

Dear Harold Mezile Y Community Member,

Every year, as we close out spring and welcome the excitement of summer, we take a step back to reflect and pen a letter to our amazing community of donors here at the **Harold Mezile North Community YMCA**. This allows us to share an update on the accomplishments we have witnessed and all that we have planned for the second half of the year.

As one of our partners, making sure you know the latest and greatest is a high priority because you help bring these shining points to life!

First, I want to emphasize how thankful I am for your kind welcome over the last few months. Stepping into this new leadership role has been a truly inspiring journey, and I am humbled to carry out this work in partnership with valued members like you.

Now, let's dig into the details! I am thrilled to share that:

- We have seen significant expansion in our **ForeverWell community** and have added new types of engagement opportunities to meet diverse member needs. One program in particular that we are excited to see grow is our featured talks on **mental health** led by professionals, allowing us to address the rise in loneliness and reduce stigma around these topics.
- Our **urban agriculture program** is flourishing, with community members of all ages participating in activities in the greenhouse, while also learning about healthy eating and how to grow their own food.
- Our free **farmers market** continues to operate using any surplus vegetables and herbs, which are distributed to community members and families. The growing (pun very much intended) **intergenerational** dynamic of this programming is beautiful to witness!
- We are helping more families offset the rising cost of **child care** by providing highly affordable options so that these critical services remain available for every family, no matter their circumstances. Financial assistance is also available for our **expanded summer youth programming**, which includes day and extended evening offerings.
- Our teen programming is another area seeing great growth, thanks largely to our amazing staff who are dedicated to strengthening our youth development efforts and building relationships. A recent highlight is our **Teen Nights** program, which is seeing higher participation than ever before.
- Plans are underway to introduce a **new social entrepreneurship program** that will teach middle schoolers business skills and financial literacy—more to come on this soon!



- As food insecurity remains a critical issue within our community—especially for youth—we remain steadfast in optimizing our **nutrition program** to ensure that the young people we serve have access to snacks and meals after school, on school release days, and during our summer programming.
- Our next **community open house** will be hosted on June 7th from 4:30-6:30pm, and our popular **back-to-school event** that provides essential supplies to hundreds of local kids will take place in August (exact date coming soon). We hope to see you at one or both!

I want to express my deepest gratitude for your help in making all of this (plus so much more!) possible. Your ongoing generosity empowers us to continue showing up for our community members, purposefully evolving our programs and resources to meet diverse needs. It is no exaggeration to say that together, we are making a profound impact in the lives of many.

I look forward to sharing more with you in the coming months as we foster new opportunities to explore wellness, connection, and growth. **Thank you for being a vital part of our Herold Mezile Y community!**

With gratitude and well wishes for a wonderful summer ahead,



Shakira Onwuachi
Associate Executive Director