

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (AKRON, AUGUST 12, 2016)**

The Akron Area YMCA announces “Y-STRONG” – a program developed to assist defendants battling addiction. The program was the result of the YMCA’s collaboration with Judge Thomas A. Teodosio and Judge Joy Malek Oldfield, who preside over two Summit County drug courts.

“Y-STRONG” is a three-month complimentary YMCA membership available for participants of Summit County Common Pleas Court’s Turning Point Program and the Akron Municipal Court’s Recovery Court who have maintained six months of sobriety and are exhibiting positive life-style changes. Drug courts provide an alternative sentencing option in which participants receive intensive Court supervision, are required to submit to random drug and alcohol testing, and must fully participate in appropriate drug and mental health treatment.

“At the Akron Area YMCA, we know how important it is to take time to nurture your mind, body and spirit. We would like to assist [in that journey] by providing a safe place to do just that,” said Jill Kolesar, CEO of the YMCA.

Judge Teodosio and Judge Oldfield are excited to offer this opportunity in their Courts. Judge Teodosio stated “the Y-STRONG program will provide many benefits to our participants such as improved health, reduced stress, increased self confidence and a sense of accomplishment - all of which are key components to recovery.” Judge Joy Malek Oldfield agreed, stating, “We know that people accomplish better-quality, long-term sobriety when they have sober activities available to them. We’re thankful that the Akron Area YMCA is willing to provide this valuable opportunity.”

The Akron Area YMCA has agreed to sponsor 20 eligible participants in the Court programs. The Judges believe “Y-STRONG” will enhance the success of their Court programs and provide a better quality of life for their participants.

Anyone wishing to sponsor “Y-STRONG” to provide additional sober participants this opportunity should contact Brian Bidlingmyer, Akron Area YMCA Senior Vice-President of Development, at [brianb@akronymca.org](mailto:brianb@akronymca.org) or 330-376-1335.