



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **YES Partners with Whole Foods Market to Support Camp FEWI (Female Empowerment and Wellness Initiative)**

*Urban Elementary and Middle School Girls gather for Wellness, Sports and Fitness Program*

Youth Enrichment Services (YES), a local non-profit focused on enrichment, education, and mentorship, was formed in 1994 to empower families to become their own best resource and to give inner-city youth a portrait of themselves as successful, empowered, and confident individuals. The heart of YES is a spirit of mentorship that places students at its center and elicits them to tap into their most valuable connection: each other. In doing so, YES peer mentors drive project curriculum, guide program focus, direct youth activities, and encourage peers.

YES is putting its mentorship model to the test this summer by providing young girls from the Pittsburgh community an opportunity to engage in various sports alongside YES peer female mentors at Camp FEWI (Female Empowerment and Wellness Initiative).

This year, YES is excited to announce that it is partnering with Whole Foods Market to sponsor 30 girls to attend Camp FEWI. With support from Whole Foods Market's Pittsburgh, South Hills, and Wexford stores, girls from the East End area of Pittsburgh will participate in a unique sport and fitness program featuring lacrosse, field hockey, tennis, and golf.

The YES and Whole Foods Market partnership will offer Pittsburgh's minority and underserved female youth an opportunity to experience, explore, and embody active healthy and pro-social lifestyles.

"Caring for our communities is a priority at Whole Foods Market, and we are committed to supporting local causes that are important to our neighbors in the Pittsburgh area," said *Casey Dill*, Whole Foods Market Pittsburgh Store Team Leader. "We deeply admire the work Youth Enrichment Services is doing to foster supportive, positive, and healthy lifestyles for young girls in the community through its Female Empowerment and Wellness Initiative."

Not only does Camp FEWI introduce youth to sports, but it also empowers female youth to cultivate their self-worth, take ownership of their health, challenge limiting and oppressive systems, and intentionally craft their own relationship and understanding of their female identities.

*Dennis Floyd Jones, PhD, Executive Director of YES, recognizes the importance of such work and acknowledges the value of Whole Foods Market's Partnership. "Local corporations with a public profile such as Whole Foods Market can be life changing and sustaining entities when they invest into the community. At YES we are excited and grateful to have their investment and support,"*

Youth in urban areas all over the world are not playing sports like they used to (Parker et al, 2016; Wong et al, 2010). This is leading to potential negative impacts in communities and on the individuals' health. Sports in urban areas promote positive role-models, lead to improved academic performance, and decrease obesity (Bruening et al, 2015; DeMeulenaere, 2010; Phillips & Young, 2009; Parker et al 2016).

Sport participation also leads to a stronger self-image, though urban girls struggle with the image that is associated with female athletes (Adams et al, 2017). The perception of female athletes, as well as other barriers have led to girls not participating in sports growing up. This has an impact on the individuals, the community, their schools, and their future life skills (Hemphill & Martinek, 2017). The presence and participation in sports also helps reduce potential for crime or negative behaviors (Kelly, 2013).

Find out more about YES and Camp FeWi at [www.youthenrichmentservices.org](http://www.youthenrichmentservices.org).

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