



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Brenda Bennett
vice president of communications
YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY
405 297 7770 405 830 4371
bbennett@ymcaokc.org

The Y Hosts Wine Taste Event to Raise Awareness about International Programs

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (May 28, 2016) The YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY will host its tenth annual international wine taste event, A TASTE OF CULTURE; at Café do Brazil on Sunday, June 5. The event helps raise funds to support the Y's international partnerships with YMCAs in Belo Horizonte, Brazil; the Czech Republic; Valparaiso, Chile; the Mexican Federation of Ys; and the Sioux Indians.

Guests will dine on various appetizers and desserts from local restaurants and sample a variety of wines from around the world while enjoying music from award winning classical guitarist Edgar Cruz and entertainment from local dance troupes including Everything Goes Dance and the Yumari Folk Dancers.

Local restaurants that are donating to the event include Café Do Brazil, Stella's Modern Italian Cuisine, 1492 New Latin Cuisine, Gopuram Taste of India, VZD's, Meat Market Refectory, McNeillie's Public House, Fassler Hall, Gigglez Bar & Grill, Bossa Nova Bar, Brown's Bakery, Viceroy Grill, Basil Mediterranean Café, Czech Delights, Basil Mediterranean Café and Cous Cous Café. Dynamic Brands, E & J Gallo Winery, Glazer's and Paragon Brands will provide the wine.

YMCA' in the United States help young people develop cultural competencies; diverse populations connect to the community, and individuals around the world gain access to life-changing resources and support. As an interconnected global network, the Y has the resources and solutions to build bridges and help make communities stronger, both at home and abroad.

"At the Y, one of our primary focus areas is social responsibility and as such, we want to provide support to our neighbors, both here and abroad," said Kelly Kay, vice president and chief operating officer at the YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY. "The Y serves more than 45 million youth and families worldwide, and we want to do our part to help build great futures for all who come in contact with the Y."

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The YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City's international partnerships began in 1994, with programs being established in Brazil and Mexico, later expanding to include programs in Chile and the Czech Republic.

Currently, there are seventeen students from Brazil in Oklahoma City learning about American culture and leadership as YMCA International camp counselors. The students arrived in Oklahoma on May 20 and will be in Oklahoma through the end of August. During their stay, they will spend time at EARLYWINE PARK, NORTH SIDE, MITCH PARK and CHICKASHA YMCAs. Students will travel to YMCA CAMP CLASSEN in the Arbuckle's later this summer to experience the Ys resident camp.

For more information or to purchase tickets to the event, visit ymcaokc.org. For more information about the Y's international camp counselor program, contact Kelly Kay, vice president and COO at 405 297 7717 or kkay@ymcaokc.org.

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The Y

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the Oklahoma City Metro, 12 Ys engage 151,000 men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities across the country, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. www.ymcaokc.org.

YMCA OF BELO HORIZONTE, Brazil

The YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY has hosted 10-14 international camp counselors each summer since 1994. These outstanding young men and women commit to a year-long training program conducted by the Y in Brazil, then come to Oklahoma to spend their summer working as counselors in the Y's day and resident camping programs. The Y has also hosted interns through the multi-international leadership program, who spend their time learning various aspects of our Y to develop their leadership skills, which they can put into practice at their home Y in Brazil.

MEXICAN FEDERATION OF Ys

This relationship started in 1994 when the YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY conducted a penny drive campaign to support the Y in Juarez, Mexico. In 1996, a group of Y directors from Oklahoma City visited Juarez to assist in the restoration of a home for transient youth. The YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY has since joined the Border Initiative Coalition to help provide funding for such homes in Juarez and Piedras Negras, Mexico.

YMCA OF VALPARAISO, Chile

Volunteers and staff from the YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY made a trip to Valparaiso, in 1997, who already had an international program in place. The result of that visit verified the mutual interest in developing a partnership between the two cities and an agreement was signed with the intent to improve communication, conduct staff and volunteer exchange activities and identify ways to support program and project development. Since that time, several other Ys have joined the partnership and have become the funding source for the George Williams School, which is run by the Y in a village near Valparaiso. The George Williams School is the only source of education for the local children.

YMCA OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

The YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY began this partnership in 2005 when a member of the YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY's international committee learned of the need for recreational and sports equipment for the Czech summer camp program. The Y had been given a conference center in Alberice, located in the eastern Krkonose Mountains, offering summer camp and parent/child camping programs. Since that time we have also helped fund the Tensing music program of the Prague Y and in 2009, a staff member from the YMCA of Greater Oklahoma City traveled to the Czech Republic to conduct Adventure Guide Trainings for their staff. The camp now offers family camps and marriage seminars.

GENERAL CONVENTION OF SIOUX YMCA'S

Native American Indian YMCAs were first started in 1879, and today the Sioux Y in South Dakota is one of only two YMCAs remaining on Indian reservations. In 1994, the YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY began financial support of the Sioux Y, and over the years has collected and donated various sports equipment and supplies for their summer day camp and their resident camp at Camp Leslie Marrowbone, on the banks of Lake Oahe. International committee member, Bill Townsend has served on their board of trustees since the early 1990's, and in 2014 a group of staff from the YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY traveled there to help build cabins for Camp Leslie Marrowbone, while delivering 6 kayaks and 6 canoes for their program. The YMCA OF GREATER OKLAHOMA CITY is also funding 2 international camp counselors from Brazil to work in their program the summer.