



May 30, 2026

Dear Elk River Y Community Members,

Have you ever stopped to think about the role you play in someone else's story?

It's not always something we see in big or obvious ways. More often, it shows up in small, everyday moments — the ones that matter more than we realize.

We see these moments brought to life every day here at the Elk River YMCA: A child building confidence in the pool. A family receiving support when they need it most. A teen trying something new and discovering what they're capable of. A senior reaching a fitness goal surrounded by people who've become dear friends.

These moments may seem simple, but together, they tell a much bigger story about what it means to belong and be part of a community. And they don't happen without supporters like you.

At our Y, the doors are always open — to friendship, resilience, health, and a sense of belonging. Every day, people walk through our doors looking for community, support, movement, or simply a place where they feel they belong, and it is inspiring to see how our members, staff, and partners like you continue to create that welcoming spirit together.

Reflecting on the first part of the year, I'm excited to share a few highlights and updates made possible through your ongoing partnership:

- Over the past year, we have experienced meaningful momentum and generosity, including our **Best Ever Comedy for a Cause event** last May, which raised more than **\$22,000** to support scholarships and programs for our community.
- We've strengthened our team in impactful ways, welcoming **Malissa O'Leary** as our new full-time Custodial Supervisor, bringing 14 years of YMCA experience, along with a new Membership Director, **Marshal Kramer**, and Member Experience Specialist, **Lori Faulhaber**, helping bring renewed energy, expertise, and excellence to our member experience.
- Our Elk River community has also shown **extraordinary compassion**, responding to the heightened needs of members and neighbors impacted by ICE actions with an outpouring of **diapers, baby food, non-perishable items, and personal care supplies** to support families through our Burnsville and Blaisdell YMCA partners.





- We are excited for another **bustling summer** filled with activities, especially for youth and families! Our **K–5 summer programs** will welcome 120–130 participants each day, while we explore **partnerships with local police and fire departments** to build positive youth engagement. In addition, our **Elk River Garden**, led by long-time swim coach Michal Hawker, will be back in action, producing over **600 pounds of fresh produce** annually for CAER, our local food bank.

- Programmatic growth continues to be driven directly by member feedback, including **expanded group fitness offerings** such as additional water exercise classes, early morning options, and increased evening yoga. We've also introduced **beginner pickleball lessons and drills** on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, led by a member with over 30 years of coaching experience — creating a fun, inclusive way for members of all ages (and even staff) to connect and learn together.

- Donor support has made a meaningful difference, particularly for our **ForeverWell senior community**, many of whom have been impacted by changes in insurance coverage. Generosity has helped **fund scholarships** to keep seniors connected to their Y community, supported new pickleball equipment to meet growing demand, and enhanced social connection through our **Ember Coffee partnership and lobby gathering space**.

- What we are most proud of is the dedication of our team, who have worked diligently to **rebuild and strengthen our leadership foundation**. Through restructuring and renewed focus, we are now fully staffed with passionate, mission-driven individuals committed to serving our members, our community, and our future.



Behind each of these bullet points are real people and real stories, and your support as a donor plays a role in every single one. That's the kind of impact that doesn't always make headlines, but it's felt every day in the lives of those we serve. And now, 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 Elk River Y 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,

Molly Ruby, Associate Executive Director, Elk River YMCA