



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT:

Angie Clawson
Director of Communications
YMCA of Metro Atlanta
angiec@ymcaatlanta.org
404.267.5335

YMCA of Metro Atlanta Receives \$4 Million Grant from

The Goizueta Foundation to Provide STEAM Learning in Underserved Communities

ATLANTA (June 5, 2017) – The YMCA of Metro Atlanta announced today that they have received a grant in the amount of \$4 million from The Goizueta Foundation. The grant will support the Y's goal of infusing science, technology, engineering, the arts and math (STEAM) into its early learning classrooms through a pilot program and will provide endowment support for the Summer Adventures in Learning (SAIL) program.

“This grant from the Goizueta Foundation will bring our vision of providing a continuum of STEAM programs to life, starting with our youngest students and continuing up through middle school,” said Ed Munster, President and CEO of the Y. “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to provide fun, hands-on STEAM learning opportunities to the children who can most benefit from this academic support.”

Recent studies show that exposing young children to STEAM has a significant impact on a child's entire spectrum of learning. From their earliest years, children interact with their peers and the world in ways that mimic best practices in STEAM education – through questioning, investigating, building, playing and more. However, if these skills are not encouraged and fostered, much of this natural disposition toward STEAM learning can fade. Unfortunately, many early learning programs are currently ill-equipped and lack the necessary training to focus on STEAM learning. As one of the largest providers of early learning in Atlanta, the Y has an opportunity to change this model. With the grant from The Goizueta Foundation, the Y will work to infuse STEAM into its early learning network through Head Start, traditional fee-for-service and partner programs changing the educational experience for more than 3,400 children, ages six weeks to five years.

In addition to Early Learning support, the grant will allow the Y to ensure that low-income children from Title 1 schools across metro Atlanta are able to participate in the SAIL program to prevent the summer learning loss that causes so many youth to fall behind academically.

The Y partnered with The Goizueta Foundation in 2014 to create SAIL. This transformative program is an intensive summer academic program designed around fun STEAM learning activities. It also gives children an opportunity to learn life skills like water safety and swimming, and to participate in other traditional day camp activities. Past participants—students and parents alike—note the significant impact of SAIL. Students have seen strong gains in reading and math skills and report increased confidence and success in school-time academics. The academic impact is lasting, and the long-term career potential is extraordinary.

Through SAIL, the Y has developed and proven a model of learning that meets the needs of elementary school children at risk of falling behind in school and engages them in interactive, educational activities not otherwise available to them. The gift from the Foundation to expand the endowment will sustain SAIL for years to come and serve hundreds of elementary-aged children each year.

Over the past 159 years, the Y has developed exceptional and research-based academic, enrichment (or leadership), and wellness programs. As the YMCA seeks to continuously improve upon and expand its offerings to the Atlanta community, it has identified the development and enhancement of STEAM-focused early learning and out-of-school programming as a significant opportunity to impact the community. This grant will be transformational in building an even stronger experience for the thousands of students that engage with the Y each day.

To learn more about the YMCA of Metro Atlanta and all of the programs it offers, visit ymcaatlanta.org.

###

About YMCA of Metro Atlanta

The Y is a powerful association of men, women and children joined together by a shared commitment to nurture the potential of kids, promote healthy living and foster a sense of social responsibility. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and connect. To learn more, visit ymcaatlanta.org or call 404-588-YMCA (9622).