



May 20, 2025

Warmest greetings, Friend and Partner of the Emma B. Howe Y,

Speaking of warm, it's hard to believe we're quickly approaching the start of summer! Doesn't it feel like just yesterday that we were pulling our heavy coats, mittens, and hats from storage?

Well, just as quickly as the seasons seem to turn here in Minnesota, our work here at the Emma B. Howe YMCA is also continually evolving to meet the needs of our community. And now that the winter gear is again out of sight and we eagerly greet summer, I am taking time to reflect on the progress we've made so far in 2025 and want to share a bit about what you can look forward to in the second half of the year.

Let's dive into some updates, shall we?

- Our incredible team of **volunteers** logged 6,755 hours at our Y and within the community - WOW!
- We have strengthened **new and existing partnerships** with local entities like NE Bank, Cummins, and Fishing for Life, which help support our Annual Fund through donations or grants.
- A major highlight for our team is the fostered growth and development we've seen in the 11-15 year-olds we serve through **intentional youth programming** that helps prepare them for employment opportunities. We had 20 youth working in different areas of our Y, learning valuable and transferrable skills by checking in members at the front desk, caring for younger children in Kids Stuff, or keeping the pool safe as a lifeguard.
- We saw an average of 1,400 check-ins from our **ForeverWell members** each month during 2024, with growing participation in our specialized senior programming to stay physically active and socially engaged.
- Back by popular demand, **Lunch with Llamas** will take place on **May 29th**. There will be a food truck to purchase food, or folks can bring a bag lunch and interact with the friendly llamas - hope to see you there!
- On **July 25th**, we will be hosting a **Community Service Day** event where members and staff will have the opportunity to give back to our local community. Stay tuned for more information coming soon.
- We are thrilled to be building a **community garden** this summer through a grant from Cummins, with members of all ages - toddlers to seniors - able to experience the various aspects of gardening.
- Programmatic growth continues in many areas, such as:
 - Increasing access to **swimming lessons**, with more available instructors allowing us to add more sessions
 - More **open court time**, with basketball remaining popular with both youth and adults
 - Additional **fitness classes** to meet member needs and interests
 - Organized **potlucks, bingo, and lunches out** to keep Foreverwell members engaged
 - Expanding **career readiness program** with 20+ youth volunteers learning and engaging with Y work

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Ongoing support from partners like you is the driving force behind these achievements, our plans for the future, and so much more. Your inspiring commitment helps us grow and adapt our programs so that no community member has to question whether the Emma B. Howe Y is a place for them.

We are beyond grateful to have you by our side in this important work, positively impacting many lives in many ways.

As we plan for the future, I'm excited to keep you updated on our journey as we create new ways to foster wellbeing and strengthen our community.

Once again, thank you for being a vital part of why and how we carry out our mission each day. I wish you a fantastic summer ahead and can't wait to see all the good we'll accomplish together in the months and years to come!

With deep gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Kinstler', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Shannon Kinstler
Executive Director

