



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GALOWICH FAMILY YMCA AWARDED \$5,000 GRANT FROM JCPENNEY AFTERSCHOOL FUND

FUNDING TO HELP ENGAGE MORE YOUTH DURING AFTERSCHOOL HOURS AND INCREASE ACCESS FOR UNDERSERVED YOUTH

JOLIET, IL 12/1/09 – As the school year begins, parents searching for safe quality afterschool programs will soon get some much needed assistance. Thanks to a \$5,000 grant from The JCPenney Afterschool Fund, the GALOWICH FAMILY YMCA will have the opportunity to help more children participate in safe, life-enriching afterschool programs.

This grant award is specifically targeted to help YMCAs provide financial assistance to new and previously enrolled students (grades K-6) who cannot afford to participate in afterschool program because of financial circumstances. This gift is one of 287 similar grants being awarded by the JCPenney Afterschool Fund to YMCAs around the country.

“The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is firmly committed to supporting youth-serving organizations, like the YMCA, that are dedicated to providing safe, meaningful programs during the crucial hours of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., when studies show that youth are at a greater risk of involvement in crime, drug abuse and other destructive behaviors,” said Jodi Gibson, president of the JCPenney Afterschool Fund. “By collaborating with the YMCA, we can ensure that more at-risk children across the nation have access to afterschool programs that will inspire them to be smart, strong and socially responsible.”

Today with hundreds of afterschool programs across the country, the nation's YMCAs are a leading resource for parents seeking a safe, enriching place for their children to go after school. YMCA afterschool programs focus on the holistic development of youth, which include elements that promote health and well-being, social skill development, emotional development, artistry, character development, sports and service. In the Joliet, Shorewood and Minooka areas, the GALOWICH FAMILY YMCA serves 191 children in nineteen different locations, both on-site at the schools, as well as the Galowich facility located on Houbolt Road.

"This generous support from the JCPenney Afterschool Fund strengthens our efforts to give the working parents of these three areas peace of mind, and their children a place to thrive," states Laurie Halaska, Executive Director . "The Galowich Family YMCA has a longstanding commitment to youth development, and providing a safe, enriching place for young people to go afterschool."

The JCPenney Afterschool Fund has supported YMCA afterschool programming since 1999.

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ABOUT THE JCPENNEY AFTERSCHOOL FUND: The JCPenney Afterschool Fund is a charitable organization committed to providing children in need with access to life-enriching afterschool programs that inspire children to be smart, strong and socially responsible. To date, JCPenney and the JCPenney Afterschool Fund have contributed more than \$70 million to local afterschool programs in every JCPenney community through partnerships with the YMCA of the USA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, National 4-H and United Way of America. For more information, visit www.jcpenneyafterschool.org for more information.

ABOUT THE YMCA: The nation's 2,686 YMCAs, which serve 21 million people each year, including nearly 10 million children under the age of 18. YMCAs respond to critical social needs by drawing on their collective strength as one of America's largest not-for-profit community service organizations. Through a variety of programs and services focused on the holistic development of children and youth, family strengthening, and health and well-being for all, YMCAs unite men, women and children of all ages, faiths, backgrounds, abilities and income levels. From urban areas to small towns, YMCAs have proudly served America's communities for nearly 160 years by building healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Visit www.jolietymca.org to find your local YMCA.