

For Immediate Release

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## **YMCA DC Celebrates 160 Years of Wholesome Recreational Activities in the National Capitol Area**

*Helping a city plagued by crime and vice become one brimming with diversity, health and unique history*

**Washington, D.C., June 11, 2012** – Can you imagine Washington DC in 1852? There were 40,000 inhabitants and 30 police officers. Vice, alcoholism, gambling, and other criminal activity, centered in numerous houses of ill repute and saloons, ruled the day. Religious and civic leaders, including William Chauncey Langdon, realized that the young men had no “wholesome outlets.” All too often, they became petty criminals. On June 23, 1852, sixty men held a decisive meeting, pledging to form the YMCA for the City of Washington and vowing to offer DC’s young men “...mental, moral and religious improvement”. William Chauncey Langdon’s passion for reform drove him to do more. He went on to play a decisive role in shaping the American YMCA movement and was he was instrumental in founding the World Alliance of YMCAs.

Since that fateful day in 1852, the Y has been providing a great variety of social and physical recreation opportunities in the community. Members of the community are invited to visit one of the 17 local Y branches and join in the celebration. “For 160 years, the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington has been a cornerstone of the community,” explained Angie L. Reese-Hawkins, President and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. “Looking back to our roots, we are still as committed to fostering physical, mental, and social development as in 1852. Moving forward, we will continue to provide programs and services for adults, children and families. Join in the celebration of the Y, and help preserve its future.”

### Scheduled Events

#### June 23 *Founder’s Day*

William Chauncey Langdon founded the YMCA of the city of Washington in 1852... 160 years ago. Local branches will display historical artifacts and collect one-word descriptions of the Y.

#### June 24 *Anthony Bowen Day*

In 1853 Anthony Bowen organized and was selected president of the first “Colored Young Man’s Christian Association”. The new Anthony Bowen Branch featuring wellness and aquatic Centers, a rooftop terrace, child care facilities, a climbing wall, a demonstration kitchen, massage rooms and a Jukari Studio will open this fall at Shaw and U Street. Memberships are now on sale.

#### June 25 *Youth Development Day*

The Y celebrates our youth. Y 160 games and challenges round out the fun. Information on Y camps and special fitness activities will be available.

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June 26 *Healthy Living Day*

Participate in the Y 160 healthy living challenges. Learn about sports, wellness and fitness activities.

June 27 *Social Responsibility Day*

Did you know that many staff members began as volunteers? Today we honor all volunteers and supporters: individuals, families, and our corporate partners.

June 28 *Charter Day*

In 1864, in the midst of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln signed the Y's charter. Help honor our 400 charter members, those who have been a part of the Y for five years or more. Historical displays will highlight the early leaders of the Y.

June 29 *Invention Day*

Celebrate the Y spirit of invention. Y inventions: Bodybuilding (1881), basketball (1891), and volleyball (1896). Branches will feature mini Thingamajigs, Y 160 challenges, and recycling and shredding events.

For a complete listing of the events planned at each branch, please visit [www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org).

“As a commemorative gift to the community, residents are invited to join the Y for the price of \$18.52,” noted Angie L. Reese-Hawkins, President and CEO of the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington. The offer applies through the end of June. Enroll at one of our local branches!

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**About the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington**

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. We have been engaging men, women and children in the metropolitan Washington region for 160 years – regardless of age, income or background. Anchored in Washington, DC, suburban Maryland, and northern Virginia, the YMCA of Metropolitan Washington creates a positive difference in the lives of more than 200,000 people each year through its 17 branches and program centers. We have the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. For more information, visit [www.ymcadc.org](http://www.ymcadc.org) or follow us at [www.facebook.com/ymcadc](https://www.facebook.com/ymcadc).