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YMCA OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO OPENS NEW YMCA TO PROVIDE HOPE TO STRUGGLING COMMUNITY

Kelly Hall YMCA Opens in West Humboldt Park

CHICAGO-January 15, 2009- His Eminence Francis Cardinal George and Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr. led a grand opening ceremony today for the new Kelly Hall YMCA located at 824 N. Hamlin Avenue in West Humboldt Park. The facility is the first new YMCA to open in Chicagoland in almost three years. This project represents the collaborative efforts of the YMCA, the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

"The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is so pleased to be coming to West Humboldt Park, a community with many needs," said Stephen S. Cole, president and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. "It is essential that organizations work collaboratively in these trying times to meet increasing needs and continue providing vital human services in low-income, high-risk communities."

With the help of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the YMCA was able to renovate Kelly Hall, the former recreation center for the Our Lady of the Angels School.

"The Church is present in many ways in the neighborhoods because religion is central to human life," said His Eminence Francis Cardinal George. "I am grateful to the YMCA for their partnership in bringing new life to the West Humboldt Park neighborhood."

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago invested \$2.4 million in the 20,000-square-foot facility. The new YMCA will provide a safe haven for the community and a wide range of services, including after-school programs for neighborhood children, gang intervention services, activities for seniors, a new food pantry stocked by the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and a computer lab and fitness center for all residents.

"The Kelly Hall YMCA is a great example of people and organizations working together to help a struggling community," said Alderman Walter Burnett, Jr. "The facility will go a long way toward addressing the needs in West Humboldt Park and bringing opportunity and hope to local residents."

Statistics indicate that West Humboldt Park has become one of the poorest and most crime-ridden neighborhoods in Chicago. According to the Chapin Hall Center for Children, more than 50 percent of children in West Humboldt Park live below the poverty line. The greater Humboldt Park area also had the third highest homicide rate and fifth highest crime rate in Chicago, according to the 2008 Chicago Police Department crime summary.

In order to help revitalize West Humboldt Park, the Archdiocese of Chicago opened the Mission of Our Lady of the Angels in 2005 to bring charitable services to families in one of the most underprivileged and undeserved communities. The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago approached the Archdiocese to renovate Kelly Hall into a full-service YMCA.

Kelly Hall was originally built in 1968 as a memorial to the victims of the Our Lady of the Angels School fire on December 1, 1958. It has been unused since 2001.

About the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

Through its 65 locations 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.

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