



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Amy McNeil, Director of Communications
E-mail: a.mcneil@ymcanwnc.org
Phone: 336-777-6252
Fax: 336-777-6345

**YMCA Helps Parents Take the Lead on Healthy Living in the Home,
Teaches Children About Nutrition**

MOCKSVILLE, NC – April 13, 2009 – As childhood obesity rates continue to rise, healthy lifestyle choices learned in the home can have a stronger influence over children than places outside the home and help reverse the trend. According to national YMCA experts the habits and activities that make up a family's routine at home have the power to stay with your children for a lifetime. By taking the lead, parents can set an example of healthy living that can influence children to lead healthier lives as well.

"Parents are the primary role model, and children look to them as an example of how to live healthier. Parents can determine how families eat, how much time they spend together and even how they play together," says Valerie Lawson, Director of YMCA Healthy Family Home, an initiative that supports families as they try to establish healthier habits at home. "The home opens up possibilities for positive change that other places cannot provide – it's where habits are formed."

Making positive lifestyle changes can be difficult at first. Often, parents need tips and reinforcements to make lifestyle changes manageable. The Davie Family YMCA is here to help give families the support they need to get started. Here are five simple tips families can make today to dramatically improve their home's health:

- Make water the primary beverage at home
- Eat more meals together as a family
- Start walking
- Limit screen time to less than two hours per day (television, video games, and computer) meals should not be consumed in front of a screen
- Provide each child with one-on-one time every day

To support families in making healthful changes in spirit, mind and body, the Davie Family YMCA is offering wellness classes for the entire family. In light of the recent study on childhood obesity in Davie County, the YMCA launched a new swimming and health program specifically geared towards children. Called Aquanauts, the program is open to children who are potty trained through age 12. Staff take children to the pool for either open swim or swim lessons, depending upon what parents choose. After children swim for 30 minutes, they change and receive a healthy snack as well as age-appropriate nutrition information.

"This program is a great, low-key way for children to learn to swim and learn about healthy eating choices," says Lindsay Pegg, Wellness and Aquatics Director for the YMCA.

To find more tips on how to make your home healthier, visit www.healthyfamilyhome.org. For more information about wellness programs for families and children, contact Lindsay Pegg at 336-751-9622 or l.pegg@ymcanwnc.org.

About YMCA of Northwest North Carolina

When the first YMCA was established in 1844 in London, England, its mission was to promote positive Christian values as well as healthy behaviors and activities. Today, the YMCA movement has spread to more than 130 countries around the world, supporting and influencing the lives of millions of men, women and children of all backgrounds. The YMCA of Northwest North Carolina association, a United Way agency, has been serving Winston-Salem and the surrounding areas since 1888. We have created a tradition of enhancing the lives of people in our community through an ever-growing list of programs and opportunities. We're proud to serve the people of

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Northwest North Carolina by helping to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Our association currently serves more than 51,000 YMCA members and more than 100,000 people with our memberships and programs. The YMCA of Northwest North Carolina has adopted Healthy Community 2015 initiatives to prepare youth and teens to succeed, strengthen and support families, develop caring communities and adopt healthy living habits. The YMCA offers financial assistance for memberships and programs through the Open Doors Program. Learn more about the YMCA of Northwest North Carolina at <http://www.ymcanwnc.org>. For more information on its many branches and services, visit <http://www.ymcanwnc.org> or contact Amy McNeil, Director of Communications, at a.mcneil@ymcanwnc.org or 336-777-6252.

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Mission: Helping people reach their God-given potential in spirit, mind and body.

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