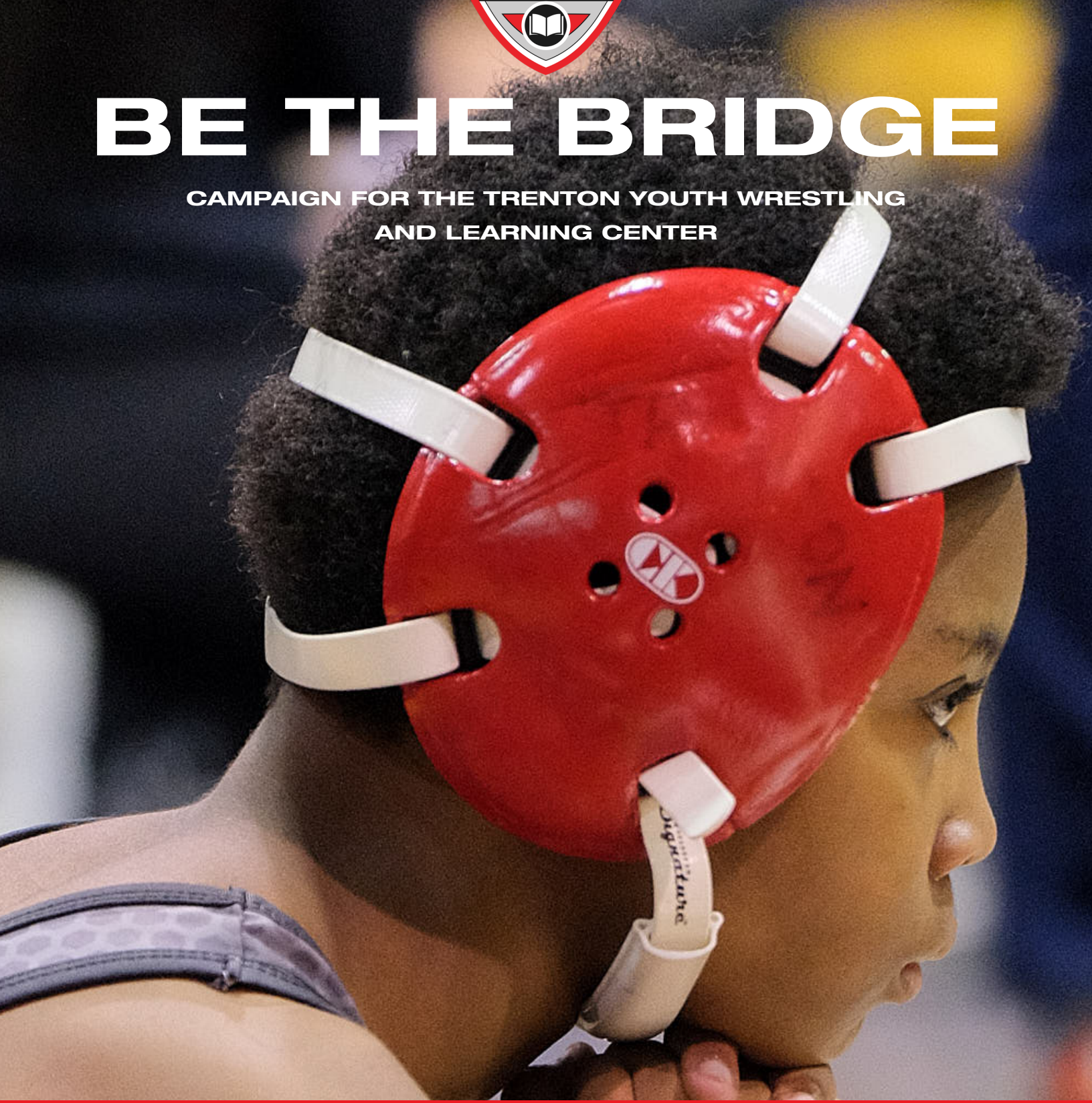




# BE THE BRIDGE

CAMPAIGN FOR THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING  
AND LEARNING CENTER



BRIDGING THE GAP TO EXCELLENCE THROUGH SPORTS AND EDUCATION



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## ▶ DEAR FRIENDS,

Two decades ago, I became the head of a fledgling Princeton recreational youth wrestling program. Over time and with the help of the University wrestling staff and the community, we grew and created a nationally recognized training center that supports all levels of wrestling and academic excellence.

Having seen firsthand the benefits of that passionate endeavor, we looked south to Trenton, a city with an abundance of untapped talented young boys and girls that could benefit from the lessons the sport of wrestling can offer.

In partnership with the Bethea family, who were born and raised in Trenton but had to travel

to Princeton for their wrestling experience, we created the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center, modeling it on the tenets of that successful Princeton program. As we look to the next important chapter of our work, **we are now in need of expanding our circle of friends and supporters.**

Our mission is to provide year-round **free** wrestling instruction, coaching, mentoring, tutoring, and wrap-around educational services to Trenton boys and girls. Our objective, which we have already begun to realize, is to establish a deep network of disciplined and successful feeder programs within the school system. Now, we are calling on you to join our mission. We need to expand our school-based network, enhance our critical programming, and provide a free-standing training and educational facility for our athletes to achieve our ethos of scholar athleticism.

The successful implementation of this plan will result in disciplined and focused young people ready for the challenges of high school and beyond. Not only will these student athletes

strengthen their local high school wrestling program, but we believe they will become leaders and role models for their fellow students - **thus brightening the future for all!**

We invite you to review our *Be The Bridge Campaign* and discover why your support is critical to continue growing and strengthening the great work of the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center.

Always In Your Corner,

**MARK R. MCLAUGHLIN, MD**



# ▶ THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER

The Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to offering wrestling and educational opportunities to young boys and girls throughout the greater Trenton, New Jersey area. A year-round athletic and support program for all young people, the programs of the center are designed to stimulate personal growth, build self-esteem and lifelong skills, and honor achievements by utilizing the sport of amateur wrestling as the vehicle.

The Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center utilizes a unique combination of wrestling (physical exercise, team building and life skill learning), education (character, literacy, the arts and experiential) and community service to develop Trenton youth into well-rounded and confident individuals, ready to take their place in the world. We accomplish this through a partnering model with some of the best local and national organizations doing work in these distinct fields as well as tapping into the strong New Jersey wrestling community. No other organization in Trenton uses this mix of programming.

We are a school-based program for grades 3-8, currently operating at six local schools and with a goal to expand and scale the program to be present in all Trenton Public Schools (elementary and middle) and to become one of the best youth development programs in the country.

**“THE SPORT IS ONLY THE VEHICLE. THE DESTINATION IS AN EMPOWERED, CONFIDENT, AND COURAGEOUS CHILD. AND THEIR PATH BEGINS AT THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER.”**

—Robert Prunetti, Former Mercer County Executive, Board Member



The Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center is a critical institution serving the needs of our young people who live in a challenging environment.

## THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF OUR COMMUNITY AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- The high school graduation rate for Trenton Public Schools is 62 percent.
- 47 percent of families in Trenton with children are living below the Federal poverty level.
- Trenton youth lack access to healthy food options; the City of Trenton is a food desert.
- The infant mortality rate in Trenton is more than twice the infant mortality rate for the state of New Jersey.
- Youth gun violence in Trenton ranks among the highest in the nation.

## THE BENEFIT AND IMPACT OF THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER

1. We use wrestling as the vehicle to educate boys and girls in discipline, personal responsibility, and academic excellence.
2. We focus on educational and youth development programs that encompass nutrition, physical and mental health, and civic participation.
3. We provide our scholar-athletes with a year-round safe environment to exercise, study, and get a healthy meal.
4. We create a strong feeder program that funnels boys and girls into the high school wrestling program, which provides a continuum of support throughout the formative years.
5. We support and grow girl's and women's wrestling and achievement.
6. We've proven that our Middle School wrestlers are 2.5 - 3x more likely to be on the Honor Roll compared to non-wrestlers.
7. Our data demonstrate tangible improvements in school absenteeism, grades, and behavior in scholar athletes enrolled in our program.





## ► PRIORITY AREAS FOR SUPPORT

### **ESTABLISHING OUR DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

To secure consistency and stability of the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center, it is critical that we secure funding to establish a full-time position for our Director of Operations, Raamiah Bethea. This is a vital role to the center that will allow us to build upon our success and established track record and provide our student athletes with a stable, reliable leader and exemplar of our ideals.

### **SECURING OUR BASE CAMP**

The Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center will be establishing a permanent home-base for the organization in Trenton, NJ. This will include either securing a physical space to renovate and configure or constructing a new permanent home to meet the needs of the young people we serve. Within this structure, we will provide both training spaces for wrestling and all complementary fitness regimens. The facility will also house the leadership of the organization and will allow for the ancillary services that our center provides in the years ahead – including educational support services and programs that will meet the demanding needs of young student athletes today. This new facility will also include a community gathering hall for special events, activities, and programs that strengthen our overall work.

### **EMPOWERING GIRLS WRESTLING**

After funding our Director of Operations position and establishing our free standing facility, our next objective is to establish a full-time position of Director of Girl's Development. This woman will serve as a community outreach coordinator and

coach. Our center has a rich history of successful girls wrestling, and we currently have one of the leading teams in the state. Our goal is to increase the enrollment of elementary and middle school girl wrestlers to continue strengthening and inspiring our already-established team.

### **FOSTERING YOUTH HEALTH & WELLNESS**

As we advance the above stated priorities, we will also expand the breadth and depth of our work so that all the programs of the center will include after school tutoring and counseling – emphasizing the health and wellness of every young person in the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center. Most importantly, we will strengthen the organizational “pillars” and professionalize all organizational functions, including creating an exciting volunteer program to help foster the health and wellness of each athlete and improve all facets of the organization's work.

### **CREATING A CRITICAL RESERVE FUND**

This reserve fund ensures that the organization not only establishes itself as a well-managed nonprofit, but it provides ongoing financial security. The fund will provide added resources for the leadership to expand, support, and sustain certain programs over the years ahead. The fund will also allow for capital to be available to assess and enhance programs to meet the changing and demanding needs of the young people served. The Fund will allow for the organization to build a firm financial base – always prepared for those challenging and rainy days ahead.





## ▶ WHY INVEST IN THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER NOW?

### BE THE BRIDGE

Your investment in the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center is a commitment to improving the lives of our young people through the power and opportunities provided by the sport of wrestling. Your support is the bridge that unites our young athletes with the educational, athletic, and character-building programs that our center provides, each and every day.

Our work and our programs could not be more timely or more critical, as we coach, inspire, and build the next generation of young athlete leaders in the Trenton, NJ area and beyond. Our community, coaches, staff, volunteers, and of course, our athletes, are calling on you to lend a hand and be the bridge that supports and strengthens the mission of the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center.

We know sports and education are powerful tools in uplifting our youth and empowering them to be the confident and well-rounded community leaders of tomorrow. The Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center is powering this truth every day, and we invite you to be the bridge within our community and support our important work for the years to come.

**“THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER HELPED ME IMAGINE A FUTURE THAT I NEVER WOULD HAVE CONSIDERED. IT TAUGHT ME HOW TO USE WRESTLING TO ACHIEVE MY ACADEMIC GOALS. IT CHANGED MY LIFE.”**

—Princessstorm Woody, TYW Alumna



## ▶ MAKE A GIFT

To Support the Be the Bridge Campaign for the Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center, please contact:

**RAY BETHEA**

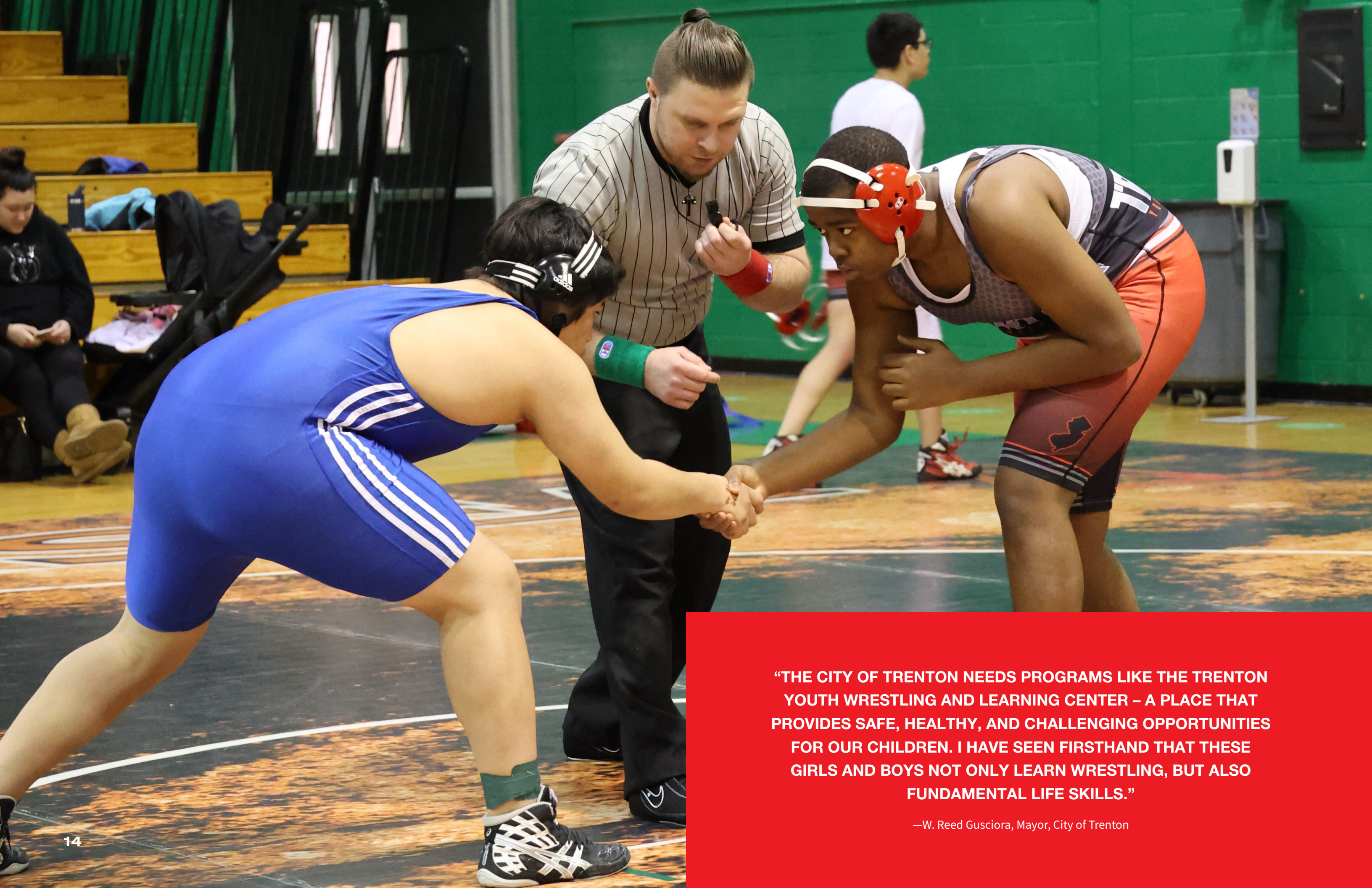
The Trenton Youth Wrestling and Learning Center  
Director of Operations  
(e) [rbethea@tretonyouthwrestling.org](mailto:rbethea@tretonyouthwrestling.org)  
(t) 609-553-8150  
PO Box 55196  
Trenton, NJ 08638

**“WE ARE EXCITED TO PARTNER WITH THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER’S BE THE BRIDGE CAMPAIGN FOR TRENTON YOUTH. THIS PROGRAM UTILIZES A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF WRESTLING (PHYSICAL EDUCATION, TEAM BUILDING AND LIFE SKILLS LEARNING), EDUCATION (CHARACTER, LITERACY, AND THE ARTS) AND COMMUNITY SERVICE TO DEVELOP TRENTON YOUTH INTO WELL-ROUNDED AND CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS. THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER WILL PROVE TO BE INSTRUMENTAL IN HELPING STUDENTS DEVELOP LIFELONG HABITS.”**

—James Earle, Superintendent, Trenton Public Schools







**“THE CITY OF TRENTON NEEDS PROGRAMS LIKE THE TRENTON YOUTH WRESTLING AND LEARNING CENTER – A PLACE THAT PROVIDES SAFE, HEALTHY, AND CHALLENGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR CHILDREN. I HAVE SEEN FIRSTHAND THAT THESE GIRLS AND BOYS NOT ONLY LEARN WRESTLING, BUT ALSO FUNDAMENTAL LIFE SKILLS.”**

—W. Reed Gusciora, Mayor, City of Trenton



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SCAN TO SEE OUR IMPACT!



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