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YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee
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YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee Appoints Vice President of Healthy Living
Laura J. Rooney, Ph.D., M.S. to lead Y's efforts to build healthy communities

MILWAUKEE – The YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee today announced that Laura J. Rooney, Ph.D., M.S., has been named vice president of Healthy Living, a new position for the Milwaukee Y. Leading the Healthy Living team, Rooney will play a key leadership role in helping the Milwaukee Y realize its vision to create a stronger, healthier Milwaukee where families of all incomes and backgrounds truly thrive.

"Laura brings years of experience in health and wellness education, and will be a valuable asset to our team at the Milwaukee Y," said Julie Tolan, president and chief executive officer of the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee. "The Milwaukee Y is the healthiest choice for families because of our emphasis on healthy living, which takes into account not only a person's physical well-being, but also their social and emotional wellness. With Laura's expertise and leadership, we will work to improve the health and wellness of our members, volunteers, employees, guests and the community at large."

As vice president of Healthy Living, Rooney and her team will lead the Milwaukee Y's Healthy Communities initiative, which will select strategic neighborhoods to deliver group fitness, diabetes prevention, healthy eating, weight management and other vital chronic disease prevention programs. These types of Y programming are typically held exclusively in Y centers, but the new Healthy Communities initiative will bring these programs directly to where community members live, work and play in order to teach new health and wellness habits to more people throughout the city.

Since exiting a thoughtful and deliberate restructuring process in January 2015, the Milwaukee Y is laser-focused on its strengths and areas of biggest impact – health and wellness and youth development. Fundamentally, the Milwaukee Y will be a champion for healthy living and will work to support families in their efforts to lead healthy lives through initiatives like Healthy Communities; Camp FLY, which integrates a proven summer learning loss curriculum into all Milwaukee Y day and overnight camps; Early Childhood Education, which enhance the academic achievement of Milwaukee's children; and Milwaukee Swims, which improves water safety and swim skills to reduce preventable drowning deaths. These life-changing programs are largely dependent on philanthropic support. Since the Milwaukee Y took a proactive approach to fixing its financial situation, benefactors of the Milwaukee Y can trust that their gifts will directly support the organization's mission, not debt reduction.

Rooney joins the Milwaukee Y from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) where she served as a health and wellness academic instructor and lecturer within the Kinesiology Department of the College of Health Sciences. In this position, Rooney developed and taught upper-level health and human behavior courses on a variety of topics, including

health and fitness business management, and health and wellness program planning and evaluation. At UWM, Rooney also served as the program director for *The HUB*, an employee-centered health and wellness initiative.

Prior to her time at UWM, Rooney was the associate director for campus wellness at the University of South Carolina-Columbia. There, she managed staff and delivery of direct patient services in two wellness centers and implemented and evaluated evidence-based behavior change programs for a diverse, urban audience. Rooney also previously served as research assistant in the W.P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University in Tempe, Arizona.

Rooney earned a doctor of philosophy degree in public health, specializing in the area of health promotion, education and behavior from the University of South Carolina, and a master of science degree in exercise and wellness from Arizona State University. She received both a bachelor's degree in business administration and master's degree in accounting from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

About the YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee

The YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee is a powerful association of men, women and children of all ages and walks of life joined together by a shared vision to create a stronger, healthier Milwaukee where families of all incomes and backgrounds truly thrive. Supported by the generosity and vision of our benefactors, the Milwaukee Y offers solutions that reduce health issues that plague our community, such as chronic diseases and preventable injuries; provides safe places seven-days-a-week where kids can have fun, families can gather and seniors can build meaningful connections; serves as an access point for vital community needs, such as preventative health care and reliable, safe before- and after-school care; partners with families, schools and other non-profits to help kids grow into productive adults; and makes fitness fun and accessible for all. Comprising five locations throughout the Milwaukee area, as well as YMCA Camp Minikani on the shores of Lake Amy Belle in Hubertus, Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Y has been a part of the lives of the greater Milwaukee area's kids and families since 1858. For more information, visit www.ymcamke.org.

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