

May 30, 2026



Dear Blaisdell Y Community Members,

I want to first say how deeply grateful I am for your continued generosity and commitment to the Blaisdell YMCA.

As I sit in our bustling lobby on a Thursday evening, I watch families streaming in for swimming lessons and open swim, youth sports, and group fitness. The space fills with the sound of laughter, conversations in many different languages, and the energy of people from all walks of life. What stands out most is the diversity — faces, cultures, and experiences coming together in one shared place.

The Blaisdell community is truly a melting pot, where differences are not just present but celebrated, creating a vibrant and welcoming environment for everyone who walks through these doors. And we wouldn't be where we are today without the support of donors like you.

Reflecting on the first half of the year as we gear up for summer, I'm excited to share with you a few updates and highlights made possible through your generosity.

Earlier this year, our Y community came together in an incredible show of compassion and action, raising funds and collecting thousands of pounds of food for neighbors in need. Volunteers and staff worked side by side to distribute food and essential items, ensuring that individuals and families in our community felt supported and cared for during times of heightened hardship.

As we look ahead and plan for the rest of the year, I am excited about new partnerships we are establishing and renewed long-standing community collaborations coming this summer. We will welcome Heals on Wheels in partnership with Hennepin County, offering a free integrative care program focused on pain management. In addition, our Y will serve as a pickup location for the Hmong American Farmers Association's CSA to provide fresh, locally grown produce. We will also continue to offer free community acupuncture three days a week, thanks to our partners at Northwestern Health Sciences University.

Your support has also allowed us to expand critical programming, including being able to resume our English Language Learning (ELL) classes in partnership with the Lyndale Neighborhood Association — providing opportunities to both YMCA members and non- members for connection, confidence, and advancement as they adapt new language skills.

Our established collaboration with Somali Youth Link is now stronger than ever, too, offering parenting mentorship, youth engagement, and community gatherings that aim to build trust and belonging amongst the vibrant population of Somali kids and teens we serve.

Once again, this summer we will offer free youth memberships to high school students through our Get Summer program. Some of the special offerings available for them will be health mentorship, fitness center orientations, and wellness classes. Our local Roosevelt Beacons site will run teen programming out of Blaisdell as well, continuing to build relationships and offer support and mentorship throughout the summer, with over 200 teens participating in Beacons.

Lastly, our Y continues to provide over \$300,000 annually in scholarship assistance for memberships, swimming lessons, youth programming, camp opportunities, and more, ensuring no one is turned away due to financial circumstances. Accessibility and inclusion will always be our top priority.

Your support plays a vital role in all the above and so much more, helping create and sustain the kind of impact that doesn't always make headlines, but that is felt every day in the lives of the many families and individuals we serve. Your investment in our Y is an investment in people, in community, and in a stronger future for all.

As we head into summer, my team and I are excited to keep building on this momentum — creating more opportunities, deepening connections, and continuing to show up for our Blaisdell community in the ways that matter most.

Thank you for being an important part of our story. We're so grateful to have you alongside us through every chapter, and we can't wait to see what we'll make possible together in the months and years ahead!



Wishing you a bright and memorable summer,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lucia Strand'.

Lucia Strand
Executive Director, Blaisdell YMCA