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# Press Release



YMCA

We build strong kids,  
strong families, strong communities.

## **YMCA of Eastern Union County's Elizabeth Branch Awarded 2007 JC Penney Afterschool Fund Grant**

*YMCA to provide \$20,000 in financial assistance to local families in need who require school age child care at schools in Elizabeth*

(Elizabeth, NJ)-The YMCA of Eastern Union County is pleased to announce that its Elizabeth Branch has been awarded a 2007 JCPenney Afterschool Fund grant in the amount of \$10,938, similar to the one recently awarded to our sister branch at 5pts -Union. The Elizabeth Branch is one of 320 YMCA's nationwide to be selected to receive this grant and will match the award with funds from our operating budget and our Annual Strong Kids Campaign to provide over \$20,000 in scholarships to local families in need who would otherwise be unable to send their children to the YMCA's afterschool program or will be unable to continue participating due to increased financial hardship. The first 19 children to receive a scholarship using this funding will also receive a JC Penney gift card to be used to purchase school clothing and supplies.

As part of the largest not-for-profit child care provider in the United States, the YMCA helps build strong kids, strong families and strong communities by providing affordable care to low and moderate income families who require child care in order to work, go to school, or begin a job training program. During the 2006-2007 school year, the Elizabeth Branch provided school age child care to 307 children ages 5-12 years old.

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In collaboration with the Elizabeth public schools, the Elizabeth Branch offers high quality school age child care programs that offer a balance between academic enrichment and healthy, recreational activities for children. Daily curriculum includes creative, educational, and recreational activities, a nutritional snack, as well as a study period in which children can receive homework assistance. All program activities aim to teach and reinforce the YMCA's four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility while encouraging the development of a healthy lifestyle.

The YMCA's afterschool programs take place in the Elizabeth elementary schools from 3:00pm-6:30 PM, Monday-Friday, when school is in session.

"Many parents come to us desperate for child care services. They sometimes work two or three part-time jobs just to maintain the bare necessities for their families... "Being this is the case, it is difficult to afford child care and many of them request financial assistance," said Alma Velez, administrative assistant for the afterschool program. Even though we do already offer subsidized child care through the state Division of Family Development and 4Cs (Community Coordinated Child Care), many of our families fall behind in being able to make their co-payments due to diminishing income and prioritizing other household expenses," Velez said. "Even though we do already offer subsidized child care through the state Division of Family Development and 4C's (Community Coordinated Child Care), many of our families fall behind in being able to make their co-payments due to diminishing income and prioritizing other household expenses," added Velez.

"At the Elizabeth Branch, some of the money will also be used to help offset the costs of our annual Teen Membership, for teens through the age of 17. The teen program currently has more than 200 teens enrolled. The Teen Center is open Mondays through Thursdays, 3:00pm-9:00pm, Fridays-3:00pm-10:00pm and on Saturdays, from 5:00pm-10:00pm," said Angelo Otero, Senior Program Director for the YMCA of Eastern Union County's Elizabeth Branch.