

## An Open Letter To the P&Z

Dear Mr. Corwin,

I am writing regarding the Westport Weston Family Y, not to comment on the land use aspects of the

Y's application, but to support the importance of the Y as a valuable community organization with a demonstrated commitment to serving the needs of Westport residents regardless of their financial circumstances.

I know the Y is seen by some as an exclusive fitness club and therefore not deserving of consideration of its place among community agencies serving the greater good. I feel compelled to speak to the fact that the Y has been very much a partner of ours in providing quality child care, safe and enjoyable camp experiences, swimming, basketball and other exercise opportunities to children and families with whom this department works, and who participate in other programs offered by the town for which they meet income eligibility guidelines.

For many of these families these child care and camp programs enable their parents, often single moms, to work and support their families. There have also been adults with disabilities in need of recreation opportunities and seniors who have benefited from the use of the Brophy Pool for therapeutic swimming, all people who could not have afforded the membership fees and for whom the Y has opened its doors. The Y also operates an after school program in the Westport Schools, again an essential community service for many working families.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) has forged strong partnerships with many community agencies, and Westport residents in need of assistance have benefited in many ways from these collaborative relationships. The Y staff has always responded generously to requests from the DHS professional staff for programs and services for residents with whom we work. I wanted you and your colleagues on the commission to be aware as you consider the Y application that it is an important and valued partner in the work that we do on behalf of the Town of Westport and its residents.

**BARBARA H. BUTLER**  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT  
OF HUMAN SERVICES  
WESTPORT