

Something for everyone at the New Britain YMCA

By LISA BACKUS
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NEW BRITAIN — From infant and toddler day care to aerobic exercise classes for seniors, the New Britain YMCA has something for everyone.

"We are a comprehensive YMCA," said John Benigni, CEO of the YMCA of Meriden, New Britain and Berlin. "We have all kinds of programs, from fitness to youth development, youth sports, day camp, child care, preschool and more."

Adults can gain strength and learn about healthy living while doing yoga or partaking in Salsa dance classes or an 8-week weight loss challenge. Group

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CEO, New Britain YMCA

exercise classes are also available, along with use of the gym and its weight-training equipment.

More than 1,000 people pass through the doors on a typical weekday and twice that number are engaged in programs and other activities at the YMCA on weekends, Benigni said.

The YMCA, at 50 High St., also runs a residence program for single adult men, providing a room and an opportunity for people to better their lives.

"We are proud of the residence program for men," Benigni

said. "We offer an opportunity to find housing here. We like to think we're aiding them to get back on their feet."

The YMCA, a nonprofit organization that was established in the city in 1883, is still expanding with a new preschool readiness program with 40 slots. The fee for the program is based on income. Children who attend all day get snacks and a hot meal. The YMCA also recently opened an off-site child care program for infants and toddlers on Hart Street.

Mornings, dozens of people are using the gym and weight room and others are enjoying swim classes that range from infant and Mommy & Me classes to youth and adult private and group swimming lessons. The YMCA recently partnered with Stew Leonard's in Newington to provide scholarships for the youth lessons for children of families who can't afford the cost. "We collaborate with the community," Benigni said.

Although the organization charges a membership fee and fees for selected programs, no one is turned away. The YMCA raises money for scholarships to programs throughout the year and at events such as the



Wesley Bunnell | Staff

John Benigni, CEO of the YMCA of Meriden, New Britain and Berlin.

upcoming Fall Into Endless Summer event slated for Oct. 12. Gerry and Lisa Amadio will be honored with the Ken Griffen Compass Award for their work on behalf of the community.

"These types of events allow us to say yes to people who might not be able to afford it," Benigni said. "We raise the funds necessary to give back to the community."

For more information on programs at the YMCA, call 860-229-3787 or visit its website at www.nbbymca.org.

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