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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

YMCA of the Black Hills Earns Praesidium Accreditation®

Recognition affirms YMCA's commitment to the highest standards in abuse prevention and creating safe environments

RAPID CITY, SD – NOVEMBER 18, 2026 – The YMCA of the Black Hills has earned Praesidium Accreditation®, recognizing the organization's commitment to meeting the highest national standards in abuse prevention and creating safe environments for the children, families and communities it serves.

Praesidium Accreditation is a rigorous process that verifies an organization has not only established strong abuse prevention safeguards but is consistently putting those practices into action. The accreditation evaluates eight key areas of organizational operations: policies, screening and selection, training, monitoring and supervision, internal feedback systems, consumer participation, responding and administrative practices.

The achievement builds on more than a year of work between the YMCA of the Black Hills and Praesidium to strengthen abuse prevention efforts. The YMCA began the accreditation process with a comprehensive assessment to identify opportunities to strengthen its practices and systems and then worked to address those areas across the organization.

As part of the accreditation process, Praesidium conducted site visits at YMCA of the Black Hills branch locations and camps and interviewed employees representing a wide range of roles and levels of the organization, from senior leadership and association staff to center management and frontline team members working directly with children. Following the visits, the YMCA completed an action plan addressing Praesidium's observations before undergoing final review.

"The safety of children has always been one of our most important responsibilities," said Keiz Larson, CEO of the YMCA of the Black Hills. "Earning Praesidium Accreditation affirms the work our staff do every day to create environments where children and families feel safe, supported and cared for. With locations in **Custer, Edgemont, Box Elder and Rapid City**, achieving accreditation across our entire YMCA Association establishes a consistent standard for child safety in every community we serve and helps set the standard for organizations serving children and families across western South Dakota. I am incredibly proud of our team and the commitment they have shown throughout this rigorous process. This accreditation is an important achievement, but it is also a promise we will remain vigilant, accountable and committed to continually strengthening the way we protect those entrusted to our care."

Praesidium Accreditation is valid for three years and represents an ongoing commitment to maintaining strong abuse prevention practices. For the YMCA of the Black Hills, the accreditation builds upon years of work to equip staff with the knowledge, tools and systems needed to recognize risks, help prevent abuse and respond effectively to concerns.

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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 Praesidium
Praesidium is the leading innovator of scientifically based solutions designed to transform the way organizations approach the prevention of sexual abuse. Praesidium's expertise, consulting, and solutions help to foster safer environments for children, vulnerable adults, staff, volunteers, and all parties involved. For over 30 years, Praesidium has trained more than one million people online and hundreds of thousands in person. As the largest and most comprehensive sexual abuse risk management firm globally, Praesidium knows how sexual abuse happens and, more importantly, how to prevent it.