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YMCA of Muncie Board of Directors votes to move forward with new downtown facility on Muncie Central High School campus

Muncie, IN, May 27, 2021: The YMCA of Muncie Board of Directors voted this morning to pursue a new downtown facility located at Muncie Central High School (MCHS). Board members approved an internal site selection committee's recommendation for the project between the YMCA and Muncie Community Schools (MCS). The organizations will now collaborate to finalize a letter of intent and formal memorandum of understanding.

YMCA President, Chad Zaucha, stated the project deepens the existing partnership with the school and will provide a continuum of education and youth development services on one campus.

"This project is an opportunity to impact youth with innovation, creativity and diversity," said Zaucha. "The YMCA and Muncie Community Schools will be able to share services and leverage critical resources. Y members and visitors will have access to green space, greenways, athletic fields and other athletic facilities. Add that to the centralized location in Muncie's downtown core and the ability to bring people from all segments of our community together, and we believe it's a pretty special formula."

The YMCA decided on the MCHS campus project after an extensive, months-long process studying a number of potential sites and project types. Gro, a national leader in the development, design and management of YMCAs and other community-based facilities, conducted a formal study and scored potential sites based upon a number of factors, including:

1. Opportunity to serve
2. Visibility, accessibility and equity
3. Projected market growth
4. Land acquisition and improvement costs
5. Goodwill for the broader Muncie community

MCS CEO and Director of Public Education, Dr. Lee Ann Kwiatkoski, and School Board President, James Williams, echoed the benefits of an expanded partnership between the organizations.

"The Y's after-school programming in our schools is already an important part of the educational experience for many of our families," said Kwiatkoski. "Our collaboration on a brand new facility

will help further family and community engagement, which is one of the foundational pillars of our Innovation Plan. It makes a lot of sense.”

“We are extremely excited about this announcement,” said Williams. “The YMCA of Muncie provides significant services to MCS families already, and this new location will only enhance that. We look forward to seeing this project take shape.”

Muncie Mayor, Dan Ridenour, expressed his support for the project as well.

“This is a win for everyone involved, especially the City of Muncie and its residents,” said Ridenour. “Most importantly, the YMCA will retain a presence in Muncie’s downtown core, serving our residents with critical programming, wellness initiatives and numerous opportunities for community development and belonging.”

The YMCA anticipates a schematic design phase to commence soon. Following schematic design, the YMCA will launch a comprehensive capital campaign to secure necessary resources for the project. The construction timeline will ultimately depend on the generosity of the community.

“We dedicated significant time and resources to this process and wanted to make sure any decision was well-informed, strategic and most beneficial to the community,” said YMCA of Muncie Immediate Past Board Chair, Steve Smith. “The project at MCHS is an ideal fit for the Y to expand and involve its impact in Muncie. We’re very pleased to be moving forward.”

Several community and business leaders offered their support for the organization and the proposed new facility.

“The Muncie Downtown Development Partnership is pleased with the YMCA's decision to locate its proposed new facility on the Muncie Central campus near the historic Fieldhouse,” said Nick Tokar, president of Muncie Downtown Development, Inc. “The new YMCA facility will be a tremendous community asset, will be a natural draw for Muncie families and visitors, and will add to a vibrant downtown scene.”

“YMCAs are proven to be a significant driver of economic development and an anchor for sustained business success in communities,” said Jay Julian, President and CEO of the Muncie Chamber of Commerce. “The continued revitalization of Muncie’s downtown core benefits businesses throughout the city, and this project is another exciting development for the area.”

“NEXT Muncie aims to build lively places, foster healthy living and create new opportunities for learning and working,” said NEXT Muncie Co-Chair, Dr. Jeff Bird. “The expanded partnership between the YMCA and Muncie Community Schools, and this new facility, encompasses all of these areas and more. We’re thrilled about the decision and hope to support the project in any way we can.”

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About the YMCA of Muncie

The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA of Muncie has served Delaware and Kosciusko Counties since 1881, with an excellent track record of providing quality mission driven programs that enrich the lives of all people in spirit, mind and body.

Visit the Y online at www.muncieymca.org or on Social Media @YMCA of Muncie.