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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Graphic Attached: YMCA Welcoming Week

YMCA Celebrates Belonging During Welcoming Week, Honoring a 175-Year Legacy of Community Connection

National awareness campaign deepens understanding and connection among community members.

RAPID CITY, SD – SEPTEMBER 10, 2026 – From September 10-19, 2026, The YMCA of the Black Hills celebrates Welcoming Week, an annual campaign that invites communities around the globe to host events that deepen understanding and connection among community members. For 175 years, the YMCA has been a place where people come not just to participate, but to belong. That's why Welcoming Week, celebrated each September in partnership with Welcoming America, is such a natural extension of our mission.

"At the Y, we believe belonging isn't just something we talk about; it's something we create together," said Elaina Kempin, Chief Development Officer, YMCA of the Black Hills. "For generations, the Y has been a place where neighbors can find connection and community. During Welcoming Week, we're proud to continue that tradition at our YMCA locations across the Hills, bringing people together and celebrating the many stories and experiences that make our communities stronger."

Everyone in the Black Hills wants to feel supported and truly welcomed by neighbors and the larger community. That kind of support takes effort and an ongoing commitment to foster a sense of belonging and community-wide connection. Welcoming Week is where this commitment can start. Learn more about National Welcoming Week at https://welcomingamerica.org/initiatives/welcoming-week/.

The Y is more than a gym, it's a place to belong. Join or rejoin today and make this place your place for community connection and renewal. For more information, visit www.ymcabh.org

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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

About Welcoming America
Welcoming America is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that leads a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by ensuring everyone belongs. Through the Welcoming Network, we work to change systems and culture by providing communities the roadmap they need to create welcoming policies and share new approaches to inclusion to create an environment where everyone can truly thrive. Learn more at welcomingamerica.org.