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**Community coalitions ramp up Get out the Vote efforts**

*Historic election fuels volunteers at YWCA of Minneapolis*

**MINNEAPOLIS – October 17, 2008** – As Minnesota voter registration reaches a record high, planning for a smooth election day is underway. The YWCA of Minneapolis is part of a network of organizations providing support for voters on November 4th and will serve as a hub for people needing rides to the polls.

"Exercising your right to vote will have a critical impact on the outcomes in November, and making sure everyone can get to the polls is an enormous task," said Anita Patel, YWCA Director of Racial Justice and Public Policy Programs. Three YWCA Health & Fitness locations in Minneapolis and North Commons Park location will all offer rides to the polls in partnership with the Minnesota Council on Nonprofits. The YWCA anticipates that parents with young children, elderly, or those needing help finding their voting location will be among those needing rides.

YWCA Public Policy efforts focus on local voter education and get out the vote activities. In addition, the YWCA educates people about the issue of Early Childhood Education. Studies show that children who access high-quality early childhood education before starting school are more likely to do well in school, attend college and have successful careers. However, many families in MN are unable to afford quality care for their children. The YWCA believes that all children should have access to early education, and provides scholarships for low-income families.

"It seems everyone is talking about the implications of race and gender in this year's election, and at every level, views on issues effecting women and families have helped define candidates running for office," said Patel. "This is an historic election, and we're seeing more people engaged and excited by the electoral process than in previous years."

The YWCA of Minneapolis is a member of the MN Civic Engagement Table and Election Day Community Coalition, and is partnering with the Minnesota Participation Project and League of Women Voters around voter registration and election day voter support. The YWCA USA is a sponsor of the 2008 Presidential Debates.

**About the YWCA of Minneapolis**

The YWCA of Minneapolis is a nonprofit organization striving to achieve the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism. The YWCA of Minneapolis provides community programming to children, youth and families, primarily from low-income households and communities of color. Approximately 20,000 individuals and families are paying Healthy & Fitness members of the YWCA, utilizing our three urban Health & Fitness facilities.