



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

## The YMCA Announces Changes to Its Early Learning Center Program

The YMCA of Greenwich has a proud history of serving the Greenwich community since 1916. As our mission states, the YMCA of Greenwich strives, "To bring together and strengthen the community through programs and services that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all men, women and children." Since its opening, the strength of the Y has lived and breathed in our landmark facility at 50 East Putnam Avenue. As times changed over the years, so did the Y, but its core competencies of aquatics and wellness have remained steadfast. At this point in the Y's history, it is important to recommit to these core competencies and to ensure they are not only maintained, but elevated. In order to accomplish this, we have taken considerable time to assess what we offer as an organization, where we thrive, and in what ways we add value to our membership and the community at large.

As we considered this, we felt it critical to examine the changing landscape of childcare and after school programs in the Greenwich area. Greenwich is fortunate to have many options now for early learning and childcare (including a new branch of the successful Bright Horizons Centers will be opening in October 2020) in spaces that were built with education in mind and that have sturdy resources in terms of their physical plants, faculty and staff, and financial support. The Y's Early Learning Center (ELC) has found itself significantly challenged in these areas. In addition, the ELC lease at St. Roch's is ending, and we are unable to reach an agreement on new terms. The combination of lease renewal rate and extensive capital investment has made the business unsustainable. As a result, we have decided to cease operations at St. Roch's at the end of August as well as the Hamilton Avenue after-school program which concludes in June.

It should be noted that, before making this decision, we also explored the notion of moving some sections of the program to 50 E. Putnam. What became quite clear is that moving any portion of ELC to the main Y building would create significant operational issues as well as exacerbate the traffic gridlock on Mason Street contributing further to downtown Greenwich congestion at peak rush hours.

By closing the Y's ELC, we are making the statement that all of our resources in terms of personnel and finances will be dedicated to offering the absolute best facility and programs to our wide base of constituents, children included, if not central to our focus. This is not an insignificant change, but we believe deeply that all families will ultimately be better served by the Y doing what it does best; being a hub for our community, with top-notch aquatics and wellness programs, as well as programs that span all ages in meaningful and powerful ways.

Further we will be working with our ELC families to secure placement for their children with Early Childhood Education providers in Greenwich including Family Centers and Bright Horizons which both have facilities in the Byram neighborhood. Likewise, we will be working with our staff to secure employment with similar organizations as well as assisting them with resume writing and interview skills training provided by Family Centers.

Patrice Francois  
Interim Chief Executive Officer