

# our voice

eliminating racism  
empowering women  
**ywca**  
bergen county

Spring 2009

## A Summer of Fun

**YW camps are an affordable option for budget-minded families**

For many local families, sending their kids to camp is as much a summer ritual as eating ice cream and watching 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks. At the YWCA of Bergen County, we're doing our part to keep this tradition alive: keeping costs low, supporting working parents and providing financial assistance to families in need to help make summer camp a reality for as many kids as possible. Given today's extraordinarily difficult economic climate, this is no easy task.

"We're deliberately more affordable than other similar camps," says Maire Brosnan Katavolos, Director of the YWCA's School Age Programs. "As a non-profit organization, we work hard to keep our fees at reasonable levels compared to for-profit camps." While other full-day camps often have at least a two-week minimum, YW camps give parents the flexibility to sign up their children one week at a time, eliminating the need to pay for a long-term commitment. Camp hours are also ideal for working families: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with pre and post camp care options.

Creating accessible and unforgettable summer camp experiences for Bergen and Rockland County families has been a YWCA tradition since 1960. "Our mission has been to empower parents by providing a place where they know their children are well cared for and having a great time," says Katavolos, who joined the YWCA in May 2007. Day camps in Saddle River and Dumont, NJ and



### Send a Child to Camp!

***"We're getting calls from parents who have both lost their jobs...we hope that those who can will give—so that their neighbors' children have something to look forward to this summer."***

*Maire Brosnan Katavolos, Director,  
YWCA School Age Programs*

Won't you please consider sponsoring a child for one or more weeks of summer camp? Now more than ever, your donations make it possible for us to offer scholarships to families in need. Send your donation with the enclosed card (see Page 3) or donate online at [www.ywcabergencounty.org](http://www.ywcabergencounty.org).

***Thank you for making a difference in a child's life!***

a day/residence camp in Bear Mountain, NY, keep children engaged via activities like arts and crafts, music, drama, sports, nature programs, and American Red Cross swim lessons.

Katavolos, who holds a bachelor's degree in Sociology and spent nine years running a summer camp for children with disabilities, believes that hiring experienced

and highly-skilled staff is critical to ensuring that children get the supervision, guidance and encouragement they need. "Most of our camp staff works for the YW year-round, and our younger staff has generally gone through our CIT programs," she says. At the day/residence camp, Ma-kee-ya, international staff offers campers the chance to experience diverse cultures and viewpoints.

The YW's new Girl Power Camp in Saddle River will offer girls ages 11 to 14 a place to have fun and learn about themselves and the world around them. The camp will combine activities like arts and crafts and yoga with Girls Inc. programs geared towards self-esteem building and career counseling. Scholarships for this and all YWCA camps are available based on eligibility. But with the current economic crisis, Katavolos expects a serious shortage of funding as requests for financial assistance skyrocket. "We're getting calls from parents who have both lost their jobs and never dreamed they'd have to ask for help," she says. While she and her staff do their best to stretch available dollars, the demand is unprecedented. "We hope that those who can give, will give—so that their neighbors' children have something to look forward to this summer."

## ywca mission

The Young Women's Christian Association of the United States of America is a women's membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: **Peace, justice, freedom and dignity** for all people. The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.

## who we are

The YWCA of Bergen County is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all. We are the area's largest provider of child care services, a recognized leader in health and fitness programs, and operator of the county's only Rape Crisis Center. Celebrating nearly a century of commitment to our community, today we improve the lives of thousands of women, girls, and their families. For more information, visit [www.ywcabergencounty.org](http://www.ywcabergencounty.org).

## board of directors

Lisa Kender, President  
Susan Borea  
Nisha Cordero  
Dr. Judith Hayles  
Christina Gibbons  
Barbara Keirnan  
Mary Jo Kurtz  
Amy Labanowski  
Dorothy Mello Laguzza  
Sally Martino  
Linda Murphy  
Teresa Oakley  
Nancy Passow  
Monica Roers, CEO

# from the ceo's desk



Dear Friends of the YWCA,  
On January 20th, I was overjoyed to be among the millions of people gathered in Washington, D.C. to witness the inauguration of President Barack Obama. Along with Americans from all over the country,

I waited for hours on the chilly parade route, hoping for a glimpse of our new President. When the police officer told us that the President and Mrs. Obama were about to walk past, peels of joy and elation filled the air. The entire crowd began screaming, jumping up and down, and waving frantically. This was a moment that I knew we would all be reliving for years to come...a moment when we were a witness to history.

The election of the first African American President of the United States was a tribute to how far we've come as a nation in eliminating racism. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that racism continues to be a divisive issue, as well as a force that keeps many individuals from achieving success in education and employment, as well as diminishing the quality of life in communities all across this country. Throughout its history, the YWCA has been a pioneer in race relations, working tirelessly to combat racism and other forms of oppression, and to promote racial understanding and justice in local communities. As part of this effort, the YWCA's of Trenton and Princeton, New Jersey, launched the Stand Against Racism in 2008, an initiative aimed at raising awareness that racism still exists in our communities and that it cannot be ignored or tolerated. Last year over 60 organizations and 5,000 individuals in Mercer County—ranging from school-age children to elected officials, executives of large corporations to church leaders—joined the YWCA in taking a bold step forward in the battle against racism.

This year, YWCAs in New Jersey, New York and Connecticut will Stand Against Racism on Friday, April 3rd. The YWCA of Bergen County invites you to stand with us for racial justice and to honor and celebrate the richness of diversity. You can do so in two ways: by holding your own Stand Against Racism event or by attending our YWCA's event at Paramus Park Mall (see details at right). I urge you to make your voice heard and join others who believe—like we do—that united we can eliminate racism.

Monica Roers  
CEO

# you're invited...

## ...to take a stand against racism



On **Friday, April 3, 2009**, the YWCA is calling on local organizations and individuals in Bergen County to join us in taking a Stand Against Racism. There are two ways to participate:

- Host your own Stand Against Racism event. Participation is free, and the YWCA will provide all necessary materials. For details and to sign up go to [www.StandAgainstRacism.org](http://www.StandAgainstRacism.org).
- Go to the Paramus Park Mall between 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. and take part in our Stand Against Racism event, featuring guest speakers, musical performances and readings by the student winners of our Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest. Go to [www.ywcabergencounty.org](http://www.ywcabergencounty.org) for more info. or call Lisa at 201-881-1729.

## ...to raise your awareness about sexual assault

### April 21<sup>st</sup>

#### "Survivors' Art and Poetry Exhibit: The Art of Healing from Sexual Victimization"

Hosted by Ramapo College of New Jersey and the YWCA Rape Crisis Center, this annual event uses survivors' poetry, art and discussion to inform others about the implications of sexual violence. Art Exhibit 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Poetry Reading 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. J. Lee's Room, Ramapo College Student Center, 505 Ramapo Valley Rd., Mahwah. Call 201-487-2227 for more info.



### April 28<sup>th</sup>

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Denim Day in NJ



The YWCA Rape Crisis Center will work with local high schools and colleges to educate young women and men about consent and the prevention of sexual violence. Wear jeans with a purpose to show your support! To find out how, call 201-881-1752 or email [angelae@ywcabergencounty.org](mailto:angelae@ywcabergencounty.org).

## thank you!

Our sincere appreciation to the following for their continued generosity:

**The Lillian P. Schenck Foundation**  
Gift will support our Rape Crisis Center and After School Program Scholarships.

**The Atlantic Stewardship Bank**  
Funds to be distributed in ways that best support our mission.

# ywca applauds signing of lilly ledbetter act

YWCA's across the country cheered when President Obama signed the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act into law on January 29th. Ms. Ledbetter worked for Goodyear Tire for more than twenty years. When she discovered that she was being paid less than her male counterparts, she took her case to the U.S. Supreme Court—which denied her claim, ruling that employees had to file pay discrimination claims within 180 days of their employers' initial decision to pay them less. Ms. Ledbetter fought back, and the resulting bill restores a prior law allowing people to challenge discriminatory paychecks as long as they continue to receive them.

When the national YWCA office called our attention to this issue, the YWCA of Bergen County worked with our sister organizations to collectively make our voices heard in Congress. But there is more work to do: passing The Paycheck Fairness Act is the next step in achieving pay equity for women. It will deter wage discrimination by closing loopholes in the law and bar retaliation against workers who disclose their wages. The House passed a version of the Act in January, and now it's time for Senate action. We encourage you to join us in asking our senators to sponsor this important pay equity bill. To find out how, log on to [www.ywca.org/advocacy](http://www.ywca.org/advocacy) and click on "Take Action".



**Above:** Monica Roers, CEO, YWCA of Bergen County congratulates Lilly Ledbetter at the Jan. 24th AAUW Pay Equity Conference at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, NJ.

## program news

### unilever hosts 35<sup>th</sup> annual TWIN awards

The YWCA of Bergen County will celebrate the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Annual Tribute to Women and Industry (TWIN) Awards on Thursday evening, April 30th, 2009. Generously hosted by Unilever, one of the largest consumer products companies in the world, the event will take place at the Teaneck Marriott at Glenpointe. Amanda Sourry, Executive Vice President SCC & Dressings, will serve as Honorary Chair, and former TWIN Honoree and YWCA Board Member Linda Murphy is Project Chairwoman. TWIN honors women in executive or managerial roles who have made significant contributions to the companies where they work, and acknowledges the companies whose progressive policies have enabled their success. For details and ticket information, contact Barbara Giarmo at 201-881-1723 or email [bgarmo@ywcabergen.org](mailto:bgarmo@ywcabergen.org).

### persimmon\* power!

Why just renew your membership when you can power it up? Renew (or join) at our new **Persimmon** level and show your support for vital YWCA programs. Persimmon Membership combines a basic YW membership with a \$50 tax deductible donation that directly supports our 24/7 Rape Crisis hotline, scholarships for child care and after school programs, and fitness programs for those with special needs. As a "thank you", you'll have access to Early Bird Registration (sign up for classes a week before registration officially opens). Visit [www.ywcabergen.org](http://www.ywcabergen.org) for details, or call the Membership Office at 201-444-5600, x341.

*\*Persimmon is an orangey-red tropical fruit and the name of our signature color!*

### cancer survivors "get in the swim"

The YWCA of Bergen County's new "Get in the Swim" program offers free swim lessons for adult cancer survivors. All levels are welcome, from beginners to the more advanced looking to improve their skills. There is no fee but participants must have a YWCA membership. For more information or to register, call Linda Doller at 201-444-5600, ext. 348 or visit [www.ywcabergen.org](http://www.ywcabergen.org).

## positively changing lives

*In this column we share stories that are told to us by those whose lives have been impacted by our YWCA. Here is one from a Rape Crisis Center client:*

"I was 14 years old when 'it' happened. I thought if I didn't tell, if I pretended it didn't happen, I would forget all about it. The sad thing is, you never forget. No matter how hard I tried to come to grips with my sanity and my life, I couldn't do it. I was 15 when I started cutting. My mother noticed the scars on my arms one day after my shower, and finally I told all. I screamed as loud as I possibly could, "I was raped".

**"My mother got the number of the YWCA Rape Crisis Center, and a set of counselors became my 'rocks'."**

My mother got the number of the YWCA of Bergen County Rape Crisis Center, and a set of counselors became my 'rocks'. I turned to them anytime I needed to be reassured, to cry, even when I just needed a hug. They stood by me for two years without budging. I hold them dearly in my heart, and no one will ever take their places as my personal angels."

## your generosity makes all the difference

Every dollar of your donation to the YWCA of Bergen County directly supports such crucial programs as:

- Scholarships for underprivileged children in need of child care or an after school program
- Adapted fitness programs for those with mental and/or physical challenges
- 24-hour Rape Crisis Center hotline
- "Camperships" for children needing a supervised summer program

✂

**enclosed is my gift of:**

\$50    \$75    \$100    \$250    \$500    other    Check    MC/Visa    Amex

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check payable to YWCA of Bergen County. Or make your donation online at [www.ywcabergen.org](http://www.ywcabergen.org) (click on the "donations" link)**

Support for specific YWCA programs \_\_\_\_\_

Please give my contribution where it is most needed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ St \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to:** Jennifer Rosa, YWCA of Bergen County, 2 University Plaza, Suite 208  
Hackensack, NJ 07601



YWCA of Bergen County  
112 Oak Street  
Ridgewood, NJ 07450

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 74  
Ridgewood NJ

**how to reach us**

**Hackensack:**

2 University Plaza, Suite 208  
Hackensack, NJ 07601  
201-881-1700

**Ridgewood:**

112 Oak Street  
Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
201-444-5600

For more information, visit us at [www.ywcabergencounty.org](http://www.ywcabergencounty.org)

**out & about** highlights from recent YWCA special events

**RCC Marks 15 Years of Giving Survivors a Voice**

More than 2,000 T-shirts were displayed on "The Green" across from the Bergen County Courthouse in Hackensack at the 15th Annual Bergen County Clothesline Project exhibit on September 11th. The shirts carried powerful messages and illustrations designed by, or on behalf of, survivors of violence, including sexual assault, incest and battery. Guest speakers included New Jersey Senator Loretta Weinberg; Bergen County Prosecutor John Molinelli; Hackensack Mayor Michael Melfi; and Lisa Plevin, Deputy State



Director to Senator Frank Lautenberg. Students from Hackensack and Teaneck high schools attended and made T-shirts, and the Reflections, an improvisational theater group, per-

formed a piece on dating and interpersonal violence. The exhibit was co-sponsored by the YWCA of Bergen County Rape Crisis Center, Alternatives to Domestic Violence, Bergen County Office of Victims Witness Advocacy, Bergen Family Center, National Council of Jewish Women, and Shelter Our Sisters. **Above:** Local legislators and advocates raised awareness about sexual abuse and assault.

**Former YW Board Members Lunch 'n Learn**

Former and current YWCA board members connected over lunch at Heritage Pointe of Teaneck on September 18th to learn about the YW's programs and initiatives designed to empower women and eliminate racism. Attendees included former board members Pam Averso, Mary Ann Bryan, Donna Dowd, Bobbie Eaton, Marilyn Fitz, Jyoti Ghandi, Marion Kortjohn, and Patricia Krayna.



**Above:** Standing L to R: Carol Hess, Ann Cranston and Susan Madden. Seated L to R: Judith Hayles and Claudia Izzi.

**Fall Golf Classic a Hole-in-One**

The YWCA of Bergen County and the Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce joined forces for a Fall Golf Classic on September 15th at the Ramsey Golf and Country Club.



Proceeds support YWCA scholarships for child care and summer camp, adapted fitness programs, and the Rape Crisis Center, plus programs of the Ridgewood Chamber. The event was made possible by more than 25 local sponsors.

**Above:** L to R: Barbara Kiernan, YWCA of Bergen County Board of Directors; Doug Seiferling, President, Ridgewood Chamber of Commerce; Lisa Kender, President, YWCA Board of Directors; Joan Groome, Executive Director, Ridgewood Chamber; and Barbara Giarmo, Special Events Manager, YWCA.

**Girls "Crack the Code" at Power & Possibilities Event**

Over 50 high school girls came together for a day of sharing and self-reflection at the YWCA of Bergen County Girls Coalition's fourth annual "Power & Possibilities" event on October 18th. The program's theme, "Cracking the Code" (which was developed by students from Teaneck High School who attended last year's event) focused on addressing issues like bullying, self-esteem and healthy relationships. The program included a group discussion, screening of the movie "Odd Girl Out," and a variety of workshops. Event co-sponsors were the National Council of Jewish Women Bergen County Section, Unilever, Liz Claiborne, Inc., and Acme Imports, Inc.



**Above:** Girls from Teaneck, Tenafly, Dwight Morrow, and Paramus Catholic high schools.