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VOLUME II
SPRING 2026

No Place Like This Place

SANTA MARIA VALLEY YMCA
ANNUAL GIVING 2026

The Buchanan Family,
Generational Community Service



IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Updates and
success stories
from 2025

2026 CASE STATEMENT

A look ahead at
what's next for
the Y

CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

All you need
to advocate
like a pro

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OVER 1,000 LESSONS!

A record number of students participated in school swim lessons in 2025. Turn to pages 8–9 to learn more.

SPRING 2026

Annual Giving Magazine Volume II

Published by:

Santa Maria Valley YMCA

NOTE FROM THE CEO

A PLACE FOR ALL

Hello Friends,

Thank you for taking a moment to be part of this story.

Every page of this magazine reflects people—children learning to swim, students discovering new possibilities, families finding connection, and neighbors showing up for one another. That impact only happens because this community believes in the Y.

As we look ahead to 2026, our focus remains simple: create access, strengthen families, and build spaces where everyone belongs. Whether it's through programs, partnerships, or scholarships, your support helps ensure the Y remains a place of opportunity for all.

We're grateful for you—and proud of what we're building together.

With gratitude,



Shannon Seifert
Chief Executive Officer



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Resources

 Give at smvymca.org/annual-giving

 Follow us @smv.ymca

 3400 Skyway Dr, Santa Maria



**Scan to visit our
annual giving
web page!**

Learning & Leadership

- **55 students** enrolled in RiseUP
- **127 students** attended Y field trips
- **42 student interns** gained hands-on work experience

Water Safety & Youth Programs

- **1,102 students** served through school swim lessons
- **104** additional private swim lessons taught
- **582** additional group swim lessons taught
- **912 children** played in youth soccer

Families, Wellness, & Community

- **6,300 members** active at the Y
- **1,081 campers** attended day camps
- **305 new families** utilized Kids Corner
- **163 participants** in Y personal training and bootcamps
- **63 littles** attended preschool

Scholarships

7,163 low-to moderate-income served across all programs!

2026 Case for Support

The Santa Maria Valley YMCA continues to grow—but more importantly, **the need for what we provide continues to grow** alongside it.

Each year, more families rely on the Y for safety, structure, and opportunity. Children come to us to learn how to swim, to stay engaged after school, to play sports, and to discover what they're capable of. Parents turn to the Y for child care, wellness, and a sense of stability. Seniors, teens, and individuals at every stage of life find connection and support within our programs.

Annual Giving ensures that this work remains accessible to all.

In 2026, campaign support will continue to fund youth development, swim lessons, child care, and health and wellness programs serving thousands of individuals across Santa Maria Valley. **These resources allow the Y to respond to real needs in real time**—whether that means expanding school-based programs, maintaining high-quality staffing, or ensuring that cost is never a barrier to participation.

This support also provides something less visible, but equally important: consistency. **Families count on the Y to be there** week after week, season after season. Annual Giving helps sustain the people, programs, and partnerships that make that reliability possible.

Why Support Matters Now

The Y's impact is built on trust—trust from families, schools, community partners, and supporters who believe in the role the Y plays locally. That trust allows us to plan thoughtfully, invest responsibly, and **continue meeting the needs of a changing community**.

Gifts to the 2026 Annual Campaign will strengthen what already works, expand access where it's needed most, and ensure the Y remains a place of **safety, growth, and connection** for years to come.

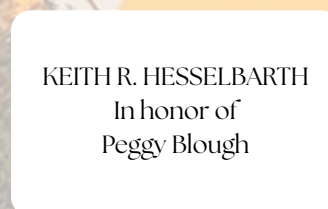
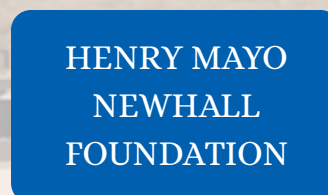
Every contribution—large or small—helps shape what the Y can offer today and what it can sustain tomorrow.

OUR 2025 LEGACY PARTNERS

Legacy Partners represent a level of support that helps shape the Y's work in lasting ways. As the organization's largest donors, they provide the resources that allow programs to remain strong, accessible, and responsive to the needs of the community.

This generosity creates stability. It gives the Y the ability to plan thoughtfully, deliver programs consistently, and adapt when families need support most. Scholarships stay available. Youth programs continue to grow. Essential services remain reliable, even as circumstances change.

Just as importantly, Legacy Partners place trust in the mission of the Y and in the people who carry that mission forward each day. Their commitment reflects a shared belief in the importance of community-based programs that strengthen health, wellness, and connection throughout the valley.



the LEGACY PARTNER

- Your commercial on our YMCA lobby TV, offering year-round exposure to all Y members!
- Business displayed on Y donor plaque for 12,000+ monthly visitors!
- Business displayed all year long on smvymca.org/sponsors!
- Invitation and recognition at the Y's Chairman's Roundtable Dinner!
- Special social media post, connecting your sponsorship to a Y program of your choice!
- Business and logo displayed in the next volume of the Y's annual campaign magazine!

ANY AMOUNT
\$7500
OR GREATER!

the CHAMPION

- Your commercial on our YMCA lobby TV, offering year-round exposure to all Y members!
- Business displayed on Y donor plaque for 12,000+ monthly visitors!
- Business displayed all year long on smvymca.org/sponsors!
- Special invitation and recognition at the Y's Chairman's Roundtable Dinner!
- Special social media post, connecting your sponsorship to a Y program of your choice!

ANY AMOUNT
\$5000
TO \$7499!

the ADVOCATE

- Your commercial on our YMCA lobby TV, offering year-round exposure to all Y members!
- Business displayed on Y donor plaque viewed by over 12,000 individuals monthly!
- Business displayed all year long on smvymca.org/sponsors!
- Special invitation and recognition at the Y's Chairman's Roundtable Dinner!
- Group social media mention, highlighting your support!

ANY AMOUNT
\$3500
TO \$4999!

the PARTNER

- Business displayed on Y donor plaque for 12,000+ monthly visitors!
- Business displayed all year long on smvymca.org/sponsors!
- Invitation and recognition at the Y's Chairman's Roundtable Dinner!
- Group social media mention, highlighting your support!

ANY AMOUNT
\$2500
TO \$3499!

the FRIEND

- Business displayed on Y donor plaque for 12,000+ monthly visitors!
- Business displayed all year long on smvymca.org/sponsors!
- Invitation and recognition at the Y's Chairman's Roundtable Dinner!

ANY AMOUNT
\$1800
TO \$2499!

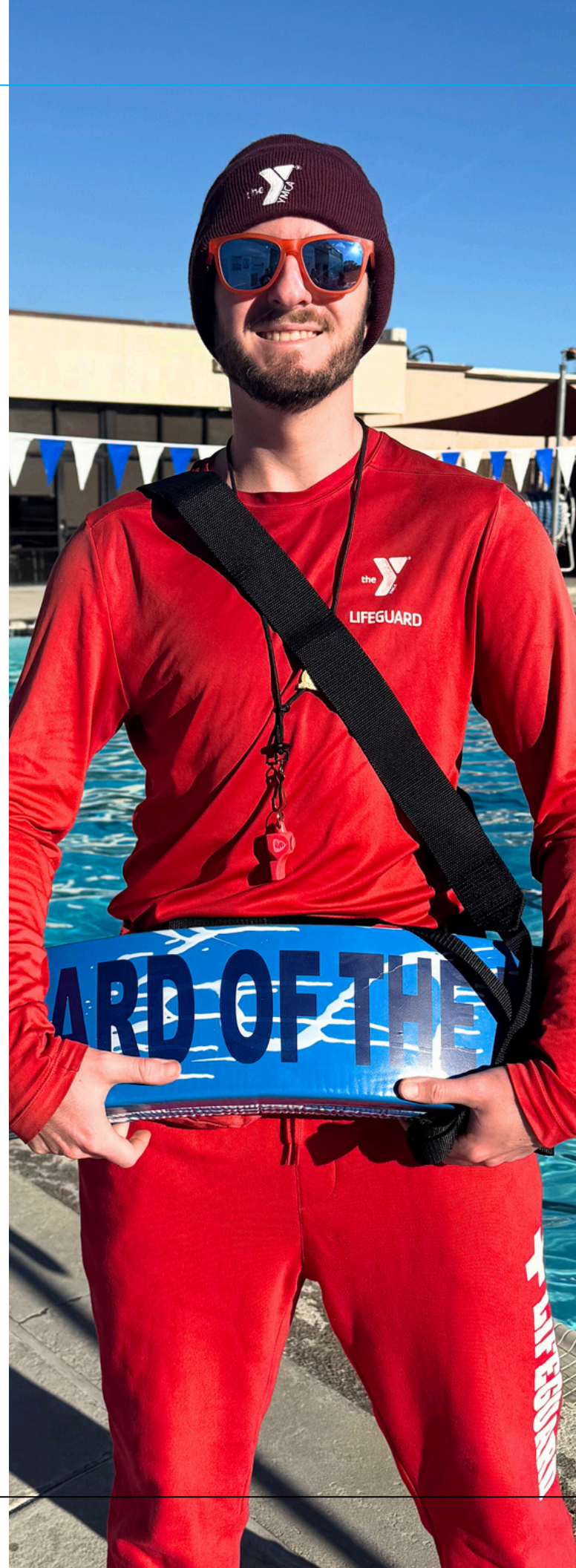
A Place to Swim Safely

The first thing most children learn in the pool is not how to swim forward. They learn how to stop.

A hand reaches the wall. Feet find the bottom. Breathing slows. An instructor waits, not rushing the moment, allowing the water to become familiar rather than frightening. Progress begins there.

At the Y, swim lessons are built around these small, deliberate moments. Instructors understand that confidence develops before technique, and that learning to feel steady in the water is often more important than moving quickly through it. Lessons are paced, patient, and grounded in trust.

This approach matters—especially for children who enter the pool carrying hesitation or fear. Many students served through school-day swim lessons have never had formal instruction before. Some have never been in a pool at all. The Y brings swim education directly into the school day, removing barriers that often keep families on the sidelines.



“CONFIDENCE CARRIES OVER —INTO SUMMER ACTIVITIES, FAMILY OUTINGS, AND EVERYDAY LIFE.”

For these students, the pool becomes a new environment to navigate. Floating replaces flailing. Stillness replaces panic. Each session builds on the last, not by pushing limits, but by expanding comfort.

Parents often notice the change outside the pool. Children talk differently about the water. Adults begin to trust their child’s awareness and ability to respond. Confidence carries over—into summer activities, family outings, and everyday life.



Adult lessons follow the same philosophy. Many adults arrive with long-held fear, shaped by near-misses or years of avoidance. Instructors meet them where they are, recognizing that learning to swim later in life requires patience and respect. Progress is quiet but meaningful.

SWIM LESSONS STATS:



- **1,102 STUDENTS
SERVED THROUGH
SCHOOL SWIM
LESSONS**
- **23 WEEKS OF SCHOOL-
BASED INSTRUCTION**
- **104 PRIVATE SWIM
LESSONS**
- **582 GROUP SWIM
LESSONS**

Learn more about Y swim
programs at:

smvymca.org/aquatics

By the end of a session, what has changed is not just skill level. It’s the relationship with the water. That shift—subtle but lasting—is what makes swim lessons at the Y one of the most important programs we offer.

A Place to Rise Up

For many students, the idea of college feels distant—something other people do, in other places. RiseUP exists to close that distance.

The program serves students identified by school leaders as facing barriers to opportunity beyond the school day. Beginning in elementary school, RiseUP introduces students to college campuses, career possibilities, and mentors who help them see new options for their future.

Over the course of the program, students participate in field trips, hands-on experiences, and conversations that expand their

understanding of what comes after high school. These experiences are not one-off moments. They are reinforced year after year, building familiarity and confidence over time.

Partnerships with Allan Hancock College, including Bulldog Bound and the Hancock Promise, turn exposure into access. Students don't just visit campuses—they learn how pathways work, what support exists, and how to begin planning early.

RiseUP is intentional in both pace and presence. It gives students time to grow into the idea of what they can become, supported by adults who believe in them long before they're asked to believe in themselves.

Learn more about RiseUP and other youth programs at:

smvymca.org/youth-development



A Place to Be After School



For many families, the hours between dismissal and dinner are the most complicated—parents still working, kids needing support, and very little room for anything to go wrong. The Y's After School Program exists for that exact window: to provide safe, consistent care when families need it most.

Serving 21 schools in the Santa Maria-Bonita School District and one in the Guadalupe Union School District, ASP gives children structure, connection, and a place to belong each afternoon. Students have space to reset after the school day, get homework support, and build confidence through meaningful activities and play. They're surrounded by

staff who know their names, see their potential, and show up with steady care.

It's where kids are safe, families can breathe, and the day ends even stronger than it began.

"It's nice knowing my child has a place to go where they're busy, safe, and not just sitting around waiting to be picked up."



A Place to Belong



With more than 6,000 members, the Y functions as a shared space for people with very different goals—but a common desire for connection.

Some members arrive early for quiet workouts. Others come for group classes, family activities, or simply the familiarity of a place where they're known. Membership supports individual health while also strengthening the larger community.

Membership dollars help keep the lights on while fundraisers support scholarships, youth programs, swim lessons, and outreach efforts that ensure access for families facing financial challenges. In 2025, approximately 10 percent of members received financial

assistance, reinforcing the Y's commitment to inclusion.

At its core, membership is about showing up. Over time, routines form, relationships grow, and the Y becomes part of daily life. It's a place where people invest in themselves while supporting something larger than any single visit.

"I started coming for the workouts, but I've stayed because it feels like a family, not just a gym."



A Place to Grow

The Y's approach to fitness is grounded in accessibility and support. Members arrive with different starting points, abilities, and goals. Some are new to exercise. Others are rebuilding strength or maintaining long-standing routines. The environment is designed to meet people where they are—without pressure or pretense.

In 2025, the addition of a new outdoor fitness area expanded options for members looking for variety and fresh air. Group classes, strength training, and functional movement opportunities provide multiple ways to stay active and engaged.

What keeps people coming back is not just equipment or programming. It's consistency. Familiar faces. Encouragement that feels genuine. Progress happens gradually, supported by an environment that values effort over comparison.





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: DAY CAMPS

A Place to Make Friends

Camp days start early. Backpacks are dropped, names are checked off, and kids settle into the rhythm of the day—sometimes shy, sometimes loud, always ready for adventure.

In 2025, Y day camps continued to expand in both reach and quality. Off-site camps in Northern Santa Maria, made possible through partnership with Driscoll's and Vida Church, brought programs closer to families and into the neighborhoods where many participants live. Accessibility was not an afterthought—it was a priority.

Camp programming balances structure with freedom. Children move through activities that include outdoor play, creative arts, STEM projects, and team-building games. This year, elements of the After School Program curriculum were woven into camp schedules, adding depth without sacrificing fun.

For working families, Y camp provides dependable care in a safe environment. For kids, it offers space to try new things, build friendships, and develop confidence.

By the end of the week, the faces are familiar, routines feel comfortable, and nervous energy gives way to belonging.

"My kid came home tired, dirty, and happy every day. That's how I knew camp was a good fit."

**Learn more about
YMCA camps at:**

smvymca.org/camps

A Place Where Character Wins

Youth sports at the Y are structured to emphasize participation, growth, and respect.

In 2025, the Y experienced its busiest soccer season to date. Hundreds of children took to the field on new turf designed to improve safety and playability. For many participants, this was their first experience with organized sports.

Coaches focus on skill development, teamwork, and effort. Every child plays. Every child is encouraged. The goal is not only athletic improvement, but confidence and connection.

The lessons learned—perseverance, cooperation, resilience—carry forward long after the season ends.

Discover more about our youth sports program at:

smvymca.org/youth-sports





A Place to Recharge

Kids Corner was created with families in mind. This 15,000-square-foot space offers children a safe, engaging environment while parents focus on their own health and well-being. Indoor and outdoor play areas allow kids to move, explore, and interact under the care of trained staff.



"Honestly, Kids Corner is the reason I can even make it to the gym some days. My kids are happy there, and that takes a huge weight off my shoulders."

For many parents, Kids Corner makes it possible to prioritize their health without worry. Children are cared for in a space designed for their needs, while parents gain uninterrupted time to exercise, attend classes, and reset. The result is a program that supports the whole family.



A Place to Learn Through Play

Early learning at the Y is designed to support the whole child.

The Young Children's Preschool uses the Creative Curriculum to blend structure with exploration, allowing children to learn through play, movement, and guided discovery. Outdoor classrooms extend learning beyond traditional settings, encouraging curiosity and engagement with the environment.

Teachers focus on social-emotional development, early literacy, and problem-solving skills while helping children build independence and confidence. The result is a strong foundation that prepares children for kindergarten and beyond.

For families, YCP provides dependable, high-quality care. For children, it offers a supportive start during some of their most formative years.

**Learn more about Y
Preschool at:**

smvymca.org/preschool



A Place to Serve

The work of the Y is powered by people who choose service as a profession—and by those who give their time to strengthen the community.

Our staff members come from many backgrounds, but they share the same responsibility: creating opportunities for others to thrive.

Working at the Y takes patience, consistency, and presence. Many roles involve mentoring youth, supporting families, and responding to moments that can't be scripted. The impact is often immediate, but the results are long-term—confidence built, skills learned, and trust earned over time. The Y invests in staff through training and leadership pathways, helping employees grow within an organization rooted in purpose.

Volunteers extend that impact even further through events, outreach, logistics, partnerships, and campaign efforts. Every role matters, strengthening connection across the community.

The strength of the Y has always been YOU, its people, who show up and make more possible.



A PLACE THAT MATTERS

As you reach the end of this magazine, it's worth pausing for a moment—not just to look back at what's been shared, but to consider what makes all of it possible.

The Santa Maria Valley YMCA exists because people show up. Some give financially. Some volunteer their time. Some advocate, lead teams, make phone calls, share stories, or simply believe deeply in the mission. Others show up every day as staff—unlocking doors early, staying late, and doing the quiet, steady work that rarely makes headlines but always makes a difference.

This work is not abstract. It happens in pools, classrooms, gyms, fields, and after-school spaces. It happens in conversations, encouragement, patience, and trust. It happens when someone is given access they might not otherwise have—and when a community decides that access matters.

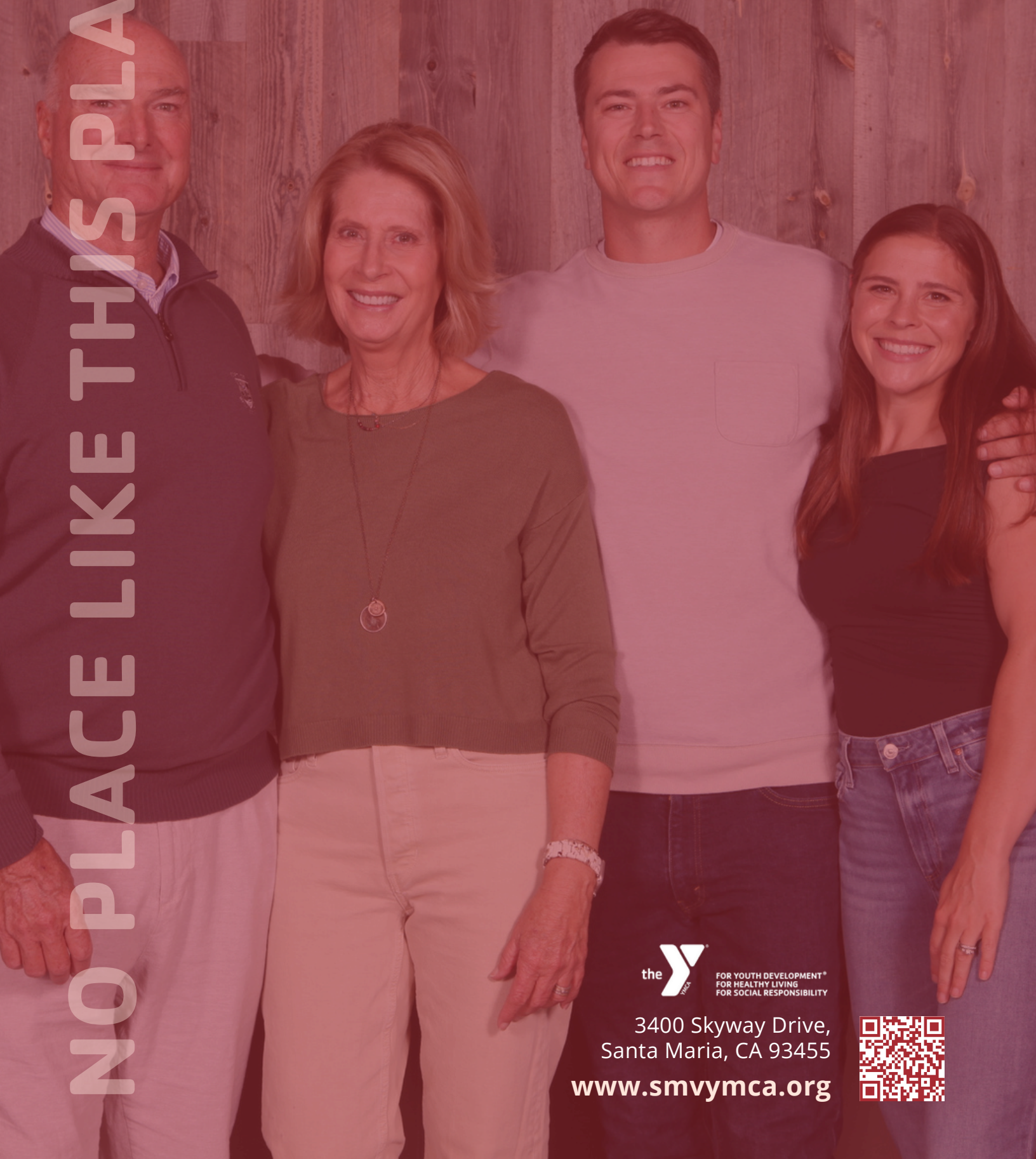
Annual Giving is about sustaining possibility. The funds raised through this campaign support scholarships, child care, swim lessons, youth development, and opportunities that help people feel safe, capable, and connected. They ensure that the Y remains a place where no one is turned away because of circumstance. To everyone who plays a role in this effort—donors, volunteers, campaign leaders, staff, partners, and supporters—thank you. Your belief in this place shapes what the Y can be, today and in the years ahead. The Y matters because people make it matter.

And we are grateful to be doing this work together.



Michael Specht
Chief Operating Officer

NO PLACE LIKE THIS PLACE



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT*
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

3400 Skyway Drive,
Santa Maria, CA 93455

www.smvymca.org

