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Contact:

Tongelia Milton
754.312.4118 office
407.427.6953 cell
tmilton@ymcasouthflorida.org

YMCA of South Florida to change lives by building new Barbara and Philip Wong Aquatic Center at South Dade YMCA

YMCA and community raise funds for new pool to make kids safer around water and prevent drownings

[SOUTH DADE COUNTY, November 27, 2018] – The YMCA of South Florida is moving forward with a plan to build an aquatic center at the South Dade YMCA Family Center, to be called the Barbara and Philip Wong Aquatic Center, thanks to the generous naming gift from Barbara and Philip Wong. The Wong Aquatic Center will enable the Y to offer swim lessons and water safety education so that children and families in South Dade will learn to swim, be safe and have the opportunity to grow and thrive.

“With so many bodies of water, drowning is a serious issue in South Florida,” said Sheryl A. Woods, President & CEO of the YMCA of South Florida. “But, drowning is preventable. That’s why the Y is dedicated to making sure that ALL children have the opportunity to learn how to swim and that ALL families are educated about how to keep their loved ones safe in and around water – regardless of their ability to pay.”

Here’s why it matters:

- Florida leads the nation in drowning deaths of children under the age of 4 and is 2nd for children ages 5 – 12
- Miami-Dade and Broward counties lead the nation in child drownings
- Child drowning incidents increased by 20% in 2017 in Florida
- children die every day as a result of drowning
- 88% of youth drowning incidents occur under adult supervision
- 40% of youth drowning incidents occur within 6.5 feet of safety
- For every fatal drowning every year, there are 10-15 nonfatal drownings, which can change families’ lives forever and result in high medical costs
- Formal swim lesson can reduce the likelihood of drowning by 88%

The new Wong Aquatic Center will include a lap pool and a shallow entry pool, as well as a water slide, splash n’ play features and amphitheater seating. It will impact over 18,000 people on an annual basis through its aquatics programs and services. In addition to offering life-saving swimming lessons and drowning prevention programs, it will also provide:

- Swim team programming – recreational and competition;
- Fitness and lap swim programming for all ages;

- Exercise and social opportunities for active older adults, adults with limited mobility, and individuals with special needs;
- Lifeguard training and certification opportunities;
- A space for events and social gatherings to bring families and the South Dade community together.

Having raised \$1,250,000 to date, thanks to the Wongs and other generous donors, the YMCA of South Florida is seeking to raise an additional \$2,250,000 through its Let's Dive In and Build it Together! Campaign to build the Barbara and Philip Wong Aquatic Center by Summer 2019.

The support of the entire community is needed in order to make the Wong Aquatic Center a reality. Any gift, no matter the size, is important and helps make an impact. For information about naming opportunities or for any questions, please contact Kadi Tarlecky, Executive Director, South Dade YMCA Family Center, at (305) 254-0310 or ktarlecky@ymcasouthflorida.org.

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About the YMCA of South Florida

The Y is a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Every day, the Y works hard to build healthy, confident, connected and secure children, adults, families and communities through over 200 afterschool, preschool, special needs, sports, camp and youth programs, family centers, and senior health outreach sites. To learn more, visit www.ymcaofsouthflorida.org, connect on Facebook or Twitter, or call a Y near you.