

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Greater Marco YMCA receives local and state awards for helping children in need**

NAPLES, Fla. (July 11, 2012) – Greater Marco Family YMCA recently received the “outstanding partner in education” award from the District School Board of Collier County. The Marco Y was also one of 79 Florida businesses to receive Florida Commissioner of Education’s 2012 Business Recognition Award for outstanding commitment to improving education by partnering with schools.

The awards recognize Marco YMCA’s summer camp and after-school programs for underprivileged and at-risk children in East and South Naples, where many families scrape by financially. For these kids, summer often means empty stomachs, loss of reading skills and too much idle time.

The Y received high marks for literacy and math components aligned with Collier County Public Schools’ curriculum and helping children get the extra support needed to be successful in school.

Funding for the programs came chiefly from Naples Children & Education Foundation, creators of Naples Winter Wine Festival. Since 2007, NCEF’s Marco Y grants have totaled nearly \$1.1 million. According to NCEF grant chair Karen Scott, “We pushed for academics to be part of the summer curriculum as a condition of our grants, and the Y moved the needle from dodge ball and swimming to educationally enriched summer classes and experiences.”

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Caption:

Marco YMCA’s Stephanie Pepper, Leslie Drake and Cindy Love; Donna Fiala, Collier County Commissioner, and Skip Merriam, YMCA board member.

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