



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

For Immediate Release

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YMCA of Greater Erie Invites Supporters to Donate 'Pennies From Heaven' at jcpenny Campaign seeks donations of change to benefit Erie's youth

Erie, PA – From Oct. 12-25, shoppers at the jcpenny store at the Millcreek Makk are invited to turn small change into “pennies from heaven” by rounding up their purchases and donating the difference to a local afterschool program. The YMCA of GreaterErie, is one of 1,100 afterschool organizations from across the country matched with a local jcpenny store that will benefit from the proceeds raised during the pennies from heaven campaign.

“At the Y, we believe young people deserve to reach their full potential and we are committed to providing quality, affordable afterschool programs where kids can discover who they are and what they can achieve,” said Kevin Salem, Downtown Y School-Age Enrichment Center Director “We hope the community will keep our commitment to youth in mind, so that the positive learning environments we provide after school will continue to be available to Erie students.”

National research shows that one out of four students in the U.S. is on their own between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. each day.* The Downtown Y's afterschool program serves more than 180 students each year, providing a safe and nurturing environment where youth develop social and critical thinking skills, engage in physical activity, and achieve academic success in school to reach their full potential.

“For more than a decade, jcpenny has been deeply committed to helping kids spread their wings by making it possible for more students to participate in life-enriching afterschool programs,” said Ken Shannon store manager for jcpenny. “When we leverage the power of a penny to create opportunities for learning, we can make a positive difference in the lives of our future leaders.”

For more information related to the pennies from heaven initiative, visit jcpennyafterschool.org.

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 4 membership branches: 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.

About jcpenny's commitment to afterschool

As the leading corporate advocate for the afterschool issue, jcpenny partners with leading afterschool organizations to make life-enriching afterschool programs accessible for working families. Through its legacy of supporting youth and charitable organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the Y, National 4-H, United Way and *FIRST*[®] Robotics, jcpenny formalized its commitment to the afterschool cause by establishing the jcpenny afterschool fund, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Since its inception, more than \$100 million has been distributed to afterschool programs across every jcpenny community thereby making it possible for more kids to spread their wings. For more information, visit www.jcp.com/pennies.

* Data from Afterschool Alliance 2009 report *America After 3PM*.