



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

3 P.M. EST, May 4, 2011

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Academic Support and Enrichment Program to Continue as YMCA and Princeton Young Achievers Combine Resources

PRINCETON, NJ: The Boards of Directors of the Princeton Family YMCA and Princeton Young Achievers (PYA) voted unanimously last week to combine their resources to guarantee the continuance of a highly-regarded academic support and enrichment program for children of Princeton's public and affordable housing communities. The Boards have pledged their joint commitment to the seamless continuation in the 2011-12 school year of programs that have been offered since 1993.

"When we learned that PYA was facing financial challenges that would have compromised its ability to serve the community this September, we acted very quickly," said David Sandahl, Chairman of the YMCA Board of Directors. "PYA has an established track record in providing the right kinds of academic support in the right way, which fits perfectly with what we at the YMCA are doing to increase our emphasis on Youth Development."

"We couldn't imagine a better partner," said Clayton Marsh, the President of the Princeton Young Achievers Board of Directors. "During my first conversation with YMCA CEO Kate Bech, we identified all sorts of exciting possibilities that might enable PYA to continue its after-school programs without interruption this fall. We quickly arranged a series of meetings to explore further the compatibility of our respective missions and to work out specific details on program and finances, down to how the payroll administration will work. My intensive discussions over the past month with Kate, David and their colleagues at the YMCA have confirmed that we are working with people who know what they are doing and who share our commitment to serving the educational needs of these children."

Princeton Young Achievers was founded in 1993 by the late Dr. Shirley Paris and other concerned parents and teachers in Princeton who recognized the need to provide better academic support for children in Princeton's public and affordable housing communities. Today PYA operates after-school enrichment programs for children in grades K-5 at the Pannell Center on Clay Street, Littlebrook School, and the Crimmins Learning Center at Princeton Community Village. PYA employs 14 part-time teachers, including 4 site coordinators, has a core of more than 40 active volunteers, and benefits from a broad base of community and institutional support that includes Princeton Housing Authority, Princeton Community Housing, Princeton Regional Schools and the Arts Council of Princeton.

The Princeton Family YMCA was founded in 1908, and has oriented itself in recent years to three areas of focus: Youth Development; Healthy Living; and Social Responsibility. "Working with PYA is a big step forward on the path we want to follow," said YMCA CEO Kate Bech. "We have started some new programs in Youth Development, such as our Y Scholars group mentoring program for middle school students and an expanded offering in after school programs, and working with PYA will allow us to coordinate and leverage our resources much more effectively."

Officials from both organizations noted that the combination of resources serves to focus resources on services rather than administrative overhead. "We've responded to the challenges of the past few years by rationalizing our overhead and adopting financial systems that give us much better insight and control of our operations," said Sandahl. "We're confident that our leadership and systems are up to task, and we know that the PYA Board, staff and volunteers are people we greatly respect and are eager to work with."

"I would like to say to our students, our parents, and our funders that by combining resources with the YMCA, PYA will be able to do even more to serve the children and their families, not less," said Marsh. "Indeed, PYA has been looking to form such an alliance for years, and we are already talking with the Y about the many additional things we will be able to do together by coordinating with other YMCA programs and other related programs in Princeton. This will be a great partnership for the Princeton community."

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