



May 20, 2025

Warmest greetings, Friend and Partner of the White Bear Area 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 White Bear Area 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?

- Over 600 second graders from the White Bear Lake school district received swim lessons last year as part of their school day, introducing **water safety** to many children. We also hosted a popular **Trunk or Treat** event in October where we engaged with community members and collected over 600 pounds of donated food for the local food shelf.
- Our **fitness center refresh** was successfully completed, bringing in new free weight and strength equipment in addition to expanding functional space so folks can spread out a bit more.
- A sure sign of spring was the recent opening of our **community gardens** – this has become such a popular program that we now have an extensive waiting list and aim to engage as many participants as possible.
- We are super excited for our annual **Open House – Backyard BBQ event** coming up on **June 24th** that celebrates the opening of the outdoor pool area – hope to see you there! We also can't wait to welcome **Summer Power** and **Summer Sports** program participants soon. The sounds and sights of youth that fill the building throughout the summer months add much joy to our space!
- Our **ForeverWell** program continues to grow, meeting increased demand for 55+ offerings, including fitness classes, social events, and creative activities – swimming, book club, and painting have been popular!
- Affordable youth programming, from sports to swim lessons, remains in high demand as well, with a **growing need for scholarships** to help families facing financial barriers.
- **Community partnerships** with our Y continue to thrive, as generosity and collaboration shine through initiatives like the Giving Tree to provide holiday gifts for families at the Maple Pond Neighborhood Center, lending our pool to the WBA Fire Rescue swimming team for skill training, facilitating winter coat and food drives with the local Rotary, and hosting blood drives every month with the Red Cross (just to name a few!).

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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 White Bear 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 that reads "Cynthia Ellickson". The script is fluid and cursive.

Cynthia Ellickson
Associate Executive Director