



YMCA

We build strong kids,  
strong families, strong communities.

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**YMCA HEAD START ACADEMY OPENS IN WEST END  
Bank of America Charitable Foundation announces support of program  
that keeps kids from being home alone**

ATLANTA (September 16, 2009) – Today marks the grand opening of the Dean Rusk YMCA Head Start Academy at the site of Atlanta Public School’s former Dean Rusk Elementary School in Atlanta’s West End. The Head Start Academy, run by the Metro Atlanta YMCA, will serve approximately 340 pre-school children with quality early learning programs.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Atlanta Public Schools and Early Learning Property Management partnered with the YMCA in creating this academy. Programs at the new academy for three- and four-year-olds include traditional Head Start, state-funded pre-k, extended day care and summer camp.

“Head Start is a comprehensive child development program for ages three to four that is most often administered by local, community-based nonprofit organizations,” says Eston Hood, Metro Atlanta YMCA chief operations officer. Through federal grants and other donors, more than \$7.8 million was raised for this academy. “Families in the West End will now have access to programs that will give their children a strong educational foundation,” says Hood.

The YMCA Head Start program responds to community needs for child care. According to several studies, children in Head Start programs score higher on school readiness measures like verbal achievement, perceptual reasoning and social competence than children in other pre-schools or none at all. Children who attend a quality early childhood program are 33 percent more likely to graduate from high school than those who did not.

Announced at the grand opening was a special Bank of America Charitable Foundation \$250,000 matching donation program that will contribute up to \$10,000 per local YMCA. The matching donation program begins today, September 16, and ends October 31, 2009. Striving to keep kids in supervised programs instead of staying home alone, Bank of America and the Metro Atlanta YMCA are giving local residents the opportunity to donate towards this urgent need.

The Bank of America Charitable Foundation and YMCA child care programs share the same vision: to have a supervised, affordable and enriching haven for children throughout the metro Atlanta area. Currently, more than 7,000 kids between ages six and 12 attend Metro Atlanta YMCA after-school programs.

(more)

“At Bank of America, we are committed to providing meaningful and impactful support to the communities we serve, because we know that leadership is even more critical when families and individuals face significant pressures,” said Milton Jones, Georgia president for Bank of America. “A growing number of children are returning from school to empty houses because their under-employed or unemployed parents are forced to leave them home alone. We are proud to partner with the Y on this program to help fight the economic downturn’s harmful effects on our children.”

A gift of any amount will help to pay for an hour, a day or a week of supervised after-school enrichment for other kids to be involved in these programs. Donations can be made at any YMCA in metro Atlanta or at [www.giveYMCA.org](http://www.giveYMCA.org). While the Bank of America Charitable Foundation matches contributions, local donors help kids double their time spent at the Y, not home alone.

“Children need supervised, enriching programs and activities, especially during after-school hours,” says Ed Munster, president and CEO of the Metro Atlanta YMCA. “By partnering with community-minded corporations like Bank of America, the YMCA can provide an affordable solution to this growing community concern.”

The Metro Atlanta YMCA started its first childcare program in 1980, its first pre-school in 1983 and began its Head Start involvement in 1999. The Metro Atlanta YMCA is the largest local single provider of Head Start in the metro area. The YMCA program includes child development services, health screenings and referrals, summer enrichment programs, bus transportation, and bilingual staff and learning for more than 1,400 children in metro Atlanta. An additional 386 children in northeast Elbert, Oglethorpe, Morgan, and Greene counties are served by the YMCA Head Start program.

The YMCA is a charitable organization open to people of all abilities, ages, beliefs, cultures, faiths, and incomes. Financial assistance is available based on need. For more information on the Bank of America Charitable Foundation matching gift program, visit [www.giveYMCA.org](http://www.giveYMCA.org) or call (404)588-9622.

#### **About Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy**

Building on a long-standing tradition of investing in the communities it serves, Bank of America this year embarked on a new, 10-year goal to donate \$2 billion to nonprofit organizations engaged in improving the health and vitality of their neighborhoods. Funded by Bank of America, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation gave more than \$200 million in 2008, making the bank the most generous financial institution in the world and the second largest donor of all U.S. corporations in cash contributions. Bank of America approaches investing through a national strategy called "neighborhood excellence" under which it works with local leaders to identify and meet the most pressing needs of individual communities. For more information about Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy, please visit

[www.bankofamerica.com/foundation](http://www.bankofamerica.com/foundation).

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statistic sources: (Lee, V.E., Brooks-Gunn, J., Schnur, E. and Liaw, F. (1990)  
(Schweinhart, et al, 1993; Lazar, et al, 1982; Lally, et al, 1988)