The MYC received over **\$53,000** through fundraisers and donations, including \$5,000 from Alavi & Braza, P.C. Law Offices, \$2,500 from Benjamin Moore, \$1,500 from Imperial Ford Corporation, \$1,088 from Barbell 88, \$1,000 from Nouria Energy Corporation and \$1,000 from Mark and Rose Titlebaum to name a few! All of our donors are thanked in our monthly newsletter and quarterly reports to the Select Board.

In-Kind Donations and projects: The MYC is lucky to be the beneficiary of thousands of dollars' worth of in-kind donations! We would like to thank everyone who donates items to us throughout the year, for, anything from arts and crafts supplies to sports equipment! We are also often chosen for Girl and Boy Scouts Projects annually. This year, Josh Schorn chose the Center for his Eagle Scout Project. With over eighty volunteer hours, Josh and his team have improved the mobility and durability of the skateboard ramps!



Grants: The MYC was awarded over **\$230,000** worth of state funding and grants from the following: SCI AmeriCorps, the Rockland Trust Charitable Foundation, The Fidelity Charitable Donor-Advised Fund Grant and the Commonwealth Corporation under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts YouthWorks Program and MassHire Central Career Center.



YouthWorks: It is so awesome to see the YouthWorks program up and running for the third year in a row! The Youth Center received a **\$203,127.74** contract from the State to run an income-eligible summer employment program. This program is supported by the Commonwealth Corporation under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts YouthWorks Program and MassHire Central Career Center. Through this program, the Center will oversee **30** youth employees at **11** worksites, including: Milford Youth Center, Milford Facilities Department, Milford Parks Department, Milford Town Hall, Milford Food Service Department, Nutriforia Nutrition, Double Bubble Laundromat, Milford TV, Vernon Grove Cemetery, Platinum Enterprises and Milford Summer Basketball, allowing additional help at each location at no cost to their individual departments and/or businesses.



Scholarships: Summer Camp: Every year we receive donations that help make our summer camp available for local youth in need! We would like to thank our 2023 contributors, who helped us reach **\$3,350** in donations:

- \$1,000 – UniBank
- \$1,000 – Milford Federal Bank
- \$500 – Milford Lions Club
- \$500 – Ann Ferreira
- \$350 – Stephen and Kerry Pepe





Connect With Us!

Milford Youth Center

24 Pearl Street

Milford, MA 01757

Phone: (508) 473-1756

Email: milforyouthcenter@milfordma.gov



milforyouthcenter.org



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