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**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Strong Kids Fundraising Dinner Raises \$250,000 for
Financial Assistance Fund at North Suburban YMCA**

Northbrook, IL – May 2013: The North Suburban YMCA celebrated another banner year for fundraising at the 7th Annual Ken & Alta Thiel Strong Kids Fundraising Dinner, held on May 1 at the Hilton Chicago-Northbrook. With approximately 400 guests in attendance, the dinner raised \$250,000 to support the Y's Strong Kids Financial Assistance Fund. Named in honor of the North Suburban Y's founders Ken and Alta Thiel, the annual Strong Kids Dinner provides funding to make Y programs accessible to families in financial need, including afterschool childcare, classes, summer camp, special needs program, and membership.

This year's dinner theme, "You Make It Possible", recognized the importance of community support in maintaining the Strong Kids financial assistance program. In particular, the Y honored Edward Wehmer, CEO of Wintrust, with the Thiel Award for Leadership and Social Responsibility in appreciation of his extensive and consistent support of the NSYMCA. Donations and assistance from Wintrust and its affiliate, Northbrook Bank & Trust, have been instrumental in the Y's recent renovation and growth.

The event, co-chaired by Northbrook resident Jill Narens and Chad Coe of Deerfield, featured a wide variety of activities to engage guests. Attendees enjoyed live music, browsed a bountiful selection of silent auction packages, tried their luck at winning diamond earrings or a \$2500 bracelet, and socialized over cocktails and delicious food from Allgauer's Restaurant. Coe partnered with Ron Bernardi of Sunset Foods in conducting a live auction that included autographed Joakim Noah and Patrick Sharp jerseys, gourmet meals, cross country moving, premium sports tickets, golf with a PGA pro and vacation packages. The enthusiastic audience response delivered a record high for fundraising from the auction.

The true purpose of the evening was highlighted in comments from Tara Bilby, a Y staff member who had herself been a beneficiary of Strong Kids Fund assistance. Reflecting on the challenges of raising four small children as a single mother, Bilby told the dinner guests, "I want to tell you from the bottom of my heart, thank you. Your contribution provided more than the dollars to send a child to a class or to camp. It provided a home, a safe place where strong and everlasting relationships are built. It taught them more than how to swim or to draw or to do a cartwheel; it taught them the meaning of community."

The North Suburban YMCA is committed to keeping its programs, services and benefits available to everyone in the community, including those in financial need. Currently, one out of five participants in NSYMCA programs receive some level of assistance, and the Strong Kids Fund provided over \$500,000 in assistance to over 2000 people in 2012. To learn more about ways to support the Strong Kids Financial Assistance Fund, contact Barb Flanagan at bflanagin@nsymca.org.



Photo 1 Caption: The North Suburban YMCA honored Wintrust CEO Edward Wehmer with its Thiel Award for Social Responsibility at its annual Strong Kids Fundraising Dinner. Pictured from left: NSYMCA Board Vice-President Ron Bernardi, Northbrook Bank & Trust CEO/Chairman Richard Rushkewicz, NSYMCA Board President Matt Brennan, Edward Wehmer, Dinner Co-Chair and Y board member Jill Narens, NSYMCA Executive Director/CEO Howard Schultz, and Dinner Co-Chair Chad Coe.



Photo 2 Caption: NSYMCA Executive Director/CEO Howard Schultz (center left) accepting a \$15,000 check from Wintrust CEO Ed Wehmer (center right). Wehmer challenged Schultz to jump in the Y's swimming pool with his clothes on in exchange for a \$10,000 donation to the Y. Schultz negotiated the donation up to \$15,000, then happily consented. The challenge and pool jump were featured in the Strong Kids Dinner video presentation. Shown here from left: Northbrook Bank & Trust CEO/Chairman Richard Rushkewicz, Howard Schultz, Edward Wehmer and NSYMCA Board President Matt Brennan.

About the North Suburban YMCA

The YMCA is a not-for-profit entity and relies on donations to fund capital improvements and transform the facility. All board members are community volunteers, who donate their time, talents and financial resources. Located at 2705 Techny Road in Northbrook, the YMCA has served area families in its twelve-city region for over 40 years. The Y is about youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, providing programs and services that meet the needs of our community and are accessible to all. For more information or to make a donation contact Ali Friduss at 847-272-7250, afiduss@nsymca.org.

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