A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO, HANK LEO

What’s the status of the new Rome YMCA?

By now, the vast majority of our members have heard news of our organization’s desire to build a new facility. There have also been many rumors floating around that hopefully, this column will help clear up. Nearly two years ago, we discussed an opportunity with the City of Rome who had a parcel of land available that was targeted for development on Floyd Avenue, directly across the street from Mohawk Valley Community College. The former Woodhaven site, a 79 acre area connected to Griffiss Park, and within walking distance of RFA, MVCC, and several other amenities, has room available to serve as a potential wonderful opportunity as a future home for our Y. It is a five minute walk from Griffiss, a two minute walk from Park Drive Manor, and less than a minute walk to the Mohawk River Trail Connection. The Rethink Woodhaven group spent more than a year engaging stakeholders, elected officials, students, businesses and community neighborhoods to work on a solution at the site for development, including a recreational facility.

The current facility on West Bloomfield Street is landlocked, on only three acres of land. There is no outdoor play space for children; the parking is limited and in the winter months we lose up to 25 spots. The HVAC units, which were replaced 13 years ago, will need to be replaced again in two to five years. And, the facility is now nearly 50 years old. It lacks energy efficiency, proper windows, doors, and other necessities for serving our members. It is a constant battle to repair or replace equipment without raising prices substantially. In 2018, we hired an independent market study firm, who conducted an unaided and unbiased assessment of community needs and wants in terms of healthy living, recreation, sports, and related social services that could be offered by the new Y versus the existing Rome Y branch. The study resulted in 74% of area residents, who currently are not YMCA members believing a new Y in that location would be either very or somewhat convenient for their use, confirming our previous data.

We recently hired a firm that will work on facility development and design, to produce substantial schematic drawings for us. The data collected from the market study, a program committee consisting of YMCA members and supporters, staff, members, businesses, and tours of new YMCAs around the state will be used to determine the facility structure, room usage, and growth potential. I am also working on options for the current Y building, as not to leave another vacant building in Rome, especially in a residential section. Early meetings have been very positive. The question of the pool has come up on multiple occasions. Yes, the new facility will have a pool. In fact, we are looking at several options for “aquatic centers” that can serve multiple populations in a variety of ways including swimming lessons, group exercise, therapy, and other important needs. Aquatics is a very important part of what we do and who we serve. Child care is equally important.

As we are in the very early stages of this process, please know that this is both an exciting and challenging time for all of us. We want to build the best possible facility, and one that will serve the community for generations to come. Our Y is one of the oldest and most successful in the country. At 147 years old, it has outlasted dozens of other organizations, due to a strong mission and support from our loyal members and generous donors. We will do our best to continue the communication stream as we work our way through the process. Of course, the entire project is solely dependent on fund raising and support from our community. We hope you will continue to support our efforts as we go forward.

Hank Leo
A MESSAGE FROM OUR ROME YMCA MULTI TEAM LEADER, BRUCE HAIRSTON.

If you’re like me you’re hoping the white stuff is done falling. The little bit of green trying to come through will make its way for good. This, from what they tell me is the signs of spring finally arriving in Central NY. It’s also the time when we start looking outdoors, and ignoring the indoors. This is a mistake that is frequently made by people who believe, because the weather is better they don’t need to be inside working out anymore. That somehow the nice weather allows them to get fit, without actually doing anything. It’s a time when we should refocus our energy and take a more active approach as it relates to our fitness, so when the time comes we will be able to do the outdoor activities we enjoy. Whether its bike riding, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, swimming, playing tennis, or even running, we need to continue getting and staying in shape in order to enjoy the spring and summer activities. I enjoy being outdoors as much as the next person, but I know I won’t get fit just because the weather has changed.

Continue taking your favorite land or water aerobic class and utilizing all the amenities the Y has to offer throughout the year. Those that do will continue to see progress and those who don’t will come back in the fall and say I have to start all over again!

Quote-

If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant: if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

The works of Anne Bradstreet
A MESSAGE FROM OUR ONEIDA FAMILY YMCA MULTI TEAM LEADER, STEPHANIE NEFF

It is a wonderful time to be a member of the Oneida YMCA. We have taken on a new approach to programming in our facility by creating a team, focusing on character development, and using goals to drive the programming. This method has helped our leadership team to develop new programs that are truly meeting needs in our community and redefine some of our existing programs to be more successful for the participants.

One of our greatest accomplishments this quarter has been an increase in our membership and adult fitness offerings. We have reached our highest membership to date! As of March 2019, the Oneida Family YMCA had 4,600 members. In addition, we have refined our class offerings to provide classes that have been in demand for a long time, Support Groups for Caregivers of loved ones with memory impairments, Grief Support Groups, AARP Driving Courses, Tai Chi, Kickboxing and TRX classes are on the way.

Recent focuses on Arts & Humanities have brought new classes, such as Art & Soul adult therapeutic painting, Song Writing with Matt Beadle, Piano, Guitar, Crafting for Kids and more. An intentional focus on relationship building in programming has also allowed us to develop our archery program into a program for the entire family, not just youth. We now have over 40 participants taking archery, including youth, parents and grandparents all learning traditional skills together in one class. Parents Night Outs have increased to over 40 youth once per month who are engaged in physical fitness activities, making friends and learning how to be responsible for themselves at the Y. .

One of our greatest accomplishments over the past several months is the Fit Kids of Madison County program that has provided youth at North Broad Street School an opportunity to learn about their health, fitness and participate in a 20 week program that incorporates cooperative fitness challenges. In addition, we have opened the Kidz Zone to all hours of operation to meet member needs, which has received significant positive feedback.

We are busier than we have ever been! With the increase in membership and activity, we have experienced some difficulty with parking and availability of some spaces in the facility. We ask that everyone please be considerate of others and have some patience. We are trying to schedule programs carefully to prevent parking overflow, although the popular after work hours are hard to avoid. If everyone could be cautious to only take one space, this would be a great help. If the machines are full in the Wellness Center, please limit yourself to 30 minutes for those that are waiting to have an opportunity to use the equipment.

A huge thank you to all of our members for their support and to our leadership team, Gregg Torrey, Valerie Webb, Emma Smith, Ryan Nester and Bethany Ratliff for everything they do on a daily basis to create a welcoming, family-friendly environment and to keep our Y running efficiently!

Stephanie Neff
Multi-Team Leader
Oneida Family Y
Changing Lives
Determination Celebration

CELEBRATING OUR MEMBERS’ SUCCESSES

Saturday, April 27th
6:00 PM—9:00 PM

Determination Honoree Video
Buffet Dinner
30+ Basket Raffles
Silent Auction Items
Beer Tasting
Cash Bar
Music by
Matthew Rockwell Group

Vernon Downs Hotel
4229 Stuhlman Road
Vernon, NY 13476

Tickets:
$40 per person or $70 per couple
$500 Table of 8
Reservation & Sponsorship

Tickets may be purchased at the
Rome and Oneida Family YMCA’s or
on our website at
www.ymcatrivalky.org

~In Memory of~
Don Connelly

Some people succeed because they are destined but most because they are determined.
• Unknown

Rome Family YMCA
301 W. Bloomfield St.
Rome, NY 13440
315–336–3500

Oneida Family YMCA
701 Seneca St.
Oneida, NY 13421
315–363–7788

“All proceeds benefit the Y’s Changing Lives Financial Assistance Program for children and families that are unable to afford YMCA programs and services.”
Hillside students utilize the Teen Center to decorate cookies for the holidays.

After Hillside students complete their homework, they are able to enjoy playing pool and basketball.
Slime time at the Westmoreland After-School Program!

Holland Patent After-School Program enjoying the first sunny day in weeks!

Denti After-School Program making glitter slime!

Friendship bracelet making at the John Joy After-School Program!

Denti After-School Program arts and craft project!

Yadiel Santiago-Smith using his favorite manipulatives to create a master piece!
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOL AGE CHILD CARE
ONEIDA

The Willard Prior SACC program had some fun with the stacking cups this month. They got together and discussed what they would have to do to get the cups to stack on each other, what the best way was to stack them and how many people could be stacking at once. It took them several times to get the cups just right in order for them to stay stacked as they got higher. They even stacked them by color. It was great team work by all!

In MARCH we celebrated how important the youth are to the YMCA. The Oneida SACC morning program discussed the importance of working together to get a project done. Every child in the program was honored with a gold coin to represent team work and how they are the roots or Treasure of the YMCA. The Seneca Street SACC program showed off their St Patrick’s day spirit.

HEALTHY LIVING

Lifeguard swims to victory

Rome YMCA lifeguard Oliver Dragojevic successfully defended his championship title with the 100-yard breaststroke breaking a school record this year in the National Swim competition. The 6-foot-3 Dragojevic is one of the area’s best swimmers. Dragojevic keeps a steady diet of chicken, rice and vegetables while training. Dragojevic reluctantly joined the RFA swim team as a freshman. He joined the Clinton Cudas after his sophomore season, but didn’t enjoy swimming until the end of his junior year, when he won breaststroke title and placed fourth at the Section III Class A championship meet. A relative of Dragojevic; Kara Lynn Joyce, is a four-time Olympic silver medalist. “That was a motivating factor for me,” Dragojevic said. Dragojevic's breaststroke mechanics have developed nicely. RFA swim coach said he has a tight whip kick and is impressed with his drive, shrug and fast overwater recovery. Even his turns, starts and pullouts are top-notch.

We are lucky to have Oliver on the aquatics team here at the Rome YMCA and we wish him luck with all of his future swimming endeavors.
HEALTHY LIVING

Summertime Swimming Tips

It’s getting close to that time again! Few things compare to a good summer day at the beach, and we all know some tips to stay safe, but here are a few you may not have known about:

Bring Vinegar to the beach. If you are ever swimming in the ocean and feel a sudden searing pain, you’ve just been stung by a jellyfish. The myth that peeing or pouring alcohol on your wound makes it feel better, can actually agitate the jellyfish stinging cells, or nematocytes, making it feel worse. But Vinegar has high acidity and helps to deactivate these nematocytes. After pouring vinegar on the wound, scrape off any remnants with a straight edge like a credit card.

Swim Parallel to shore to escape a rip tide. Rip tides are basically areas where water going back out to sea gets funneled into an area of high concentration. They are hard to spot, have no different feeling, and can carry you miles out to sea. If you ever find yourself in one, don’t panic. Remember that you are in an area of suction, and swimming back to shore directly will only wear you out. To escape, swim diagonally or parallel to the shore line. You will swim out of the rip tide after a few yards and will have no resistance making it back to land.

Relax to float on your back. If you fall out of a boat, get pulled out to sea by a current, or by some other catastrophe find yourself alone in the great wide ocean, don’t panic. You need to keep calm in order to conserve energy until a rescue crew arrives, and fortunately, relaxing is also the best way to stay afloat. Breathing deeply draws more oxygen into your body, lowering your overall density and thereby buoying you up in the water. Lying back also helps you float, because it makes it more difficult for water to flow around your outstretched body and force it downward compared to when you’re upright like a pencil. Lie back by using the water as a pillow for your head and shifting your weight from your legs to your shoulders. Drawing your arms back toward your head helps lift the rest of your body toward the surface of the water. If necessary, kick your legs and wave your arms very gently, cupping your hands to push water downward and turning them on edge to slide them upward. But most important, relax.

Never too old to learn...

It’s no myth that swimming is the best exercise. It works your full body, from the tips of your fingers to the tips of your toes, all your muscles get a good workout along with your respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Combine that with a zero-impact environment and you have yourself the best possible way to exercise. But if you’re an adult and you’ve never learned, here are some tips to get you started:

Decide to do it: For many, making the mental commitment is the hardest part. Maybe you had a bad experience or feel awkward, but don’t worry. You can do this. Everyone can swim, it’s not a matter of if, but only a question of when. Your body wants to float, swimming is just learning to balance.

Get some good gear: You don’t need to buy a lot of equipment, good goggles and a bathing suit that fits well sure helps. A noodle and a kickboard are also the only two pieces of equipment you would need to start learning the basics.

Start Small: When you first start to learn, you’ll be focusing on the basics, like getting comfortable with breath exchanges or putting your face all the way down in the water. You’ll need these skills first before you even try to float, let alone swim. Take small steps and enjoy the victories.

Don’t give up: Learning to swim takes time, and as an adult we can become frustrated or disappointed we aren’t learning as quickly as we like. For this, I say we can learn something from kids...Try to relax and have fun with it! Remember WHY you want to learn. Now you’ll be able to take your family on more vacations. Victories don’t feel as good when there wasn’t a struggle to earn them!
HEALTHY LIVING

Hydro Spin offered at the Rome YMCA

Hydro Spin classes are offered in pools across the UK, and now at the Rome YMCA. Hydro Spin is the aquatic fitness class that incorporates the benefits of spinning with the resistance of the pool. Each class is taught by a certified instructor and uses state of the art Hydro Rider bikes that are made in Italy. Hydro spin has been brought to the Rome YMCA because of high popularity and demand with land spinning. When you join in a hydro spin class you experience reduced pressure on your joints and muscles. The water provides the cyclists with a degree of support and resistance for their limbs which is impossible to achieve on a normal stationary bike. The benefits of exercising in the water are becoming better known as many professional athletes are turning to the pool for their training routine. Athletes use the water to protect vulnerable parts of the body, and to recover, with the goal of complete rehabilitation after an injury. All participants will need water aerobic shoes to participate in the class.

The class is offered in the 83 degree main pool on Monday at 5:30pm-6:30pm. Tuesday at 5:45am-6:45am, Tuesday 9:45am-10:45am, and Tuesday 6:45-7:45pm. Thursday 5:45am-6:45am, Thursday 5:30pm-6:30pm.

YMCA members who would like to attend the class can sign up at the front desk 15 minutes prior to the class starts. One month trial memberships are available for anyone interested who is not a current member.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 12th, 2019

Our Strategic Teen Enrichment Program (STEP) was fortunate enough to take an amazing trip to the New York State Capitol in Albany for the Alliance of New York State YMCA’s Advocacy Day on March 12th, 2019. While in Albany, we were able to meet with members of the Alliance of New York State YMCA and state legislators. Our day started at the Y Advocates Breakfast, where we were able to honor the Speaker of the Assembly Carl Heastie with the Y Champions Award. Next, we met with NYS Assemblywoman, Marianne Buttenschon and then NYS Senator, Joseph Griffo. Both were very inspiring for our STEP group. After our meetings, we explored the NYS Museum. Our experience at the NYS Capitol was truly influential and allowed the teens of STEP to understand how their voice can make a difference.

March 16th, 2019

ROME YMCA vs CYO All-Star Game

Over the past 10 weeks, our teens have been playing basketball within our Teen Basketball League. This league included 6 teams of student athletes and volunteer coaches from the community. This program allowed youth to experience the dedication and hard work that makes up the element of teamwork. With committed staff and athletes, our Rome YMCA was able to organize an All-Star Game held at the Rome YMCA and enjoy some external competition!

IMPORTANT UPDATES:

New equipment and fun has been added to our Teen Center! With additions like a brand new PS4 and an Air-Hockey Table, we are very excited to see what the future holds for our center. New events such as ping-pong tournaments and Open-Mic nights are hopefully coming soon!
PERSONAL TRAINING AND SMALL GROUP TRAINING TESTIMONIALS

Julie is an exceptional trainer. She tailors workouts to the needs of her clients and works around any physical impairment without compromising their success. I have lower back issues and Julie modified specific exercises to avoid aggravating them while maintaining a high level of performance. Her knowledge and dedication to fitness and her clients is unwavering!

-Amy Debrucque

Bethany worked with me to help develop weight training workouts to further myself to help me reach my fitness goals. It was a great experience and I learned a lot from her. She is always very encouraging and helping me push myself further than my mind thinks it can. I would highly recommend her as a trainer and to attend her workout classes that she instructs.

-Jill Crosby

I first met Julie by attending her HIIT classes. I was hooked after just a couple of classes. Her knowledge of working out and fun disposition made attending these classes extremely enjoyable. The results became a bonus. After about a year of classes, I wanted to achieve different weight lifting goals. I hired Julie to personal train me. She was always ready to teach and extremely organized. Her energy and love for what she does made attending these sessions a priority. I am not only thankful for our great workouts but also for our friendship. Thanks Julie!

-Alice Rinaldo

I had been attending Bethany Ratliff's Cali HIIT classes for almost a year when she mentioned she’d be starting up a small group training class for clients to learn more about the equipment in the free weight room - how to use it, what exercises to do, and what muscles to target. I had been intimidated by all the equipment and options, so I looked forward to the class. Through this class, Bethany taught us the proper technique and form for completing several different exercises that target multiple muscles. We learned how to do everything from dead lifts to skull crushers to squats using the Smith machine. She also taught us numerous cable machine workouts focused on all body areas (everything from cable terry pulls and single arm diagonal raises to glute kickbacks and single arm rows). We also learned how to use the equipment in the cardio/circuit machine room.

This class was so much more than I anticipated. We met twice a week -- one day focused on training, and the other on accountability. In the accountability portion, Bethany went over nutrition, the importance of stretching, etc., and the importance of sticking to a routine and preparing meals in advance. We kept track of our workouts and completed food logs (which was eye opening!). Through all of the classes, Bethany made me feel comfortable, answered all of my questions, and pushed me to work hard.

I highly recommend the small group training if you’re looking to get more out of your gym visits or if you’re looking to set up a routine that gets you to the gym. I now have the confidence to be able to complete these workouts on my own!

-Danielle Krol

Blood Drive
June 18, 2019  in Gym B 12pm-6pm at the Rome YMCA.
May is National Physical Fitness and Sports Month

The YMCA of the Greater Tri-Valley is supporting National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. During the month of May, we challenge all adults to get 30 minutes of moderate physical activity per day. Regular physical activity is good for everyone’s health, and no matter what shape or size you are, you can find activities that work for you! Whether you hit the weight room or join in some classes at the Y or get outside and get moving, together we can challenge each other to get more active during the month of May! Here are some examples of ways to get active this month:

Exercise with Mom!

For Mother’s Day, take some time to help Mom feel great. Depending upon her fitness level, get out for a walk with her, then take her for a healthy lunch. How about trying a yoga class together, or coming to open swim? If mom is really fit, she might take a Spin class with you!

Try a Group Fitness Class

Working out with others helps to keep you on target. Your classmates will hold you accountable for attending each day and the camaraderie you will develop while you work up a sweat together will help to keep you motivated!

Have a Ball with Your Children

Set a good example for your children. Engage your kids and show them that fitness can be fun. Toss around a football or baseball together, kick a soccer ball through the park, or take turns shooting hoops in the gym or driveway. Then return home for a healthy snack accompanied by water or unsweetened juice.

“Sweating with your Sweetie”

The YMCA held their first “Sweating with your Sweetie” drawing in February to help celebrate members during the week of Valentine’s Day. The lucky winners at the Rome branch were Sharon and Bill Bocchi! Sharon and Bill are regulars in the Silver Sneakers classes! The winners at the Oneida Branch were Danielle Hudson and Mike Hudson! Congrats to the happy couples and thanks to all the couples for participating in this fun event!
LOCAL STUDENTS CELEBRATE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKE OUT

Great American Smoke Out was November 17th and students from Chittenango Middle School educated their school on the reasons why so many people take up smoking.

"The tobacco industry is trying their hardest to attract new customers," said Sheila Leamer, Health Teacher and Reality Check advisor. "Unfortunately, they are advertising their deadly product in stores where kids shop. Young people should be able to walk into a store without being bombarded by marketing for a product they are too young to purchase."

Reality Check works to reduce youth exposure to tobacco marketing on stores and one screen. The students involved in this program aim for a healthier community.

"I wanted to be a part of this program because I want to encourage people to stop smoking or never begin in the first place," said Riley Ellis, eighth-grader at Chittenango Middle school.

Students agree that tobacco marketing is prolific in stores where they shop and in movies they watch. They are fighting to put an end to this. Students set up a table inside the lunch room, catching their peers as they headed to lunch to talk to them about the meaning of the Great American Smoke Out. Students signed letters encouraging local elected officials to protect young people from tobacco marketing and secondhand smoke.

There is still a lot of work to be done. According to the most recent Morbidity and Mortality Report, found at [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov), 15 percent of adults are still smoking. We know that 90 percent of current smokers begin before their eighteenth birthday and these young activists are fighting to make sure kids never pick up this deadly habit.

For more information about Reality Check, visit [www.realitycheckofny.com](http://www.realitycheckofny.com) to find your local chapter.