

**5 TOWNS—  
40,000 Y  
FAMILIES**

THE CAMPAIGN TO BUILD OUR "Y"

6034

January 29, 2007

State Senator Jonathan Harris  
State Representative Peter Villano  
Members of the Human Services Committee  
Room 2000, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Harris, Representative Villano and Members of the Human Services Committee:

The YMCA has developed, as its core mission, "programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all." We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities—worldwide and for over one hundred fifty years—all in a day's work.

The conspicuous absence of a full-service YMCA is a quality-of-life issue for the residents of the shoreline. A Study conducted by the Y found that 95% of the people of the shoreline region think that the Soundview Family YMCA facility "would provide a much-needed increase in the level of aquatics programming, family recreation opportunities, quality child care, and wellness/fitness programming." Many communities are defined *as* communities by the local YMCA, and the Soundview Family YMCA will be the epicenter of the shoreline—centered a ten-minute drive from the eastern and western extremes of its service area.

In order to serve the shoreline community in these important need areas—family programs, aquatics, teen programs, special populations, senior programs, and child care—the Soundview Family YMCA has designed a 50,000 square foot facility which includes:

- A 15,937 square foot, two-pool natatorium. The first pool, a 25-yard, 8-lane lap pool will be used for fitness swimming, training, competition, and therapy. The second pool, a 25-yard, 4-lane warm water pool, will also be used for family recreation and leisure swimming, as well as aquatic therapy. This facility will be the new home of our Stingrays Swim Team.
- A full service teen center with meeting rooms, vending area, video/television lounge, cyber-café, and gymnasium
- Certified, professional child care center with a licensed capacity of 33
- A wellness center/aerobics room
- A child watch room
- A Teen Center
- A day camp on the grounds
- Sport Courts
- Hiking and nature trails on the wetlands attached to the campground. Trails will be designed in conjunction with the Branford Land Trust and the Inland Wetlands Commission and will frame, protect, and preserve the wetlands.
- Family, youth and Adult locker rooms

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*Once built, the new facility will be sustained by memberships, annual support contributions, and program and user fees. Up to 9,000 shoreline residents, nearly 9% of the service area population and 20% of all households will utilize the new facility on a regular basis. An operating budget of \$2,500,000+ includes a generous scholarship/financial assistance program for memberships, child care, day camp, and other programs.*

The \$13,000,000 facility requires that up to \$10,000,000 of its cost be raised through gifts, grants, and in-kind contributions. By pooling the resources of the shoreline community, the YMCA, and the groups we serve, the Soundview Family YMCA is positioned to build the facilities long-needed by over 40,000 underserved families of the shoreline. The enclosed Case for Support details the objective to be met by completing this campaign

Building a permanent home for the Soundview Family YMCA will benefit all residents within our service area, regardless of their age and/or life circumstances

**Teens**—Currently, teens of the shoreline area have little in the way of alternatives to self-organized, and therefore precarious, social events. They have few places to call their own, and so they appropriate the few public spaces and commercial sites that have the room to accommodate their groups. This situation is not only inconvenient and bothersome, it's dangerous. Teens who have a place of their own—without interference but under a watchful eye—can and do choose healthful recreation as an alternative. They prefer competitive athletic events to a hamburger drive-thru, and frequently seek out the counsel and regard of respected adults. The Soundview Family YMCA will provide our teens a place of their own.

**Seniors**—A variety of social service organizations provide health and fitness programs, socialization opportunities, and watchful and caring attention to the retirement-age community of the shoreline. While The Parks and Recreation Departments of the townships offer professional programming at taxpayer expense, these programs will benefit from aquatics and aqua therapy programs that are not currently unavailable. The Soundview Family YMCA facility will give seniors meeting space, and our programming includes social opportunities, as well as new venues that will be available for the towns' Parks and Recreation seniors programs.

**Child Care**—Few, if any, communities in the United States are over-served in the area of pre-school child care and school-age after school programs. The shoreline is no exception. Families in the region are constantly seeking child care during normal business hours of the working day. The best of these programs—those that provide not only safe and clean care for children but also growth- and development-enhancing activities for young children—are rare and always in high demand. Shoreline families want, need, and deserve ready access to high quality, professionally staffed and managed childcare. The YMCA conducts its own training programs, certifies its graduates, and provides more child care/day care than any other organization public or private in the United States.

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**Other service organizations**—In addition to providing for the needs of our communities, the facility will accommodate the trainers, coaches, and athletes of Special Olympics Connecticut (SOCT) and their local affiliate SARAH. The 50,000 square foot facility is designed specifically for special needs users—a design configuration that also fits all other users. To our knowledge, this approach—designing the facilities for special needs users and adapting for standard uses—is a national innovation. Coaches and trainers of SOCT will study for and receive their certification at the facility. Local Special Olympics competitions and qualifications will take place on the site. The fit between these two internationally recognized organizations is natural and mutually beneficial.

*A family facility so easily accessible to shoreline families, commuters who live on the shoreline and work in New Haven, and young people from local high schools and middle schools represents a dramatic improvement to the quality of life in the region. These kinds of community amenities will make the area a preferred residential location for the kinds of family-conscious, professional, and high tech workforce that shoreline economic development efforts have targeted. Standard industry multipliers for recreational facilities sited in suburban areas with population and demographics factors similar to those of the Soundview Family YMCA service area indicate that a facility with this center's annual budget will likely generate an annual return to the shoreline economy of approximately \$5.7 million.*

The support of the community we serve is essential if the shoreline's forty-year dream of an aquatic and recreational center is to materialize. Research indicates that the time is right, that the goal of \$10,000,000 is reachable. With additional leadership from the State of Connecticut, building a permanent home for the Soundview Family YMCA will be a reality. More importantly, the Soundview Family YMCA will continue its proud service to the residents of Branford, East Haven, North Branford, Guilford, and Madison with enhanced programs and the ability to better serve our growing constituency.

On behalf of all residents of the Five-Towns Area, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Philip J. Dwyer  
CEO  
Central Connecticut Coast YMCA

Charles Andriole  
Campaign Chairman

Douglas P. Shaw  
Executive Director  
Soundview Family YMCA