

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October, 2008

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YMCA OF EASTERN UNION COUNTY’S FIVE POINTS BRANCH LAUNCHES “HEALTHY U” AFTER SCHOOL INITIATIVE

Five Points Branch kicks-off an obesity prevention program in Union and Kenilworth in conjunction with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey and the YMCA New Jersey State Alliance

(Union, NJ) – The YMCA of Eastern Union County is pleased to announce that its Five Points Branch has joined 359 YMCA’s across New Jersey to implement *Healthy U*, an afterschool obesity prevention program, sponsored and supported by Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey.

In an effort to combat the childhood obesity pandemic, the YMCA New Jersey State Alliance has teamed up with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey’s Horizon Foundation to implement the *Healthy U* initiative in YMCA afterschool programs throughout the state. *Healthy U* was developed by the Horizon Foundation and is based on the *Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) Kid’s Club* curriculum, an award-winning national program with 15 years of proven research documenting its success in reducing childhood obesity.

Designed for grades K-5, the *CATCH, Healthy U* program is comprised of various health and wellness components including nutrition education and physical activity. The curriculum intends to build an alliance between parents, teachers, YMCA staff and community partners to teach children and their families fun ways to become active and develop healthy lifestyles.

The Horizon Foundation awarded the Five Points Branch a \$1,000 grant that was used to train YMCA staff and purchase equipment necessary to facilitate the *Healthy U* program at all of its afterschool programs in elementary schools throughout Union and Kenilworth.

The Five Points Branch launched the *Healthy U* program on Monday, September 29th and hosted an Open House for parents and families of afterschool participants on Friday, October 3rd that showcased the *CATCH, Healthy U* program and equipment.

“The Center for Disease Control reports that 33% of all children across the nation are currently obese,” said Anna Talley-Schuetz, School Age Child Care Director. “The Five Points Branch and Horizon Blue Cross & Blue Shield of New Jersey understand that this is not just a statistic but a true emergency that must be addressed now.”

Serving 300 children afterschool programs throughout Union and Kenilworth, the YMCA has the ability and expertise needed to help fight this very serious health crisis and improve the lives of the families we serve.” said Melynda Mileski, Five Points Branch Executive. “Through our partnership with Horizon Blue Cross Blues Shield and the YMCA New Jersey State Alliance, the Five Points Branch is driven to instill the values of health and well-being in the children and families of the communities we serve for years to come.”

The YMCA of Eastern Union County’s Five Points Branch is a not-for-profit community service membership organization working to meet the health and social service needs of the children, men and women of Hillside, Kenilworth, Roselle, Roselle Park, Union and Vauxhall. Our school age child care program is one of many outlets the YMCA uses to achieve our vision of building strong kids, strong families and strong communities and to reinforce our four core values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility.

Should you need any additional information on the YMCA of Eastern Union County, the Five Points Branch and/or our programs, please feel free to contact Megan Appello at mappello@ymcaeuc.org.

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