



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** August 16, 2017

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### **Free Afterschool Program for Teens Offers a Range of Benefits to Local Families**

After a child turns twelve, the opportunities for afterschool care become increasingly limited. Left unsupervised many children can get into trouble between the hours of 3 – 6 PM. However, new research also shows that participation in quality afterschool programs is linked to significant gains in standardized test scores and work habits as well as reducing the risk of behavior problems.

Afterschool programs lead to improved attendance, behavior and coursework. Students participating tend to go to school more, behave better, and receive better grades and do better on tests compared to non-participating students.

Through a partnership with MDHS, the Y is implementing a free afterschool program to help. The Y says its goal is to prepare youth to leave the school or classroom setting with the job skills, social skills and nurturing support to be able to serve in their own communities.

The Community Youth Career Development Center (CYCDC), in Lowndes county is open to youth ages 12 – 18 after school. Transportation from the local schools and back home when the program ends at 6 PM is provided. The CYCDC Program helps youth develop career skills and avoid behaviors to help them reach their full potential.

Ariel Gainey is the state-wide program director of youth development initiatives for the Y. Gainey says, "We often hear from parents who aren't comfortable leaving their young teens at home alone, but we also hear from those who are about to send their kids to college and worry that they do not have the basic skills to make it on their own. This program serves kids at both ends of that spectrum."

Some of the resources the youth will be given access to through the program include: Standardized Testing Prep, GED preparation, Vocational Education Training, Technology Courses, Career/Workforce Development, Teen Pregnancy

Prevention Education, Social Skills, Anger Management and Substance Abuse Awareness training.

The Y has partnered with MDHS with a common goal of reaching families throughout the state and investing early, in building a strong foundation that helps nurture the well-being of individuals.

To refer a child to the program, please contact: Titus Latham- Primary Youth Coach, or Essence Walker- Assistant Youth Coach

#### **About the Y**

The Y (The Young Men's Christian Association) is one of the nation's leading nonprofits, strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

For more information visit: [metroYMCAms.org](http://metroYMCAms.org) or contact [jreihle@metroymcams.org](mailto:jreihle@metroymcams.org).