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CONTACT: Simon Public Relations Group  
Mike Guzzo, 215-545-4715 x25

YOUTH PROGRAMS AT LOCAL YMCA HELP MAKE ABINGTON  
ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S '100 BEST COMMUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'

*America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth Recognizes  
Communities Dedicated to Youth Development*

ABINGTON, Pa. – February 5, 2007 – Dozens of teens gather to brainstorm a plan to clean-up trash in the neighborhood. Students are meeting with adult mentors to discuss career plans while others are piling in to take part in after school activities. A mother drops off her toddlers into the hands of well-trained baby sitters and a group of soon-to-be lifeguards are in the pool practicing water safety. This is a typical day at the Abington YMCA, which is why it played a major role in Abington being recognized as one of the country's *100 Best Communities for Young People*.

Chosen by America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth, *100 Best Communities for Young People* showcases areas with innovative efforts to make children a priority. Abington – with the support of educational, fitness and social programs offered at its YMCA – will help inspire cities and communities nationwide to take action on behalf of young people. In cities, suburbs, small towns and counties across the country, this annual competition is leading communities to assess their efforts, work more effectively together for young people and share best practices.

“America's Promise and the Abington YMCA both place the development of youth at the top of our priority lists,” says Julie Swarts, the Abington Y's executive director. “It doesn't surprise me that Abington was recognized as one of the country's best communities for young people since it has long provided a healthy and resourceful environment for the local youth. The staff at the YMCA couldn't be more proud to have contributed to this honor.”

The Abington YMCA reaches out to children of all ages with an extensive list of programs ranging from health and fitness to childcare to career mentoring. Y Achievers, for example, is a mentor program which pairs teens in grades seven through 12 with successful professionals from the Greater Philadelphia region business community. Another program for teens is Y Leaders Club which inspires its members to become active in their community through volunteerism, allowing them to create their

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own community service projects.

Close to 300 students find a safe haven in the Y's after school programs while hundreds of mothers find trust in using its full-day, before and after school childcare. There's also lifeguard training, dance classes, "Short Sports" – athletic leagues for kids as young as three-years old – gymnastics, teen weight lifting, summer camps and much more.

America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth grew out of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future in 1997. At that gathering in Philadelphia, Presidents Clinton, Bush, Carter and Ford, with Nancy Reagan representing President Reagan, challenged America to make children and youth a national priority. The presidents affirmed our special obligation as Americans (reaffirmed in 2001 by President George W. Bush) to keep five essential promises to young people: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others.

Located at 1073 Old York Road, the Abington YMCA is a vital home-away-from home for its members, a link to positive values and a place that strengthens minds, bodies and spirits through programs including full-day and after-school child care, summer camp, youth sports, teen leadership, Achievers and adult fitness. Throughout the Y, an emphasis is placed on building character through the values of caring, honesty, respect and responsibility. For more information, call 215-884-9622 or visit [www.abingtonymca.org](http://www.abingtonymca.org).

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