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The Y Makes Commitment to Advance First Lady's Efforts to Keep Kids Healthy

Ys nationwide to establish physical activity and healthy eating standards for the 700,000 children in its early childhood and afterschool programs

CHICAGO, Nov. 30, 2011 –Today, YMCA of the USA (Y-USA), the national resource office for the nation's 2,700 Ys, committed to standards that would ensure that more children have access to healthy food and physical activity in its 10,000 early childhood and afterschool programs across the country.

The new commitment is to the Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) and was announced at the Building a Healthier Future Summit, focused on ending the childhood obesity epidemic. PHA, which hosted the Summit, works with the private sector and its honorary chairwoman first lady Michelle Obama to solve the nation's childhood obesity crisis.

"As one of the nation's largest providers of early childhood and afterschool programs, the Y can make a significant impact in improving the health of hundreds of thousands of children nationwide," said Neil Nicoll, president and CEO of Y-USA. "The Y is a leading nonprofit strengthening community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the country, children are in desperate need of healthy environments that help them thrive. Implementing standards and practices for Y childcare programs will help create a healthier future for our nation's children."

The new standards will:

- Establish a minimum of expected physical activity for children of different ages enrolled in our programs;
- Define food and beverages offerings, including designating water as the primary beverage during snack times and offering fruits and vegetables as snack options;
- Limit the amount of screen time (watching TV, playing video games, using computers);
- Encourage breastfeeding of infants in our care; and
- Commit Ys to conducting parent education to encourage healthy behaviors at home.

In the last few decades, childhood obesity rates have soared. Nationally, one in three



children is obese or overweight, which puts children at risk for chronic diseases often seen in adults, such as high cholesterol, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure and type-2 diabetes. This health crisis sheds light on the need to provide children and their parents or guardians with the resources and the support they need to live healthier. With a presence in nearly 10,000 communities nationwide, the Y is uniquely positioned to address this issue.

"YMCA of the USA has always been committed to fostering healthy environments for those in its care," said PHA's CEO Larry Soler. "This commitment establishes standards helping to create the healthiest environment possible. Perhaps most importantly, the Y's commitment means that we can help make the healthy choice the easy choice for the hundreds of thousands of busy parents who rely on the Y for early childhood and afterschool programs."

Many Ys across the country have had some form of healthy eating and physical activity standards already in place. The implementation of these new standards will roll out over the next four years. In addition, the Y will implement comprehensive systems to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the standards, training to educate child care staff, grants to offset costs and support in negotiating with preferred vendors.

The standards are based in part on years of research supported by collaborations with the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), University of Massachusetts at Boston, the Healthy Out of School Time Coalition (HOST) and the National Institute for Out of School Time (NIOST). Through these collaborations, as well as the experience of Ys across the nation, the Y has learned the most effective ways to create healthy environments in out-of-school time settings.

Additionally, the Institute of Medicine's Early Childhood Obesity Prevention policies, the National Afterschool Association's "Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out of School Time Programs" and the Let's Move Child Care Standards played a significant role the guidelines.

For more information about the Y, visit www.ymca.net

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About the Y The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. ymca.net

About Partnership for a Healthier America The Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA) is devoted to working with the private sector to ensure the health of our nation's youth by solving the childhood obesity crisis. In 2010, PHA was created in conjunction with – but independent from – First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! effort. PHA is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that is led by some of the nation's most respected health and childhood obesity experts. PHA brings together



public, private and nonprofit leaders to broker meaningful commitments and develop strategies to end childhood obesity. Most important, PHA ensures that commitments made are commitments kept by working with unbiased, third parties to monitor and publicly report on the progress our partners are making. For more information about PHA, please visit www.aHealthierAmerica.org and follow PHA on Twitter @PHANews.

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About the East Bay Y System:

The YMCA of the East Bay is one of Northern California's largest trainers and deployers of volunteers. Last year the East Bay Y system trained more than 500 volunteers in programs ranging from childcare to teen enrichment, health and wellness and cultural harmony. With nine branches and almost 50 childcare centers in operation from Fremont to the Oregon border, the East Bay Y system also has the largest geographic reach of any YMCA operation in North America. Formed as a 501 (c) (3) corporation on July 20, 1879, the not-for-profit East Bay Y operates branches in downtown Oakland, Fremont, Newark, Hayward, Castro Valley, Richmond, and Dublin, as well as camps in Livermore, Pescadero (San Mateo County) and Redway (Humboldt County).