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**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**North Suburban YMCA feeds more than 162 students
while supporting local restaurants and businesses**

Northbrook, IL; December 2020: Every year the North Suburban YMCA's social responsibility committee chooses a local nonprofit to support through its Holiday Giveback initiative. This year, the Y in partnership with the Hunger Resource Network (HRN), participated in a successful holiday food drive collecting food for 162 food insecure Northbrook elementary and middle school-age children and their families. The "*Adopt a Student and Feed their Family*" food drive was aimed at making the holidays better for Northbrook families in need, while supporting local businesses and restaurants.

The community came together to donate 87 gift cards, 48 bags of groceries, and over \$2300 in cash donations that were later converted to gift card purchases at Northbrook businesses and restaurants including Marcello's, Subway Northbrook, Dairy Queen in Northbrook, Domino's Northbrook, Baskin Robbin's Northbrook, The Claim Company, Culver's Northbrook, Landmark, Eataco, Graeter's Ice Cream, Josh's Hot Dogs and Sunset Foods. The NSYMCA also purchased gift cards and groceries from the local Jewel Osco, Aldi Glenview, Marianno's and Target Glenview.

"I admire the community involvement of helping families in need," said Jennifer Spencer, the owner of the Northbrook Dairy Queen, "But this fundraiser also helped local businesses like us who have been struggling during the pandemic. Thank you to everyone who donates and helps others in need, it makes a difference!"

Within the Northbrook area, 1 in 10 residents are food insecure, equaling about 4000 people, with the number growing due to COVID-19. There are almost 400 Northbrook students on the free or reduced lunch program in its public schools with the Hunger Free Northbrook, a program of Hunger Resource Network, currently serving 162 students and their families across the twelve public elementary and middle schools in the area. The NSYMCA's donation is incremental to Hunger Resource Network's monthly student food pack program, giving these families more support during the holidays.

"We are so thrilled to have the Y on our side when it comes to feeding families in our community! The concept of "Adopt a Student and their Family" is such a fantastic idea especially during this holiday season," states Dan Jariabka, President and Founder of the Hunger Resource Network. "It has been our mission for 14 years to help feed people, and it is a blessing to have other organizations like the Y help in our efforts. Hunger is in every community, including ours. It's wonderful to see our community coming together to help alleviate hunger."

In total, the 'Adopt a Student' food drive collected over \$6500 through donation efforts, putting money back into local businesses while helping food insecure families. "The Y is all about the community and we were humbled by the amount people who donated and thrilled that everyone rallied around the struggling restaurants and businesses in the area by purchasing gift cards," said Kim Nyren, Director of Community Investment at the North Suburban YMCA. Nyren also indicated that she was surprised that many people in the community were not aware of the number of food insecure families in Northbrook. "We hope our efforts also educate people on the needs of our community and continue even after the holiday season to keep food on the table for our families in need."

"The NSYMCA has gone above and beyond to help support our neediest families in the Northbrook area. The gift cards and groceries their members are providing is a lifeline to so many who are experiencing very difficult financial circumstances. We are very grateful," stated Dr. Larry Hewitt, Superintendent of District 28 Schools.

About the North Suburban YMCA

The North Suburban YMCA services Northbrook and 14 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help its residents become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.

About the Hunger Free Northbrook

Hunger Free Northbrook is a program initiated by the Hunger Resource Network, an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3), non-profit organization based in Northbrook, IL. Hunger Resource Network, founded in 2009, is dedicated to help alleviate hunger in the Chicago area by meeting the needs of food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters.

Learn more at HungerResourceNetwork.org



PHOTO 1: *Caption: From left: Kathy Fielding, CEO of the NSYMCA; and Kim Nyren, the NSYMCA Director of Community Investment; and Henry Fetta, Director/Vice President of the Hunger Resource Network pack up the bags of groceries donated to the “Adopt a Student and Feed Their Family” food drive.*



PHOTO 2: *Caption: From left: Henry Fetta, Director/Vice President of the Hunger Resource Network; Dan Jariabka, Founder of the Hunger Resource Network; and Kim Nyren, the NSYMCA Director of Community Investment display the dozens of bags of groceries donated to the “Adopt a Student and Feed Their Family” food drive.*