

WOOD RIVER YMCA CAPITAL CAMPAIGN NOW HEADED BY BENJAMIN WOOD AND THERESA CASTELLANO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 7, 2004

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Spring 2005 Groundbreaking on Schedule

KETCHUM, Idaho – Momentum continues for the Wood River Community YMCA with the announcement that supporters Benjamin Wood and Theresa Castellano Wood of The Works of Grace Foundation will be leading capital campaign efforts. The Woods' have been working closely with the fundraising team since pledging a \$1 million matching gift to the YMCA in December, a challenge which has been met and surpassed with the help of donations from a diverse group of individuals, foundations and private organizations located throughout the Wood River Valley.

Last year, the City of Ketchum passed a Resolution agreeing to match the first \$3 million of donations with a \$3 million corresponding contribution. This challenge has been met as well, marking another milestone in the organization's fundraising efforts. The Resolution also stated that the City may seek voter approval for a revenue bond. To date, a total of \$4 million, not including the City's \$3 million, has been raised toward the \$16 million goal for the development of the center, which will be a community center offering many resources for every member of the Wood River Valley. The facility will also offer a unique opportunity with a new year-round swimming pool, and an indoor venue for concerts and special events.

“ This is an exciting time for the entire community. We are forever grateful for the City of Ketchum's help in rendering a portion of the Park and Ride lot on which to build the facility and the signed commitment from Ketchum Mayor Ed Simon and the City Council to provide \$3 million in funding” said Benjamin Wood. “Being located in Ketchum has also allowed the Wood River Community YMCA to budget a generous yearly income from visitors, which is an exciting and significant addition to the future revenue stream of the organization.”

“ To build a stand alone pool would cost approximately \$7 million dollars,” added Benjamin Wood. “On top of that, there's also an annual overhead cost to consider that can be overwhelming to maintain, running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. An experienced organization such as the YMCA, who owns more swimming pools than any other organization in the world, is extremely skilled in running such a facility more efficiently than any other organization.”

“It is the humanity of the ‘Y’ experience that is its greatest benefit,” said Theresa Castellano Wood. “As a child growing up in a project in Newark, New Jersey, I felt equal to everyone else when I stepped over the threshold into this amazing sanctuary where I was nurtured, challenged and held in high esteem. As a mother of twin 5-year-olds, living in a valley rich in natural elements but divided socio-economically, I am determined to affect what I can in the quality of life for all of our children.”

“Theresa and Benjamin have the capabilities to see this project to fruition and the know-how to ensure that the facility will be self-sustaining in the future,” said Cynthia Murphy, board chair, Wood River Community YMCA. “So much has already been accomplished by meeting and exceeding the \$1 million challenge from The Works of Grace Foundation and thereby also the \$3 million challenge from the City of Ketchum. The Woods’ experience and tremendous philanthropic efforts through The Works of Grace Foundation, along with their enthusiasm and inspirational leadership, will no doubt keep the fundraising momentum going until the last penny is in hand.”

“The Wood River YMCA is an opportunity to support a piece of each child’s dream,” said Jim Lewis, Ed.D, Superintendent of Schools. “While many adults have moved here to support their lifelong dream, their children’s wishes center more on a park in the neighborhood, summer camps, making the baseball team, and having a swimming pool in the neighborhood like the one found in their cousin’s community. Together as a community we can and we must take pride in making all of these YMCA programs a reality for all of the children of Blaine County.”

The new Wood River community center was granted YMCA status earlier this past year. Work has already begun with the architect. Groundbreaking remains on scheduled for Spring 2005. YMCA executive Teresa Beahen, who has 20 years experience combined in Denver and Minneapolis, will join the Blaine County YMCA team as executive director on June 1. Additionally, outreach programming will begin as early as July with programming coordinators going out into the community, creating organized recreational activities and other fun programs.

For more information on contributing to the Wood River Community YMCA’s capital campaign, please contact Mike Wolter, Campaign Manager, at 208-726-6260 or email to mike@WoodRiverYMCA.org. Visit www.ymca.net for more information on the YMCA.

Wood River Community YMCA was granted YMCA status in 2003 and is currently in fundraising and planning for a center that will serve all of Wood River Valley. For more information on contributing to the capital campaign, please contact Mike Wolter, Campaign Director, at 208-726-6260 or mike@woodriverymca.org. The YMCA, over 150 years old, is collectively the largest non-profit community service organization in the United States. Additional information on the YMCA organization can be found at www.ymca.net.