

■ BUSINESS BRIEF CASE

Merrimack Valley YMCA promotes new branch executive directors

ANDOVER — The Merrimack Valley YMCA is pleased to announce that Claudia Soo Hoo has been named senior executive director of the Andover/North Andover



Claudia Soo Hoo



Anne Whalen



Ryan McVann

YMCA. Soo Hoo replaces Alex Turek, the former executive director, who left earlier this year to become CEO of the Southern District YMCA in Exeter.

Soo Hoo has spent more than a decade working for the Merrimack Valley YMCA in various roles, and has been a member and program enthusiast for even longer than that. In fact, she attended preschool at the Andover/North Andover Y.

volunteer Board of Managers, and annual fundraising. The Andover/North Andover Y features three indoor pools, 13,000 square feet of wellness space, a café, a commercial teaching kitchen, a preschool and school age childcare wing, four group exercise studios, a gymnasium, and the Active Living Center for older adults.

Soo Hoo has worked full-time at the Merrimack Valley YMCA for 12 years, serving most recently as the district executive director, which included oversight of the Camping Services branch as well as the Lawrence branch. Since starting her career at the Y, she has overseen aquatics, youth and teen programming, branch operations, and more. She is also currently serving on the Y-USA Diversity, Inclusion and Global (DIG) Innovation Y Steering and Strategy Council.

Other branches of the Y will see changes as a result of this transition. Anne Whalen, the former executive director of the Methuen Y for the last 10 years, will step in to oversee the Camping Services branch as its new executive director.

During her career at the Y, Whalen has overseen preschool and school age childcare, youth and teen programming, child protection and branch operations. She has also been active in the community serving as a volunteer in the Methuen Rotary and Exchange Clubs.

At the Methuen Y, Ryan McVann will step in to serve as associate executive

director to replace Whalen. McVann most recently served as sports and teen director at the Methuen Y and as assistant director of Camp Otter in Salem, New Hampshire, and has served in several roles at the Merrimack Valley YMCA since 2012.

Growing Years Learning Center celebrates 40 years

METHUEN — Growing Years Learning Center, located at 423 Howe St. in Methuen, is celebrating 40 years of educating children in the Merrimack Valley and southern New Hampshire.

Started by Tom and Nancy Forzese in October 1978, the school has grown to service 107 children per day. Recently, the couple's daughters, Stephanie and Mallary, have joined to make Growing Years a true family business and atmosphere.

Growing Years looks forward to sharing happiness with many new families for years to come.

Entrepreneur wanted for Revolving Test Kitchen

LAWRENCE — Applications are now being accepted for the new tenant in the Revolving Test Kitchen at NECC's Lawrence campus. Two restaurateurs have already been groomed for success in the space.

Launched on Dec. 1, 2016, the Revolving Test Kitchen is an incubator and pop-up restaurant, located in the heart

of downtown Lawrence in Northern Essex Community College's 420 Common St. building.

The objective of the RTK is to provide restaurant entrepreneurs with a trial run of their ventures and also contribute to Lawrence's economic development. This collaboration between Lupoli Companies, the city of Lawrence, The Lawrence Partnership, Northern Essex Community College and EparaTodos has already helped two local food entrepreneurs get the jump-start they needed, and they are currently looking for a third with applications due by Oct. 31.

Food entrepreneurs and restaurant start-ups looking to expand are invited to apply.

For more information, contact Karina Calderon, assistant director of The Lawrence Partnership, at kcalderon@lawrencepartnership.org.

LaRoche performing stand-up to benefit women's health

ANDOVER — This fall, nationally-known comedian and motivational speaker Loretta LaRoche will perform a stand-up routine to benefit women's health initiatives at Greater Lawrence Family Health Center. This will be just one part of the organization's ninth annual In Pink Brunch & Comedy Show fundraiser on Saturday, Oct. 27, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Andover Country Club, 60 Canterbury St.

Congresswoman Niki

SHARE YOUR BUSINESS NEWS

We want to publish news about your business – new contracts, new hires, promotions and events that are open to the public. Just send a brief notice with the basics. Please be clear about the person's connection to the region. Include the name and phone number of someone we can call if we have questions. Send your news by mail to Features Editor Sonya Vartabedian, 100 Turnpike St., North Andover, MA 01845, by fax 978-687-6045 or by email to svartabedian@eagletribune.com.

Tsongas' district director, June Black, will be honored with the health center's Rosalyn Kempton Wood Award for Inspirational Leadership during the event. Black, a two-time breast cancer survivor who holds women's health causes near and dear to her heart, is being recognized for her time serving the Merrimack Valley.

In addition to LaRoche's routine, the event will feature silent and live auctions, brunch provided by the country club and a gift for attendees.

Early bird tickets are \$45 and will be available for a limited time at glfhc.org/inpink2018.

Parties interested in sponsorship opportunities should contact the organization's External Relations department at glfhevents@glfhc.org.