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**NORTH SUBURBAN  
YMCA**  
2705 Techny Road  
Northbrook, IL 60062  
[www.nsymca.org](http://www.nsymca.org)

**For More Information Contact:**

Nancy Gerstein  
Creative Marketing Associates, Inc.  
[Nancy@cmacreative.com](mailto:Nancy@cmacreative.com)  
[www.cmacreative.com](http://www.cmacreative.com)  
847 401.0384(direct)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**North Suburban YMCA Strong Kids Fundraiser Goes Virtual**

**Week-long event includes silent auction, gift baskets, and commemoration of former Y CEO**

**Northbrook, IL** The North Suburban YMCA's 14th Annual Ken and Alta Thiel Strong Kids Scholarship Fundraiser is not only going to look a lot different this year, it's going to last a full 5 days. Originally scheduled as a dinner on April 17 but canceled due to the pandemic, the 2020 Strong Kids Fundraiser will be held virtually from Sunday August 23- Friday August 28, culminating in a live on Zoom Trivia night and closing presentation.

The Strong Kids Fundraising Dinner was planned as a Casino Party at the Chevy Chase Country Club to honor Howard Schultz, Former President and CEO, who after 13 ½ years retired at the end of April, with the Thiel Award for Leadership & Social Responsibility. The money raised through the annual event supports the Y's financial assistance program for families in need and contributes to the "Revive Our Y" campaign to help the Y assist the community during COVID-19.

The newly reinvented Strong Kids fundraiser will include an online auction, gift baskets, live Zoom events including a Trivia Night, Painting & Wine Party, and a Mixology and Cooking webisode featuring local businesses like Francesca's North, Lynfred Winery, Butches Love Cider and Tito's Handmade Vodka. In addition, Ron Bernardi of Sunset Foods and the Strong Kids auctioneer for over 14 years, will be featured in a video introducing the online auction this year. The virtual program will also pay tribute to Alta Thiel who recently passed away. Alta Thiel and her husband Ken were the founders of the North Suburban YMCA.

"It is important to us this year to not only fundraise for our Y, but to celebrate our partnerships and promote local businesses by getting them involved anyway we can," said Kim Nyren, NSYMCA Director of Community Investments & Events. "We invite anyone who has been part of the Y in some way, to help us come together and support us and our families during these challenging times."

## **The week-long Strong Kids Virtual Fundraiser schedule includes:**

**Sunday, 8/23:** Strong Kids Welcome & Early Silent Auction featuring Sunset's Ron Bernardi as the Y's official auctioneer with access to bid on over 100 auction packages

**Monday, 8/24:** Drive up "gift basket" pick-up and a tribute to NSYMCA co-founder Alta Thiel along with her husband Ken

**Tuesday, 8/25:** Presentation honoring Howard Schultz, former NSYMCA President/CEO

**Wednesday, 8/26:** Live on Zoom: Wine & Painting Party at 7pm

**Thursday, 8/27:** Mixology & Cooking Webisode featuring Francesca's Northbrook, Lynfred Winery, Butches Love Cider, and Tito's Handmade Vodka

**Friday, 8/28:** Live on Zoom Trivia Night and closing presentation at 7pm

To participate in the events, tickets are available at the \$50 level for limited event access and \$150 for full event access. Current ticket holders and sponsors will be sent links to participate in the events.

Chairing the 2020 Strong Kids virtual fundraiser are Dave and Melanie Fogel who were introduced to the NSYMCA at the 2019 Strong Kids dinner when Dave was asked to be a celebrity blackjack dealer. Dave has been an on-air radio personality and disc jockey for over 30 years and is the host of "Mornings with Dave & Kim" on 94.7 WLS-FM Radio. Due to the changes of the event, Dave and Melanie have also agreed to stay on as the Y chairs for 2021, where they are scheduled to host the event at Chevy Chase Country Club on April 16, 2021.

"We are humbled by the effort and enthusiasm made by our community, staff, and volunteers to ban together to help us raise much needed funds for our Y and our families during these challenging times," said Kathy Fielding, North Suburban YMCA CEO. "We are hopeful this virtual platform will help us reach our goal and help us 'Revive our Y' this year."

The Ken & Alta Thiel Strong Kids Scholarship Fund has provided critical funding that enables the Y to keep its life-changing programs and services available to all, regardless of their ability to pay. One out of five individuals at the Y, over 2,800 people a year receive financial assistance through the Strong Kids Fund. This allows children and their families to participate in after-school programs, summer camp, life-saving swim lessons, older adult services, and other wellness activities.

Proud sponsors of the Strong Kids Virtual Fundraiser include Wintrust Community Banks, Northwestern Medicine, Illinois Bone & Joint, First Bank of Highland Park, Waterway Carwash, FGK

Services, Pioneer Press, 94.7 WLS-FM, Covenant Living Northbrook, Align Wellness, Sunset Foods and many more.

For ticket and sponsorship information visit the North Suburban YMCA's website, [www.nsymca.org/strong-kids](http://www.nsymca.org/strong-kids). All donations provide financial aid for families in need, helps the Y with operational costs to keep the Y open, and ensures over 200 staff stay employed.

### **About the North Suburban YMCA**

The North Suburban YMCA services Northbrook and 14 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help its residents become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at [NSYMCA.org](http://NSYMCA.org).



CAPTION: Ron Bernardi of Sunset Foods and Strong Kids Fundraiser auctioneer for over 14 years, will be featured in a video introducing the 2020 online auction.