



CONTACT:  
Michelle Valmond  
Jasculca/Terman and Associates, Inc.  
312/573-5491 (O)  
312/933-7594 (C)  
[michelle\\_valmond@jtpr.com](mailto:michelle_valmond@jtpr.com)

## **YMCA OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO OPENS NEW DAY CARE CENTER**

*Jeanne Kenney YMCA Day Care Center Opens in Auburn Gresham*

**CHICAGO-March 31, 2009-** Commissioner Mary Ellen Caron of the Chicago Department of Family and Support Services led the grand opening ceremonies today for the new Jeanne Kenney YMCA Day Care Center located at 7600 S. Parnell Avenue in the Auburn-Gresham neighborhood. Commissioner Caron also took time to read to local children and got a chance to tour the new center, which is housed within the SOS Children's Village Chicago's community center.

"The economic downturn continues to strain Chicago's families," said Caron. "Whether a parent is expected to work longer hours or is unemployed and needs support while searching for a new job, quality child care programs, such as those offered at Jeanne Kenney YMCA Day Care Center, give parents peace of mind and the assistance they need to succeed in the workplace.

Caron continued, "We applaud the YMCA for its commitment to serving communities in need like Auburn-Gresham."

The state-of-the-art center will serve 76 children, with programs for ages six-weeks to five-years-old and their families. It will feature multiple activity rooms, offering separated spaces for infants/toddlers, as well as for children up to five-years-old. The center will also have upgraded playground equipment, offer healthy snacks and meals and provide care for children with disabilities. Additionally, families will receive a free YMCA membership after enrollment.

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"We are stepping in to fill a need for child care services at a time when other organizations cannot afford to expand," said Stephen S. Cole, president and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago. "Working with the Chicago SOS Children's Village to open this new day care center is another example of how we at the Y are looking to work collaboratively with other organizations in these trying times. We're committed to meeting increasing needs and continuing to provide vital human services in the communities that need them."

Auburn-Gresham is a family-oriented neighborhood on Chicago's Far South Side. Since the mid-1990's, there has been a strong movement to revitalize the neighborhood, which suffered from business flight in the 1970's and 80's. Attracting young families with children back to the neighborhood is a key component of efforts to restore the neighborhood to its former prominence.

To that end, Alderman LaTasha Thomas has worked hard to bring investment back to the neighborhood, including the SOS Children's Village, which opened at 76<sup>th</sup> and Parnell in 2004. SOS is a unique community of homes for foster children developed through an \$8 million investment from the City of Chicago, through its Safe Homes for Kids program. The new Jeanne Kenney center is a component of the effort to provide day care, family support services, job skills and counseling help, enhancing the lives of the Village's children, parents and neighbors.

"At SOS Children's Villages Illinois, we build families," said Tim McCormick, chief executive officer of SOS Children's Villages Illinois. "We're so pleased to have the Y and this new day care center here to aid in our mission to provide a stable home in a supportive, community environment designed to help children in need grow into caring, productive, self-reliant adults."

The day care center is named in honor of Jeanne Kenney through a generous grant from the Duchossois Family Foundation. The center honors the lifelong friendship between Beverly Duchossois and Jeanne Kenney, mother of SOS Board Vice President Lynn Kiley, who spent their childhood together near the SOS Chicago Children's Village.

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The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is one of the largest licensed child care providers in the city, serving more than 900 children ages six weeks to 12 years old annually at 13 locations in the Chicago area. In addition to the Jeanne Kenney YMCA Day Care Center, the Y also recently opened the new Dr. Effie O. Ellis YMCA Day Care center in East Garfield Park.

**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](http://www.ymcachgo.org).

**About SOS Children's Villages Illinois**

SOS Children's Villages Illinois is a not for profit, licensed child welfare agency that provides permanency and homes for children who are wards of the state because they have been neglected, abused, orphaned or abandoned. It provides a viable alternative to traditional foster care. Children who come to live at SOS stay with their biological brothers and sisters in a private home. A full-time, professionally trained foster parent lives with them, and the whole Village gives them support, compassion and strength. SOS Children Villages has grown to become the largest non-denominational children's care provider in the world. Today, 450 Villages in 133 nations are home to more than 60,000 children. To learn more, visit [www.sosillinois.org](http://www.sosillinois.org).

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