



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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**Gateway Region YMCA Awarded \$300,000 Healthy Schools Healthy  
Communities Grant**

*Missouri Foundation for Health initiative working to increase access to healthy food  
and physical activity for children and families*

[ST. LOUIS], MO (Dec. 08, 2015) – The Gateway Region YMCA has become the latest St. Louis area community partner to join Missouri Foundation for Health's Healthy Schools Healthy Communities (HSHC) initiative. The Y will be working with the Ferguson-Florissant and Riverview Gardens School Districts to bring together schools, community organizations, businesses, parents and residents to identify and push for changes that increase access to healthy food and physical activity where our kids live, learn and play.

Today, 28 percent of Missouri kids ages 10 to 17 are obese or overweight. The Gateway Region YMCA will facilitate one of 13 HSHC collaborations in the state creating healthy opportunities for kids in the classroom, on the playground, at home, and throughout the community.

"We are excited to work with Missouri Foundation for Health and the school districts on this very important cause," said Tim Helm, president and CEO of the Gateway Region Y. "The Y's core focus areas are youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, and this initiative supports all of those areas. We look forward to helping to increase access to healthy food and physical activities in these communities."

Through the grant, the Y will work with the school districts to address school foods, physical education/activity, health education, school policy and family engagement. The collaborative will work together to create a community action plan that addresses gaps in access to healthy foods and physical activity, and has been developed using the results of the Y's Community Healthy Living Index assessment.

Healthy Schools Healthy Communities encourages participation from across the community. The Y will be partnering with early childcare providers, government entities, universities, healthcare providers and other community organizations to spread the word about new opportunities for children and families.

"Twenty-five percent of Missourians have limited access to healthy foods, and opportunities for physical activity can often be limited. Through Healthy Schools

# Healthy Schools Healthy Communities

LET'S BUILD A HEALTHIER FUTURE



Healthy Communities, we want to help energize communities and provide the necessary resources to drive change,” said Deidre Griffith, program officer, Missouri Foundation for Health. “Missouri Foundation for Health is committed to supporting local efforts that create healthier opportunities for children, families, and communities.”

## **About the Gateway Region YMCA**

The Gateway Region Y is a nonprofit organization dedicated to youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Featuring 24 traditional Y branches in Missouri and Illinois, along with two Campus Y student leadership facilities, the Community Services Y-Without-Walls serving East St. Louis and Y Community Literacy. 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. The Y is committed to serving people of all abilities. For those who qualify, we offer financial assistance so everyone has the opportunity to participate in Y programs, regardless of ability to pay. Our Y is a proud member of the United Way of Greater St. Louis. For more information, please visit [www.gwrymca.org](http://www.gwrymca.org) or call 314-436-1177.

## **About Healthy Schools Healthy Communities**

Healthy Schools Healthy Communities (HSHC) empowers communities to build a healthier future for children and families across Missouri. An initiative of Missouri Foundation for Health, HSHC brings together schools, community organizations, businesses, parents, and residents to identify and push for changes that increase access to healthy food and physical activity where our kids live, learn, and play.

## **About Missouri Foundation for Health**

Missouri Foundation for Health is a resource for the region, working with communities and nonprofits to generate and accelerate positive changes in health. As a catalyst for change, the Foundation improves the health of Missourians through partnership, experience, knowledge, and funding.

To learn more please visit [mffh.org](http://mffh.org)

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