

On Behalf Of Mahackeno Move

I have lived in Westport for 14½ years. My husband and 2½-year-old son moved from Manhattan; die hard "born and raised" New Yorkers, here we were in rural suburbia.

The New Neighbors came by with a carload of neighborly offerings ... discount cards, registrations, walking tours, library, park and recreation, historical society information ... and ... trial membership at the Westport/Weston

Family Y.

I had been a member of the YMCA in New York and had such fond memories of taking acting classes, swimming lessons, attending lectures, that I immediately took my trial membership at the Y and felt like I had found an old, familiar face.

My son is now 16, driver's license and all. My daughter, who wasn't born yet at the time of our move, is now 12½. Both my children took swimming and gymnastics at the Y. Both my children had pool and gymnastics parties at the Y. My daughter attended the Y pre-school. Both my children attended Hafaday camp and Mahackeno. And, while my children were merrily having fun, making friends, learning new skills, I and my husband and our au pair reaped all the benefits of a family membership and took advantage of all the Y had to offer.

Friends that my children made back then are still friends now. And all that they learned at the Y — the experiences, the benefits, the skills are displayed in photo albums at my

house.

I am now a part-time staff member. I have the privilege of working in Membership Services, greeting all the members that come in, processing registrations, giving tours, answering questions and, best of all ... watching the new members, the new families experience what I did 14 years ago — being a part of the Y Family.

It is a tragedy for me to think of the possible loss of the Y in our community. It is an even greater tragedy to think that misinformation about the move to the Mahackeno site would cause the loss of the Y in our community. Our community needs a brand-new facility with the kind of space and functionality, including handicapped access and parking, that our membership deserves. There is not a site imaginable that would please all of the people; there is not a site in Westport that makes more sense than the site at Mahackeno.

Make it happen!

**MIDGE HERZ DEVERIN
WESTPORT**
