

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NAPERVILLE MAYOR DONATES \$15,000
TO YMCA'S STRONG KIDS CAMPAIGN

(Naperville, IL) -- Mayor A. George Pradel was greeted with energetic applause as he stopped by the Heritage YMCA Group's Corporate Board of Director's meeting last Friday morning, January 19th on his way to another meeting at 7:00am. As a long-time supporter of the YMCA, the mayor came to be recognized for his donation of \$15,000 to the annual Strong Kids Campaign. The funds are part of the money raised at the Mayor's Golf Outing last fall on a very rainy day.

"You all do such a great job when it comes to kids and families and thank you for helping our young kids in the community. The City Council and I are so pleased with all the YMCA does for the community," the mayor said with passion.

The YMCA Strong Kids Campaign raises over \$400,000 annually and begins in February each year. The funds raised enables the YMCA to provide fee assistance to children and families in need. "We never turn anyone away because they lack the financial resources to pay for a Heritage YMCA Group membership or program. This is another very important fund-raising year for the YMCA, and we are appreciative of the overwhelming support the mayor provides to the YMCA," said Walter Johnson, Vice President Resource Development.

"We are in the business of changing peoples lives. We are in the business of instilling values in kids today so they can make better decisions tomorrow. Our job is to develop leaders with character so our children and their children can live in a world of peace and tolerance. We are in the business of putting heroes in the lives of kids in every YMCA program at every branch and program site, everyday," explained Tom Beerntsen, CEO/President for the Heritage YMCA.

"I could ramble on about the number of kids and adults enrolled in YMCA programs, and many would not be able to participate had it not been for the Strong Kids Campaign. Each day 750 children attend the Y Safe 'n Sound before- and after-school program at 35 sites across three school districts, over 3350 children enrolled in swim lessons, another 133 swimmers representing 6 area high schools swam on the Aurora Sharks Swim Team, 178 students from seven area high schools participated in Y Youth & Government, over 2100 kids attended Y Camps, 414 dads and their children enjoyed the adventures of Y-Guides, Y-Princesses and Trailblazers, 129 children are attending the Early Education and Child Care program at the Aurora YMCA and enrollment is rapidly growing at our new YMCA Children's Early Learning Campus next to the Fry Family YMCA, and the YMCA Naperville Family Resource Center attends to 30 to 50 kids per day and the list goes on and on," said Tom Beerntsen, CEO/President for the Heritage YMCA.

YMCA events surrounding the Strong Kids Campaign create great awareness for the YMCA. We need people to understand our story and all of the good work the YMCA does for the community and to get

more involved. This year's annual Strong Kids Campaign will officially kick off on February 14th with a breakfast and special guest speaker at the Naperville Country Club. The Y is always looking for volunteers to work on the campaign.

For more information about volunteering or to make a donation, please contact Walter Johnson, Vice President Resource Development, at 630.420.8242 or visit the Web site at www.heritageymca.org.

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