

## YMCA planning school programs to complement state's reopening

PAWTUCKET, RI - As the state plans to reopen schools this fall, the Y, which typically offers before- and after-school care to children, will be offering programming to complement whatever option the state chooses to support parents and their children.

Even through the mandated shut-down last spring, the Y continued providing vital services and emergency support to the community. Under state reopening guidelines, the YMCA reopened facilities and resumed its in-person programming on June 1, with limits on capacity and other COVID-19 protocols in place. Now the YMCA is stepping up to help parents navigate the upcoming school year.

If schools go back to regular in-school sessions, the YMCA plans to offer its regular school enrichment programming. However, if schools opt for alternating at-school and at-home days, or even decide to go completely virtual, the YMCA will offer programming for children during the days that they are out of school.

"Whatever situation the schools are in, the Y is here to provide wrap-around support. We have worked hard throughout this pandemic to continue being a

valued resource for families and for our community as a whole," said Jeanine Achin, the Chief Operations Officer at the YMCA of Pawtucket.

The Out-of-School programs will consist of traditional enrichment activities including swimming, sports, art, STEM, and academic support. The YMCA has been working with the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health to ensure it is following all guidelines on capacity limits, social distancing, and disinfecting for COVID-19.

"Our emphasis is safety first and then enrichment and engagement as a quick second to that," Achin said. "The Y Out-of-School Time programming will follow the successful model that was implemented this summer in our camps. We will make much use of outdoor spaces and small, consistent group sizes.

The programs will be available for children from kindergarten to sixth grade. If there is a chance you need before-school, after-school, or full-day virtual learning care, the YMCA is asking that parents fill out a questionnaire on its website and be placed on its fall registration waiting list. The questionnaire

can be accessed on the YMCA's homepage, <https://ymcapawtucket.org/>

The YMCA is also offering its other regular programs and services, following all pertinent state guidelines on social distancing and cleaning, Achin noted. Its indoor and outdoor basketball courts, swimming pools, and gym facilities are all open. The YMCA has also resumed offering fitness classes. Classes are available outdoors as well as indoors, at a distance of 14 feet at which masks are not required.

In addition, the YMCA is taking extra steps to help those in need during these difficult times. We are providing food and essential personal items to those in the community who request them through deliveries or grab-n-go's. The YMCA has also set up a lending library of donated books, puzzles, and children's games which are disinfected before they are put into circulation.

Throughout this crisis, the Y has continually been looking for ways to best serve everyone in our community. For more information regarding programs and services, or to become a member, visit our website, <https://ymcapawtucket.org/>, or call 401-727-7515,

