

Celebrating Arlene Virga

Letter from Alex Gardner on the announcement of Arlene's retirement:

Not sure I can succinctly do justice to what Arlene has meant to my family and all the boys & girls who have participated in YYAA's many sports programs over the last 26 years so I will try with a top-10 list. Feel free to add to my list

The top 10 reasons we will miss Arlene Virga, the longtime Executive Director of YYAA

10. She understood that families who live in NYC need a safe place for kids of all abilities to play sports on the weekends.

9. When the travel craze hit, Arlene did not sacrifice her rec leagues which are the only true uptown rec leagues that have continued to thrive over the past 26 years.

8. Arlene was not afraid to have YYAA try new sports be it dodgeball, roller hockey, or lacrosse.

7. Arlene provided so many Dads (and some Moms) the experience of doing their jobs during the week but on the weekends turning into a football, baseball or basketball Coach, many of us who prepared for each game like they were a World Series or Super Bowl.

6. Arlene knew when she needed assistance in various areas and was smart enough to reach out to parents like me, Mark, Liz and Ernie, whose children participated in her program to advise her and help her grow the organization. It takes a village... and Arlene allowed her trusted few to give her guidance when important issues arose.

5. Arlene cared about keeping each of her leagues competitive but still valued making sure children of all levels could participate.

4. As children get into High School, there are many kids who don't make their HS basketball teams but YYAA maintained a competitive basketball league where many of the kids were able to have a competitive basketball experience that they were unable to get at their high school. As a parent, there is no better way we'd want our kids to spend a Saturday night, then playing basketball and then going out with their friends who they just played with.

3. Arlene is the reason our huge City can feel like a small-town community as parents & children alike meet on the ballfields but maintain those friendships for their lifetime.

- My son is at Lehigh and he joined a fraternity in part because there was a YYAA boy one year ahead of him who he played with and against for many, many years and when they both ended up at Lehigh, that YYAA bond brought them together.
- And we all love seeing the children of all ages on the UES walking around on the weekends with their YYAA uniforms, particularly on opening day of the baseball season!

2. The partnerships she formed over the years are ones that only she could have made work. They worked because her partners knew that Arlene shared their vision of making their facilities available to all children who wanted to play sports.

1. I will let a parent of one of the children I coached say the #1 reason why the Yorkville Community will miss Arlene Virga.

- The child (now that he was in High School) refused to let his parents come watch him so I emailed his parents to tell them how well he played (in a playoff game against Ernie & Jacob) and here is their response:
- "Jared has been adamant that we don't attend his games this season which was a real bummer for us. He did tell us about his 7-point playoff game and tried very hard (and successfully) to hide a smile. Stew and I really appreciate your support of Jared and I am so happy to hear he's shown steady improvement. It is so so good for him in numerous ways to be an active part of this team. All of your efforts have really paid off."

Thank You Arlene!