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YMCA of Greater Erie

YMCA Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

For Immediate Release

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Downtown YMCA Childcare Earns National NAEYC Accreditation

Program among the Top in the Nation by Earning NAEYC Accreditation

Erie, PA . The YMCA of Greater Erie's Downtown YMCA Childcare has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) . the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals.

We are proud to have earned the mark of quality from NAEYC, and to be recognized for our commitment to reaching the highest professional standards, said Heather Clark Celio, Downtown YMCA Childcare Director. NAEYC Accreditation lets families in our community know that children in our program are getting the best care and early learning experiences possible.

The YMCA of Greater Erie is the largest provider of childcare in Erie County with 21 locations providing care for children as young as six weeks old through school age. The YMCA of Greater Erie has designed its childcare programs according to the YMCA's philosophy to foster the development of the spirit, mind and body. The centers have a well-balanced program that fits the needs of the children according to their ages and individual progress, said YMCA Vice President of Childcare Tina Carter. The programs have been designed to promote physical, educational, emotional and social growth for infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children.

The Downtown YMCA Childcare is the first of the YMCA of Greater Erie childcare sites to seek this non-required NAEYC accreditation. According to Clark Celio, other YMCA childcare locations will begin the process in the fall of 2010 until all are accredited.

To earn NAEYC Accreditation, the Downtown YMCA Childcare went through an extensive Self-Study process, measuring the program and its services against the 10 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards and more than 400 related Accreditation Criteria. The program received NAEYC Accreditation after a site visit by NAEYC Assessors to ensure that the program meets each of the ten program standards. NAEYC-accredited programs are also subject to unannounced visits during their accreditation, which lasts for five years.

In the 23 years since NAEYC Accreditation was established, it has become a widely recognized sign of high-quality early childhood education. Almost 8,000 programs, serving one million young children, are currently accredited by NAEYC . approximately 8 percent of all preschools and other early childhood programs. The NAEYC Accreditation system raises the bar for preschools, child care centers and other early childhood programs, said Mark Ginsberg, Ph.D., executive director of NAEYC. The Downtown YMCA's Childcare NAEYC Accreditation is a sign that they are a leader in a national effort to invest in high-quality early childhood education, and to help give all children a better start.

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The NAEYC Accreditation system has set voluntary professional standards for programs for young children since 1985. In September 2006, the Association revised program standards and criteria to introduce a new level of quality, accountability, and service for parents and children in child care programs. The new standards today reflect the latest research and best practices in early childhood education and development. NAEYC is committed to utilizing the newest studies and analysis on positive child outcomes to ensure young children continue receiving the highest-quality care and education possible.

The NAEYC Accreditation system was created to set professional standards for early childhood education, and to help families identify high-quality preschools, child care centers and other early education programs. To earn NAEYC Accreditation, a program must meet each of the 10 NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. Programs are accredited by NAEYC for a five-year period.

About the YMCA of Greater Erie: The mission of the YMCA of Greater Erie is to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Integral to all YMCA programs is character development and developmental assets. **Character** Development is based on the four YMCA core **values**-caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

For 150 years, the YMCA of Greater Erie has been dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities with a mission to put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all it. Is also the belief of the YMCA that no one should ever be denied services because of inability to pay. Additionally, our income-based membership ensures that everyone can belong to the YMCA.

Our four convenient locations throughout the Erie region offer programs for all ages from our creative and fun youth sports programs to a wide variety of active older adults classes. Our award winning early learning care for children is offered at twenty locations throughout Erie County. A fit lifestyle and a philosophy dedicated to honesty, caring, respect and responsibility, the YMCA of Greater Erie celebrates a century and a half of services to our community.

To learn more visit www.ymcaerie.org.

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