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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YMCA of the Black Hills Encourages Community to Secure Their Futures During National Make-A-Will Month

RAPID CITY, SD (AUGUST 1, 2026) — In recognition of National Make-A-Will Month this August, the YMCA of the Black Hills is raising awareness about the critical importance of having a clear estate plan. Recent studies show that more than half of American adults still do not have a legal will or basic estate plan in place, leaving vital decisions about their assets and loved ones up to state courts.

Having a properly executed will ensures that individuals — rather than state laws — decide how property, financial accounts, and cherished personal belongings are distributed. It also allows parents of minor children to legally designate trusted guardians.

Why Estate Planning Matters Now

- Protect loved ones: Prevent family disputes and reduce legal stress during difficult times.
- Designate wishes clearly: Direct exact asset distribution for peace of mind.
- Support causes: Create a lasting philanthropic legacy by including non-profit organizations or foundations in your planning.

"Creating a will does not have to be complicated or intimidating," said Keiz Larson, CEO YMCA of the Black Hills. "Make-A-Will Month provides the perfect annual checkpoint to take 20 minutes to write down your intentions and safeguard the people and causes you care about most." Larson continues, "My own personal story made me realize how important planning ahead is: One year ago, my husband Tony and I started our morning like we had countless times before. We exercised together, talked about our plans for the day, and I started making coffee. Then, everything changed when Tony suddenly collapsed. Despite every effort to save him, he passed away unexpectedly at the age of 58. Nothing prepares you for that kind of loss. His death taught me a difficult but important lesson: *none of us knows what tomorrow holds.*"

To help community members plan for tomorrow and build a stronger, healthier Black Hills, the YMCA has partnered with FreeWill. This collaboration makes estate planning easier and more accessible. FreeWill's secure online platform guides them through writing or updating a free will in as little as 20 minutes. Strengthen the heart of our community by creating a plan for all close to your heart before August ends.

For additional local resources or guidance provided by FreeWill and the YMCA, visit

<https://shorturl.at/ZQGV7>

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**About the YMCA of the Black Hills**

Driven by its founding mission, the YMCA of the Black Hills has served as a leading nonprofit committed to strengthening community for more than 77 years. The Y empowers everyone, no matter who they are or where they're from, by ensuring access to resources, relationships and opportunities for all to learn, grow and thrive. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives and generations, the Y's goal is to improve overall health and well-being, ignite youth empowerment and demonstrate the importance of connections in and across 10,000 communities nationwide. Learn more at www.ymcabh.org