



How Your Y Is Responding to an Urgent Childcare Need: An Update from Dan Smith, CEO

September 4, 2020

Dear Valued Members, Guests and Supportive Community,

Our COVID-19 marathon has started yet another mile with the end of our summer season and the start the school year. Throughout this run we have tried desperately to respond to the needs of our community. Thanks to all of you who have stayed with us, our team has had the capacity to respond to a vastly urgent childcare need. Like all things pandemic-related, the process and the product have many complexities. So today I want to update you on how your Y is responding thanks to you and some fabulous partners.

Academic Support & Enrichment Program for School-Age Youth K-5 (ASE): The ASE Program is designed to support working families with K-5 students participating in the hybrid school model. This five-day-per-week program will include three days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the off-site days of the hybrid school model and two days of after school care. YMCA staff will help children with their remote learning and virtual learning assignments. Additional enrichment programming will be provided throughout the day. We will host these programs at five different sites across our Y locations and at our new partner locations, the Keene Church of the Nazarene, Next Level Church and Elm City Church. COVID-19 practices will be at play, including restricting children to the same group of kids each day, maintaining 6 feet apart and wearing masks. We really want to thank the **Savings Bank of Walpole** for providing a generous donation to allow us to purchase needed supplies for this program.

ASE for Middle School Youth. We are also starting a three-day-per-week model for middle school youth. This program will parallel the ASE for K-5 however, it will not provide after school care. It will run only on the school's remote learning days.

Prioritizing ASE registration to meet the overall need of Keene

children: Childcare need in our community being great, and capacity being limited, we have had long discussions about how to prioritize this offering in our community. We decided to put the needs of our children community-wide first. As such, we know that our area teachers are wrestling with their ability to teach this year in the hybrid model because of their own childcare needs. All our area children will suffer if our community cannot answer our teachers' needs. That is why we have opened registration today through Monday, Sept. 7, for SAU29 staff. We will open registration on Sept. 8 to our YMCA SACC children and then general registration will begin Sept. 9.

Job fair & scaling ASE and preschool to size: We currently have more rooms available for this ASE program than we have trained staff ready to launch. We will add seats to this program as staffing, spaces and demand align. Our preschool childcare also has more space and wait-listed children than we have staff to accommodate. I ask for your help in encouraging qualified candidates to apply for these jobs or attend our Job Fair on Thursday, Sept. 10, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and on Saturday, Sept. 12, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The children and families in our community need them.

Please stay socially distant and community focused,

Dan Smith
CEO