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YWCA Central Alabama Celebrates AmeriCorps Champions of Service

Birmingham, AL – The YWCA Central Alabama "Building Communities, Bettering Lives" AmeriCorps program is pleased to recognize and congratulate its 2012 Champions of Service. Chosen by peers and staff, from among the 24 YWCA AmeriCorps member, Mary Chiles and Kellie Cosby are being honored for their outstanding service, leadership and initiative.

Mary Chiles is completing her second year of service as an AmeriCorps member in the YWCA’s Social Justice department. She works with teenagers on several programs, including the Heritage Panel program, which works intensely with 25 students from one school to teach them leadership skills and to empower them to stand up for students being bullied. She has implemented this program in 14 different schools this past year. Mary is a great role model for the students, as she is strong but humble, good humored but sure in her convictions. Another one of Mary’s responsibilities was to direct Anytown Alabama, a social justice leadership camp for high school students. Mary worked with two other AmeriCorps members to recruit the students and the volunteer staff; update the curriculum; train the staff; and then direct the implementation of the week-long program. Another AmeriCorps member described Mary as “the perfect person to serve with. Mary always does what she says she will do and takes her responsibilities seriously. She is smart and has strong opinions, but she listens well to others and doesn’t always have to have her way. She inspires all of us to do our best and achieve excellence.”

Kellie Cosby is completing her first year of service as an AmeriCorps member with one of the YWCA’s partners, Hope Manifest. Not only does Kellie do excellent service at Hope Manifest, she also helps out with lots of other AmeriCorps programs and events, including Habitat for Humanity, KaBoom, Leading Edge Institute, Girls on the Run and Anytown Alabama. As a regular “coach” for Girls on the Run, Kellie provided a listening ear for girls and a friendly face for parents. Kellie’s passion for running was only overshadowed by her passion for children and desire to encourage them to be strong and do their best. Kellie made a lasting impression on the girls she coached and many other people who she reached out to as an AmeriCorps member. An AmeriCorps member who served with Kellie described her as “someone who is smart and has a lot of integrity but also doesn’t take herself too seriously and is a ton of fun!”

Since its inception in 1994, more than 706,000 Americans have given over 860 million hours of service through AmeriCorps. YWCA "Building Communities, Bettering Lives" AmeriCorps members help serve in areas of domestic violence prevention, social justice, homelessness initiatives, leadership and community development programs, housing and child care. The YWCA’s AmeriCorps program currently has 24 members and will expand to 30 members in September 2012.

Visit www.ywcabham.org and click on the AmeriCorps link for details on the YWCA's "Building Communities, Bettering Lives" program.
About the YWCA

The YWCA is the voice for every woman. For over a century, the YWCA has spoken out and taken action on behalf of women and girls. The YWCA is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Over 2 million people participate each year in YWCA programs at more than 1,300 locations across the U.S. Worldwide, the YWCA serves more than 25 million women and girls in 125 countries.

For over a century, the YWCA Central Alabama has been responding to the needs of women and families by providing: affordable child care for low-income families; child care and after-school enrichment programs for homeless children; affordable housing for families and seniors; a full array of domestic violence services and outreach programs for social justice issues.