Weston YMCA Family Center Celebrates 10th Anniversary

BY STACEY BOMSER

It’s been ten years since the Weston YMCA Family Center first opened. Over that time, it has touched the lives of nearly everyone in our community. From recreational sports leagues to swimming lessons and Mommy & Me classes to Silver Sneakers, the Y has programs for everyone. To celebrate this major milestone, it rolled out the red carpet for community and business leaders, elected officials, volunteers and donors.

Guests at the elegant reception were greeted by the Cypress Bay High School band and cheerleaders. The evening began with a performance by Brazilian Voices, an award-winning female vocal ensemble, followed by passionate messages by Y officials and local leaders about the YMCA, its mission, and its commitment to the Weston community.

YMCA of South Florida President & CEO Sheryl Woods and Weston YMCA Family Center Executive Vice President Buddy Evans each reflected on the past and looked to the future. Woods spoke specifically about the positive impact the Weston Y has made in drowning prevention. As a result of its water safety programs, nearly 3,000 children and adults have learned to swim.

Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz addressed the crowd via video. In addition to sharing stories of her family’s personal involvement with the Weston YMCA, she reiterated Woods’ remarks about the Y’s role in promoting drowning prevention efforts. This is an issue the Congresswoman is passionate about. Just days later she announced a federal grant program to fund additional training, enforcement and awareness programs to keep children safe around the water.

Broward County School Board Member Robin Bartleman, a former Weston City Commissioner and educator of students with disabilities, spoke of how the Y is one of the few places that she can refer families with children with developmental difficulties for after care or summer camp. As a Weston resident, she shared stories of her experiences at the Y, the friendships she has made, and the dedication of the staff (including a nod to the grueling workouts they put her through). Bartleman, too, recognized the Y’s drowning prevention efforts, reminding residents that the Y takes its water safety program “on the road,” bringing programs to community pools if needed.

Weston Mayor Daniel Stermer was the evening’s Keynote Speaker. He spoke of how the Y filled a need in our community long before the Weston YMCA Family Center was ever envisioned. The YMCA used to provide summer camp at Tequesta Trace Middle School.

Mayor Stermer reflected that almost 20 years ago, when Weston became a City, officials and community leaders agreed that the Y would best fill the community’s recreational needs, rather than the City trying to fulfill that role. With 170 years of experience, the Y offers recreation, youth development and healthy living choices for all ages.

Back in 2001, Weston offered a land lease to the YMCA. Mayor Stermer spoke of how the community rallied and took fundraising to new heights, all with the goal to build the facility that stands today. He personally thanked Broward County and the Founding and Charter YMCA Members, along with the individual and corporate patrons who generously donated their money to make the Weston YMCA Family Center a reality.

For more information on the Weston YMCA Family Center, its services and programs, visit http://www.ymcasouthflorida.org/locations/weston-ymca-family-center.

YMCA of South Florida President & CEO Sheryl Woods with Weston YMCA Family Center Executive Vice President Buddy Evans.

Laura and Don Decker, Weston’s Director of Parks & Recreation.

Commissioner Angel Gomez, Mayor Daniel Stermer, and City Manager John Flint. Photos courtesy City of Weston.

Brazilian Voices performed.

Mayor Daniel Stermer was the Keynote Speaker.

Guests at the event also heard testimonials from two Weston Y members about how the Y has made life-changing, positive impacts on their lives. Both families received financial support allowing them to take advantage of the many services and programs the Y has to offer. The YMCA has a policy of never turning a family away because of the inability to pay. The YMCA fills needs within a community by developing skills, building relationships, shaping values and connecting families and individuals to opportunities that enable them to grow stronger.