



YMCA OF THE SUNCOAST



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YMCA of the Suncoast and LiFT Announce New Partnership to expand services to the Community

November 3, 2021 (Clearwater, FL) – The YMCA of the Suncoast is excited to announce a new partnership with Learning Independence for Tomorrow Inc. (LiFT). LiFT will expand from their Seminole location into the current Clearwater YMCA facility at 1005 S. Highland Avenue in Clearwater. The Clearwater YMCA will temporarily move services to other locations with the intent to build a brand new, state-of-the-art facility.

Founded over eight years ago, LiFT Inc. (dba LiFT Academy & LiFT University Transition Program) has become a leader in educating and training members of our community with neurodiversity to live life to their fullest potential. LiFT will repurpose the Clearwater YMCA facility to continue to serve as a community asset - offering a warm, nurturing place where neurodiverse students of all academic levels can learn and grow. This will allow the school to meet their goal of doubling capacity to serve 350-400 students within the next four years.

The Suncoast YMCA is working to raise the appropriate funds to build a state-of-the-art facility in the Clearwater community. Y members will continue to have access to group exercise, swim lessons and youth sports programs through the "Clearwater YMCA In Motion," as well as access to nearby YMCA facilities.

"When the YMCA of the Suncoast first opened the Clearwater YMCA years ago, the purpose was to serve a new community's emerging and underserved needs for health and wellness services," says G. Scott Goyer, President and CEO of YMCA of the Suncoast. "As the diverse community has grown, there is a great need for services and programs for neurodiverse children in the community and it made perfect sense for us to partner with LiFT and enable them to expand their offerings to the community."

"LiFT aspires to continue the incredible positive community impact started by the Clearwater YMCA in this community," says Shawn Naugle, Executive Director of LiFT. "LiFT is creating educational opportunities for students with neurodiversity by strengthening existing and growing community partnerships to provide solutions for unmet needs in the space of special education, workforce development, independent living skill development, and advocacy for students in need. LiFT's partnership with the YMCA of the Suncoast will allow

for greater engagement with extracurricular activities, sports, recreational, and camp experiences for neurodiverse students.”

LiFT has secured initial funding to purchase the YMCA Campus by the end of 2021 and will be launching a capital campaign to raise the funds necessary to complete the renovations. The new LiFT campus is anticipated to open for students in the fall of 2022. If you are interested in learning more about LiFT or to see how to get involved, please contact Shawn Naugle at snaugle@liftfl.org

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About the YMCA of the Suncoast

As the leading [4-star charity](#) committed to strengthening community, the Y is a cause-driven, charitable organization that stands for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We serve more than 100,000 men, women, and children through eight branch locations and 60 before and after school sites in Citrus, Hernando, Pasco, and Pinellas counties. For over 62 years, the YMCA of the Suncoast has been an integral part of the communities we serve to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. For more information, please visit www.ymcasuncoast.org

About the Learning Independence for Tomorrow, Inc. (LiFT)

Founded January 13, 2013, the mission of LiFT is to inspire and empower people with neurodiversity to learn, thrive and succeed. Built on the foundation of diversity and inclusivity as a champion for the underserved, our goal is to level the playing field for individuals with learning differences and neurodiversity. At LiFT, we provide our learners exceptional academics, life skills, career training and opportunities to strengthen social skills and build meaningful friendships. We have a passion that each student comes to value and view their diversity as a gift to be celebrated. Driven by a desire to serve our learners, our families, and our community, we strive to be thought leaders in the landscape of exceptional education and equal opportunities for those with neurodiversity. Learn more about our mission at www.LiFTFL.org.