

For Immediate Release
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YWCA USA Awards Economic Empowerment Grant to the YWCA of Queens

The YWCA of Queens Recognized Amongst Five Local YWCA Chapters Nationwide

Flushing, NY (May 27, 2014)—YWCA USA announced YWCA of Queens as one of the six recipients of the Economic Empowerment Grant of \$30,000. The Economic Empowerment Grants are given to local associations of YWCA nationwide to enhance programs that provide employment services and financial security to underprivileged individuals in their respective communities. **This funding will support the YWCA of Queens' Women to Work program and High School Equivalency (HSE) Career Services program.**

"We are honored to receive this recognition from the national chapter. Unemployment is one of the greatest obstacles that immigrants and the youth face, especially in the harsh economic state. The YWCA of Queens prides itself on adapting to the evolving community needs and we strive to give all our community members access to economic independence through practical and effective programs," YWCA of Queens Executive Director, Helen J. Kim stated.

The Women to Work program was created and implemented in 2008 when the recession had disproportionately affected the immigrant community and many of the immigrant women had no options for employment. Women to Work trains long-term unemployed immigrant women with language and cultural barriers to become certified Home Health Aides to serve the growing immigrant senior population, requiring their native language and cultural competence. **The YWCA of Queens currently employs approximately 250 home health aides.**

The YWCA of Queens has been providing HSE classes for 15 years and is a leader in HSE and ESOL programming. **The YWCA of Queens has an 80% average HSE passing rate compared to New York State's 59% average passing rate, the lowest in the nation.** The HSE program targets out-of-school and at-risk youth, as well as providing support to undocumented youth through a current contract with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Initiative. The HSE Career Services serves both youth and adults through HSE testing preparation and career workshops and counseling provided by the on-site job developer. The goal is to guide all program participants to find employment and financial security.

Helen J. Kim stated, "Women to Work is an innovative program that solves two key issues in our community; unemployed immigrant women and seniors who need the specialized service. We believe that our programs can be models for other local chapters to follow and adapt within their communities." She continued, "Our HSE programs combine high quality teachers and materials designed to provide practical support for our target population." Ms. Kim will be presenting the program models at the Economic Empowerment Panel during the upcoming YWCA USA 2014 Annual Conference on June 13th.

For more information about how to give your time, talent, tenacity and financial support to the YWCA of Queens, please visit www.ywcaqueens.org.

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About the YWCA

The YWCA is the voice for every woman. For over a century, the YWCA has spoken out and taken action on behalf of women and girls. The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Over 2 million people participate each year in YWCA programs at more than 1,300 locations across the U.S. Worldwide, the YWCA serves more than 25 million women and girls in 125 countries.

About the YWCA of Queens

Founded in 1978, the YWCA of Queens is a multi-tiered community organization with a mission to eliminate racism and empower women. Located in the center of one of the most diverse communities in the country, the YWCA of Queens tailors its services to meet the specific needs of individuals and families in the communities through programs for education and economic self-sufficiency.

for every woman