



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Funding Awarded to YMCA for OKC Afterschool Programs

OKLAHOMA CITY (Nov. 21, 2009) – Elementary students in two south Oklahoma City neighborhoods will continue to have afterschool programs thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Kirkpatrick Family Fund. The money was awarded to the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City, which has operated the programs at Pierce and Van Buren Elementary Schools since 2003.

“My son loves the afterschool program,” said Monica Smith, a parent of a student at Pierce Elementary School. “He enjoys being able to play with his friends and I definitely feel like the program has helped him overcome his shyness. I am able to relax knowing he is safe and enjoying his time while I have to work.”

The Y will use the funding to offer financial assistance to families who could otherwise not afford to send their children to an afterschool program. About 70 children from low-income families currently participate in the two programs. Students learn about character development, conflict resolution, social competency, science and technology, healthy lifestyles and get assistance with homework, tutoring and literacy.

“As a parent, I am grateful for this program,” said Jessy Gallegos. “I have peace of mind during those few extra hours at work knowing that my son is in a safe environment and having fun while still learning.”

Most of the afterschool participants live in neighborhoods infested with gang activity. Parents often work multiple jobs, leaving their children home alone for several hours after school.

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“This is the prime time for drug use, crime and sexual activity to occur among kids,” said Kelly Kay, Vice President and COO of the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City.

“Afterschool programs offer a positive alternative to kids who might otherwise be tempted to take a turn down the wrong path.”

Afterschool programs have proven effective at improving test scores, behavior, self esteem and work ethic.

About the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City

The YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City is a charitable, not-for-profit organization that serves children, families and adults of all ages, regardless of gender, race, abilities, or income. Major program areas include aquatic and water safety, youth sports, before and afterschool childcare, camping, health and wellness, teen leadership and community development. The YMCA served nearly 130,000 people in the greater Oklahoma City area last year. For more information please call (405) 297-7777 or visit www.ymcaokc.org.

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