



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Barbara A. Bettin, President/CEO
YMCA of Lincoln, Nebraska
216 N 11TH ST, SUITE 400
LINCOLN NE 68508-1401
(402) 434-9205
bbettin@ymcalincoln.org

LINCOLN YMCA UNVEILS HEALTHY FAMILY HOME PROGRAM TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

(Lincoln, Nebraska) April 9, 2008— The YMCA of the USA and Eli Lilly and Company have partnered to create the Healthy Family Home program to help the entire family work together at home to make healthier choices and live healthier lives. The program launches nationwide this Saturday during YMCA Healthy Kids® Day fairs at more than 1,700 YMCAs including the YMCA of Lincoln's Cooper location at 6767 South 14th Street.

“The family home is the place that defines, creates and predicts a family’s lifelong health and well-being,” said Barb Bettin, President/CEO of the Lincoln YMCA. “Healthy Family Home empowers families to create a home environment that supports healthy living. It’s a program that can work for any kind of family in any kind of home, regardless of whether the family lives near a YMCA.”

Healthy Family Home provides families with practical, flexible tools and support for making lasting changes for a healthier, happier life. Actions aimed at the whole family that lead to small, sustained

YMCA Metropolitan Office • 216 North 11th Street, Suite 400 • Lincoln, Nebraska 68508-1401
402-434-9205 • fax: 402-434-9208 • www.ymcalincoln.org

YMCA mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

changes—like eating better, getting exercise and connecting as a family—are proven to have a long-term impact.

“We are a nation struggling with obesity and other chronic diseases that are lifestyle-related and often preventable,” said Kristine Courtney, M.D., an internist and Director of Corporate Health Services at Lilly. “Lilly is proud to support the Healthy Family Home program, which jumpstarts and supports a family’s efforts to be healthy in practical ways.”

Healthy Family Home Starter Kits Offer Tips, Ideas Free on Website

The “Healthy Family Home Starter Kit,” a free guide with tips for healthy living, will be available April 12th at the Cooper YMCA Healthy Kids Day event and on www.HealthyFamilyHome.org. The Healthy Family Home program is designed to work in any home and in any community, and lets families pick the actions and health goals that make the most sense for them. A sample from the Healthy Family Home Starter Kit:

- 1) **Make family time.** Sit down as a family for one meal a day. Research has shown that family meals are more nutritious than “solo” meals and kids who eat with their family end up making healthier snack choices.
- 2) **Sneak in more physical activity.** Plan a weekly family breakfast where you are the transportation. Skip the car, bus or train and ride bikes, walk or jog/run.

- 3) Get more fruits and vegetables in your diet. Have all family members identify their favorite fruit and write each one down on a list. Then fill a family fruit bowl with those fruits and keep it on the counter. This way everyone in the family will have easy access to their favorite fruit when they're looking for a snack.
- 4) Make getting exercise fun. Turn up the music and do chores together (clean the house, wash windows, do laundry, etc.).

Lincoln YMCA Weigh Cool® Initiative and Nutrition Seminars

Through a collaborative project called Weigh Cool® with the Community Health Endowment and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation, the “Healthy Family Home Starter Kits” will be distributed at the Healthy Kids Day event on Saturday April 12, and this spring to YMCA Youth Sports teams.

The Lincoln YMCA is also sponsoring a monthly series of nutritional seminars that focus on rebuking myths and building a factual groundwork for helping families make sound nutritional choices.

The April seminar is titled *Why Diets Don't Work: The Facts About Diets and Weight Loss Supplements*.

The May seminar is *My Pyramid Basic Training: The Facts About Calories and How Much Food is Right For You*

June will address *Healthy Summer Eating and Snacking*,

July & August: *Kids Cooking the Healthy Way*—workshops for youth ages 6-11

Seminars are free to YMCA families and members, and there's a \$10 fee for non-members/families. To register or to learn dates and times for each workshop visit ymcalincoln.org or call the YMCA nearest you.

National Survey: Parents Unaware of Toll of Obesity on Children's Lifespan

According to an online survey conducted by Harris Interactive® on behalf of YMCA of the USA and Lilly, parents spend more time worrying more about their children's health than their own (48 percent versus 33 percent), yet most believe their children's generation will live longer than their own (57 percent said longer; 32 percent said about the same; 11 percent said shorter).

The survey also showed that most parents know what behaviors are elements of a healthier lifestyle, yet many just cannot seem to put that knowledge into practice. For example, 91 percent of parents know their family should eat a balanced diet, yet only 56 percent say their household does, and 93 percent know their family should exercise regularly, yet only 45 percent say their household does. While 59 percent of parents say that everyone in the family knows what they should be doing to lead a healthy lifestyle, only 23 percent say everyone in the family practices good health habits.

The top five barriers to putting what is preached into practice are lack of time (48 percent), lack of motivation (46 percent), lack of willpower (45 percent), lack of money (36 percent) and lack of participation from some members of the family (29 percent).

Experts: Reverse Obesity Trend With Bite-Sized Changes in American Home Life

Experts in public health say that while genetics may play a role in obesity, the gene pool has not changed enough over recent decades to explain the dramatic rise in obesity. Rather, it's the nation's gradual move, "quarter step by quarter step," toward less physical activity and more food that is processed or high in saturated fat that has pushed up obesity rates, says Wesley Alles, Ph.D., Director of the Health Improvement Program at Stanford University and an adviser to Activate America®, the YMCA's response to our nation's growing health crisis.

That trend can be reversed, quarter step by quarter step, through programs like the YMCA-Lilly Healthy Family Home. Seemingly small but extremely manageable changes like adding a fruit or vegetable to every meal or getting the entire family together for a 20-minute walk around the block three times a week add up and make a difference, experts say.

"For all the interventions at school and elsewhere, kids do most of their eating and physical activity at home," says Jean Wiecha, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist at Harvard School of Public Health and an adviser to Activate America. "Kids are always observing their parents and their siblings and this is how

they get an idea of what behavior is considered normal. The reverse is also true: children can affect grown-ups' behavior and health by influencing what foods the family eats and what activities they engage in. The home has a circular dynamic that is very different from what takes place in other settings like school or in the doctor's office.”

Activate America®

Activate America® is the YMCA's response to our nation's growing health crisis. YMCAs are redefining themselves and engaging communities across the country to better support Americans of all ages who are struggling to achieve and maintain well-being of spirit, mind and body. Visit ymcalincoln.org to learn more about Activate America® and the Lincoln YMCA

YMCA of the USA

YMCA of the USA is the national resource office for the nation's 2,663 YMCAs, which serve nearly 20.2 million people each year, including 9.4 million children under the age of 18. Through a variety of programs and services focused on the holistic development of children and youth, health and well-being for all and family strengthening, 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.

###

