

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:****October 13, 2008****YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee Selected to Participate in Pilot Program to Develop Physical Activity and Well-Being Initiatives for Cancer Survivors***LIVESTRONG Program Will Be Based at Downtown YMCA*

MILWAUKEE- The YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee is one of 10 YMCAs across the country selected to participate in the pilot phase of a project to redefine the YMCA experience to better support the specific wants, needs, and interests of cancer survivors. Their work will include developing physical activity and well-being programs for cancer survivors.

The project is a result of a multi-year partnership between the YMCA of the USA and the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) launched last fall to respond to the growing body of evidence that physical activity can improve cancer survivors' quality of life, lessen the impact of treatment side effects, and help in their recovery.

“Medical studies show that moderate levels of appropriate physical activity can reduce fatigue, boost self esteem, and improve muscle strength and physical endurance in individuals following cancer treatment. However, physical activity and wellness programs specifically for cancer survivors are scarce and often difficult to take to scale nationally,” said Andy Miller, vice president of programs and policy for the LAF. “The YMCA is uniquely positioned nationwide and maintains exceptional recognition, trust, and credibility regarding community health and physical activity. Together we are confident we can make an unprecedented difference in the way we inspire and empower people affected by cancer.”

At the conclusion of the program, it is expected that cancer survivors will feel understood and supported at the YMCA; will be able to participate in programs, clubs, activities, and events designed specifically for cancer survivors; will interact with staff who are skilled in leading physical activity programs for cancer survivors; and will encounter YMCA environments that ensure their safety, privacy, and respect.

“This exciting new partnership with the Lance Armstrong Foundation will allow us to more effectively involve cancer survivors in the Downtown YMCA **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA program with research-based programs that focus on their specific health and well-being needs,” said Janet McMahon, Associate Vice President of Healthy Lifestyles for the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee. “It is our hope that this pilot at the Downtown YMCA will be successful and set the standard in physical activity and well-being programs for cancer survivors. We hope to expand the program to other branches over the next several years.”

The **LIVESTRONG** at the YMCA program features 12-week small group exercise class led by a certified personal trainer. The goal of the class is to build muscle mass and muscle strength, increase flexibility and endurance, and improve overall functional ability. Additional goals include reducing the severity of treatment side effects, preventing unwanted weight changes and improving energy levels and self esteem.

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The initiative is a key component of Activate America®, the YMCA's bold approach to directly address our nation's growing health crisis. Through Activate America®, YMCAs are shifting how they focus their work inside and outside the YMCA to engage health seekers: all children, youth, adults, and families whose successful pursuit of health and well-being in spirit, mind, and body require continuous supportive relationships and environments. Those living with, through and beyond a disease like cancer often fit into this group.

For more information about LIVESTRONG at the YMCA, please contact Joel Mathews, Facilitator, at (414)274-0814 or jmmathews@ymcamke.org. LIVESTRONG at the YMCA is currently offered at the Downtown YMCA, 161 W. Wisconsin Ave. Ste. 4000, Milwaukee. (414)291-9622. It will expand to other YMCA branches in the near future.

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ABOUT THE LANCE ARMSTRONG FOUNDATION

The Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) unites people to fight cancer. The Foundation believes that unity is strength, knowledge is power, and attitude is everything. We provide the practical information and tools people battling cancer need to live life on their own terms. We take aim at the gaps between what is known and what is done to prevent death and suffering due to cancer, ensuring access to screening and care, improving the quality of life for people affected by cancer, and investing in needed research. Founded in 1997 by cancer survivor and champion cyclist Lance Armstrong, the LAF is located in Austin, Texas. UNITE at LIVESTRONG.org.

ABOUT ACTIVATE AMERICA®

Activate America® builds on the YMCAs mission and history as a social innovator, in this case responding to the nation's growing health crisis. Through Activate America, the YMCA is redefining itself and engaging communities across the country to provide better opportunities for people of all ages in their pursuit of health and well-being in spirit, mind, and body. Advisors to the YMCA for this effort include: scientists at Harvard School of Public Health and Stanford University School of Medicine, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Steps to a Healthier US, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Active Living By Design, the Chronic Disease Directors and others. Visit www.ymca.net/activateamerica.

ABOUT THE YMCA OF METROPOLITAN MILWAUKEE

The YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee builds strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. Since 1858, Milwaukee YMCAs have helped kids and families live healthy lives in spirit, mind and body. Supported in part through contributions to the Strong Kids Campaign, the YMCA provides membership assistance and scholarships to programs like summer camp, child care and teen activities, so that no one is turned away due to an inability to pay.