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YMCA of Greater St. Louis Receives Grant to Offer Enhance® Fitness, a Program that Treats Arthritis through Fun, Laughter and Friendship

Program proven to reduce arthritis symptoms and increase physical function in a social atmosphere

[St. Louis, Mo., June 16, 2014] –The YMCA of Greater St. Louis is the proud recipient of a grant to start the EnhanceFitness Program within the St. Louis community. The program is an evidence-based physical activity program proven to increase the physical, mental and social functioning of older adults – particularly those with arthritis. The Y Association will be piloting the program at the O’Fallon Family YMCA and the Edward Jones Family YMCA, with the goal of eventually bringing it to other branches.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 52 million Americans have arthritis, including about half of all adults over age 65. Almost 23 million Americans report that arthritis limits their physical activity. Research has shown that low-intensity physical activity performed on a regular basis can reduce pain, improve functioning, elevate mood and delay the onset of disability.

Participants in EnhanceFitness will receive three, one-hour classes per week from certified Y staff that include proven aerobic, strength training, balance and flexibility exercises that are safe, effective and modifiable for a variety of fitness levels. Fitness assessments will be conducted every four months to track participants’ progress. In addition to physical benefits, the program will provide a fun, social atmosphere that fosters relationships between program participants.

The YMCA of Greater St. Louis Y was one of 20 Y associations in the U.S. to receive an EnhanceFitness implementation grant, funded through a partnership between the Y’s national resource office, YMCA of the USA, and the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. EnhanceFitness is offered at YMCAs across the country through a licensing agreement with Senior Services, Inc., the Seattle-based non-profit organization that developed the EnhanceFitness program model.

“With a mission centered on balance in spirit, mind and body, the Y strives to be a leading voice for health and well-being in our community so that all people, no matter what their circumstance or age, can achieve greater health,” said Gary Schlansker, president and CEO of

the YMCA of Greater St. Louis. "Providing healthy aging programs is a priority for the Y, especially as the number of older adults continues to increase. We are excited to collaborate with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors and Senior Services to offer older adults the support they need to build physical strength and decrease arthritis symptoms in a fun atmosphere."

For more information, please contact Joyce Hoth, director of community health, at 314.436.1177 or jhoth@ymcastlouis.org.

About the YMCA of Greater St. Louis

The YMCA of Greater St. Louis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Featuring 17 traditional Y branches and two Campus Y student leadership facilities on the Missouri side of the St. Louis Metro Area, our Y also includes YMCA Camp Lakewood and Trout Lodge in Potosi, Missouri. The Carondelet Park Rec Complex and O'Fallon Park Rec Complex are owned by the City of St. Louis and operated by the Y. Our Y is a proud member of the United Way. For more information, please visit www.ymcastlouis.org or call 314-436-1177.

About the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors

The National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) is a non-profit Public Health organization committed to serve the chronic disease program directors of each state and U.S. jurisdiction. Founded in 1988, NACDD connects more than 3,000 chronic disease practitioners to advocate for preventive policies and programs, encourage knowledge sharing and develop partnerships for health promotion. Since its founding, NACDD has been a national leader in mobilizing efforts to reduce chronic diseases and their associated risk factors through state and community-based prevention strategies. For more about NACDD, please visit: www.Chronicdisease.org

About Senior Services, Inc.

Senior Services offers a comprehensive network of services promoting the emotional, social, and physical well-being of more than 60,000 older adults and their families throughout King County, WA and supports nationally disseminated evidence-based fitness and wellness programs. Since 1967, Senior Services has been a leader in connecting older adults with high quality programs and senior centers that support them to live active lives while enabling them to make their own choices to suit their lifestyles and preferences. Senior Services has been a major player in the aging field for more than 45 years. For more information, visit: www.seniorservices.org