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FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

For Immediate Release

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75 PRESCHOOLERS SET TO BEGIN SCHOOL AT YMCA OF GREATER ERIE'S NEWEST PRESCHOOL LOCATION

Erie, PA – It's a BIG Day for Kamdyn. She and 74 other preschoolers will begin their first day of preschool on Monday, Aug. 29, 2011 at the YMCA of Greater Erie's newest early care & preschool enrichment center, the Eastside Y Academy, 2132 Willow Street in Wesleyville.

The Eastside Y Academy is a satellite educational facility of the Eastside Family YMCA in Harborcreek. The YMCA is leasing the new space located in the former Wesleyville Elementary School from Harborcreek Youth Services, who has just completed renovations. The Eastside Y Academy will occupy four classrooms on Aug. 29 and plans to open more later this year as it grows its preschool offerings.

"This is an exciting opportunity for the YMCA of Greater Erie to help more families in our community that want to provide their kids with a preschool educational experience. There's no question that early learning is essential to the academic success of our youth," says YMCA of Greater Erie CEO Gerry Vandemerwe. "We had 30 of these kids on a waiting list for preschool. That tells me that parents recognize the importance of early learning and there was a definite community need for us to expand our program so that these kids have access to learning fundamentals in preparation for Kindergarten."

The Eastside Y Academy opens on Aug. 29 as a state-licensed educational center, fully staffed by early childhood educators and support staff. The Academy will be open from 6:30 a.m.-6 p.m. providing convenient care and programs for children both before and after school. Enrollment for the 2011-2012 school-year is currently open.

"At the Y, we believe the values and skills learned early on are vital building blocks for quality of life and future success. Our early care & school-age enrichment programs are staffed with people who understand the cognitive, physical and social development of kids, the need children have to feel connected and supported in trying new things and the caring and reinforcement parents and families need to help each other," says Vandemerwe. "Most importantly, children learn to be their best selves. That makes for confident kids today, and contributing and engaged adults tomorrow."

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YMCA OF GREATER ERIE WWW.YMCAERIE.ORG

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



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DOWNTOWN YMCA
31 West 10th Street
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EASTSIDE YMCA
2101 Nagle Road
Erie, PA 16510
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GLENWOOD PARK YMCA
3727 Cherry Street
Erie, PA 16508
(814) 868-0867

The YMCA of Greater Erie offers early care & school-age enrichment at 19 locations throughout Erie County serving more than 1000 children as young as 6 weeks on a daily basis.

For more information on the Eastside Y Academy, contact Linda Gehrlein at the Eastside Family Y at (814) 899-9622.

Editor's Note: The YMCA believes that everyone deserves a YMCA experience. The YMCA provides scholarships for YMCA programs and memberships through its We Build People fund. Financial assistance for preschool is available for working families.

About the Y

The Y's Mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

The Y's Cause: At the Y, strengthening community is our cause. Every day, the Y works side by side with our neighbors to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

The Y, founded in 1860, is one of Erie's leading nonprofits (501 c-3), committed to strengthening our community in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility:

Youth Development: Nurturing the potential of every child and teen.

The Y believes that all kids deserve the opportunity to discover who they are and what they can achieve. That's why, through the Y, thousands of Erie's youth today are engaged in programs that encourage Y core-values – character, honesty, respect and responsibility. Unique community partnerships with the City of Erie and the Erie Housing Authority serve Erie's most at-risk, underserved kids and teens directly in their neighborhoods. In our membership and program centers, award-winning childcare, before & after school care, summer camp, youth sports, swimming, youth fitness, leadership, mentoring and volunteerism, are all Y programs that are helping Erie's kids and teens reach their full potential.

Healthy Living: Improving health and well-being.

Through advocacy and leadership, the Y is a leading voice on health and well-being. With a mission centered on balance, the Y brings families closer together, encourages good health and fosters connections through fitness, sports, fun and shared interests. As a result, thousands of Erie's youth, adults and families are receiving the support, guidance and resources needed to achieve greater health and well-being for their spirit, mind and body.

Social Responsibility: Giving back and providing support to our neighbors.

Across Erie County, the Y helps people give back and assist our neighbors by offering them opportunities to volunteer, advocate and support programs that strengthen community. At the Y, we are volunteer-founded, volunteer-led organization. Volunteers are found at every level of the Y – in childcare, health & wellness, youth mentoring, board leadership and more. Through the Y's We Build People annual scholarship campaign, the Y provides financial assistance and income-based membership rates so that everyone can benefit from Y programs and membership. Additionally, the Y partners with other area non-profits enabling our members to support the community through donations and volunteerism.

Involvement at the Y: The Y strives to engage more people in the communities it serves whether it is as a member, volunteer, supporter or advocate. Each YMCA association is an independent, autonomous organization with its own governing board, professional staff and assets.

The Y By the Numbers:

The Y has 5 membership branches: Camp Sherwin, the County Y located in Edinboro, the Downtown, Eastside and Glenwood Park Ys. Eighteen award-winning childcare centers provide care to children as young as six weeks. Unique community partnerships with the City of Erie and the Erie Housing Authority serve Erie's most at-risk, underserved kids and teens directly in their neighborhoods.

30,000 people of all ages, incomes, backgrounds and abilities are served by the Y and Y programs. Financial assistance is available for all Y memberships and programs.

To learn more about the Y, www.ymcaerie.org.