



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Newest Y Links 2 Learning Center Opens at South Orlando YMCA**

*Providing safety, learning support and  
food assistance to local children and families in need*

**ORLANDO, APRIL 1, 2013** – As part of the YMCA of Central Florida’s commitment to Social Responsibility and Youth Development, the organization this week announced the opening of its second Y Golf Links 2 Learning Center at the South Orlando YMCA.

With the launch of the \$500,000 facility, hundreds of children living in the Oak Ridge Road/OBT Corridor will be able to learn a new sport – golf – as well as the values, civility and self-respect that go with it. And through a tie-in to the Y’s Lockheed Martin Technology Center, children will also receive homework help, as well as a greater understanding of golf’s connection to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills.

With the opening, the Y is also partnering with the Community Food and Outreach Center to provide food and case management support for participating children and families, many of whom are at imminent risk of hunger and homelessness. Currently, nearly half of all children served by the South Orlando Y come from single-parent households and 79% qualify for free or reduced school lunches.

“We know that through no fault of their own, children are often the hardest hit by poverty, hunger, family stress and neighborhood crime,” said Jim Ferber, President and CEO of the Central Florida YMCA. “Yet even modest investments in children’s safety, learning and well-being pay huge, lifelong dividends for them and our entire community.”

The 6,000 square foot facility, which includes putting greens and hitting bays, was established through a \$500,000 gift from The Warden Family Foundation, as well as a major partnership with Lockheed Martin. Other leading partners include the LPGA and other professional golfing groups, which are providing on-site golf instruction, mentoring, event sponsorship and grant support.

“What makes Y Links 2 Learning unique is that it is offered free to all deserving kids, many of whom can walk directly to the Y after school,” said Glen Davis, committee chair of the Links 2 Learning program. “The South Orlando Y is one of 11 Outreach Ys, which are located in the heart of financially fragile communities. These Y’s provide safety and security for kids, as well as peace of mind for struggling families, many of whom are working several jobs to survive.”

(more)

## **P. 2 Newest Y Links 2 Learning Center Opens at South Orlando YMCA**

The Y operates another Links 2 Learning Center at the Tangelo Park Y and is seeking additional sponsors and partners to further expand the program.

In addition to previously mentioned partners, other program sponsors include Chris Barley, the Edward T. Bedford Foundation, Dona and Fred Tannler, Brad Brewer Golf Academy, Dr. Dorsey and OMYGA, Microsoft, Orange Appeal Magazine, Orange County Government, Orange County Parks & Recreation, Orange County Public Schools, Orange County National, Professional Golfers Career College, Rollins College Women's Golf Team, Shape and Sport, Andrea Doddato and Swingbyte.

For more information about Y Links 2 Learning, please contact YMCA Development Director Julie von Weller at (407) 895-8677 or email [jvonweller@cfymca.org](mailto:jvonweller@cfymca.org).

### **About the YMCA of Central Florida**

The YMCA of Central Florida is one of the area's largest nonprofits committed to strengthening the local communities it serves. It is a diverse organization of men, women and children joined by a shared commitment to nurturing the potential of kids, promoting healthy living and fostering a sense of social responsibility. Each day 25,000 Central Florida residents are impacted by the Y when a mentor inspires a child, individuals make healthy choices and a community comes together for common good. In 2012, this YMCA Association of over 1,800 employees across 6 Florida counties impacted over 225,000 residents and invested, during a down economy, \$10.2 million in its local communities through neighborhood improvement projects. Also, this Y provided \$9.2 million in financial assistance to children and families that resulted in lasting personal and social change.

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