



**For Immediate Release**

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### **YMCA Recognizes North Lawndale and Austin Mentors**

Chicago, IL (January 12, 2007)-- The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, a participant in January's National Mentoring Month campaign, will recognize mentors in the North Lawndale and Austin communities for their service to area youth. The event will be held Jan. 26 at Moretti's Restaurant, 1645 W. Jackson Blvd. in Chicago.

National Mentoring Month 2007 is a month-long campaign dedicated to recruiting caring adult mentors for America's youth. Research has shown that programs that rely on volunteer mentors can play a powerful role in reducing drug abuse and youth violence, while greatly enhancing a young person's prospects for leading a healthy and productive life.

"When people in the community, youth and mentors alike, feel valued, it makes their community stronger. We're a proud participant and encourage others to get involved. We can make a difference," said Stephen S. Cole, president and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago.

More than 450 youth have participated in Y Pals Mentoring since it began more than 10 years ago. The number of participants has increased from 35 to 90 over the past three years when the YMCA was awarded a National Mentoring Grant from the US Department of Education.

Hilda Marshall, a Y Pals mentor for the last seven years, shares, "Everybody isn't born with the same chances. That is why it is so important for each of us to give back."

"Anytime we can pair a youth with an adult that exemplifies positive attributes, we create a lasting relationship. Mentors gain so much for this experience. It's a two-way street for growth, learning and friendships," said Kim George, Program Director and mentor at the North Lawndale YMCA.

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is committed to recruiting mentors for North Lawndale and Austin youth. To learn more about the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago's Y Pals Mentoring Program and how to become a mentor, please contact Kimberly George at 773-638-0773.

#### **About the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago**

*The North Lawndale YMCA is a branch within the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. Through its 43 centers and more than 100 extension sites, the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago helps children learn and grow, teaches young people to lead, brings families closer, and encourages individual health and well-being. The fourth largest non-profit in Chicago and one of the largest human services organizations in the nation, YMCA programs impact hundreds of thousands of lives annually, helping to strengthen neighborhoods and respond to community needs across Chicagoland. To learn more, visit [www.ymcachgo.org](http://www.ymcachgo.org).*

#### **About National Mentoring Month**

*For additional information on National Mentoring Month or to become a mentor, please call 1-888-432-MENTOR or visit [www.mentoring.org](http://www.mentoring.org).*

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