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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Communities and Organizations Across the US, Including Kandiyohi County Area Family YMCA Join Welcoming America in Celebrating New Americans During Welcoming Week**

Willmar, MN – August 29, 2018. This Welcoming Week, taking place September 23 - 29, Kandiyohi County Area Family YMCA will join Welcoming America and hundreds of YMCAs and other organizations nationwide in hosting events to celebrate immigrants' contributions to communities and bring together all residents in a spirit of unity. Welcoming Week activities are open to the public and include an open art exhibit featuring local diverse artists, a youth art auction benefiting the Y Partners Program which gives back to local families and youth in need in the form of membership and program scholarship opportunities, 3 Free welcoming days with open house tours and refreshments, A Red Cross Blood Drive with Health and Wellness Event, Salvation Army Coat Drive, special multi-cultural dance class, family swim night, and our return of monthly potluck themed "Share Your Culture".

"At the Kandiyohi County Area Family YMCA, we believe Willmar and the surrounding communities are stronger when everyone in the feels welcome and we can all work together for the common good," said Dean Madsen, Associate Executive Director. "We are proud to be a part of Welcoming Week, which is demonstrating that in places large and small, rural and urban, people of all backgrounds are coming together to create stronger communities. It is a time to celebrate the shared values that unite us as neighbors, parents and colleagues, and to make our towns more welcoming to newcomers and to everyone who calls our community home."

During Welcoming Week, the Kandiyohi County Area Family YMCA will host an open art exhibit featuring local diverse artists, a youth art auction benefiting the Y Partners Program which gives back to local families and youth in need in the form of membership and program scholarship opportunities, 3 Free welcoming days (September 25 -27) open to the public and all adults are welcome to experience the Y for free with open house tours and refreshments, A Red Cross Blood Drive with Health and Wellness Event on September 26<sup>th</sup> form 9 am – 3 pm, Salvation Army Coat Drive all month, special multi-cultural dance class, family swim night, and our return of monthly potluck themed "Share Your Culture" on the 27<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 – 6:30 pm. Join the Y during Welcome Week and we will waive the Joiner Fee!

“These events are part of a powerful and growing movement in our country and around the world, demonstrating that communities want to be welcoming,” said Rachel Peric, Executive Director of Welcoming America. “Welcoming Week is a reminder of the resilient and inclusive spirit of American communities. Thousands of local leaders nationwide are bringing their communities together to bridge divides and build stronger local economies where everyone belongs.”

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### ***About the Y***

The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 22 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. [ymca.net](http://ymca.net)

### ***About Welcoming Week***

Welcoming Week, founded by Welcoming America, is an annual celebration bringing together thousands of people and hundreds of local events that celebrate the contributions of immigrants and refugees and the role communities play to foster greater welcome.

Welcoming America is leading a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone who lives there feel like they belong. Welcoming America believes that all people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of both our communities and our shared future. [www.welcomingamerica.org](http://www.welcomingamerica.org).