

A Message from Our Chair

July-August 2023

This fall the Alliance will host three [poverty simulations](#) across our state to provide our leaders and staff with greater cultural competency in serving low-income adults and children with empathy and care.

If you're not familiar with poverty simulations, participants experience the role of a low-income individual or family member and are tasked with navigating the complexities of life in poverty. Family roles are based on real scenarios and challenges faced by low-income households.

I participated in such a simulation about 10 years ago when I was at the Y in Charlotte. It was eye-opening for me. While I knew that low-income people face difficult decisions such as choosing to put food on the table or buy their blood pressure medicine, this didn't really resonate with me until I participated in the simulation.

We cannot really walk in someone else's shoes, but this experience helped me look at the work of the Y through a different lens. People in poverty are making difficult choices each day with very limited resources, and if we are truly serving all, we need to have a realistic understanding of the day-to-day challenges some of our community members face. This also ties into our community partners with a real-life example of poverty situations. This allows us to work with our partners when there is someone that we all need to put our arms around and support.

Our Alliance staff team is finalizing the details and will open registration soon, but I encourage our CEOs and leaders to save the date and plan to attend one of the three regional-based simulations from 9 am-1 pm on **October 24** at the Fulton Family YMCA in Winston-Salem, **October 26** at the Goldsboro Family YMCA or **November 8** in Gastonia at the Warlick Family YMCA.

Frontline staff, youth development staff working with children and teens, leaders and even Board members are encouraged to participate in this professional development opportunity. The better we understand where individuals and families are coming from, the better job we can do with helping them, beyond financial assistance, to ensure we are really bringing them into our YMCA family in a way that they feel cared for—and how we can do that at an even greater level.

I look forward to seeing our NC Y staff there and to our state collectively leaning in further to our mission and diversity work by further educating ourselves so that we can serve all.

Lynn Lomax
CEO, YMCA of High Point
Chair, NC Alliance Board of Directors