



**CONTACT:**

**Nancy Calkins**

*Vice President Financial Development*

YMCA of Greensboro

336.854.8410 ext. 107

[nancy.calkins@ymcagreensboro.org](mailto:nancy.calkins@ymcagreensboro.org)

**MEDIA ADVISORY // FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Team Up with the YMCA to Give Children In Your Community a Bright Beginning**

Greensboro, N.C., June 17, 2010 - The YMCA of Greensboro is taking deserving children back-to-school shopping for the twelfth year of their Bright Beginnings program. This program plans to raise \$64,000 to help more than 500 children in 2010. Over the past 11 years, YMCA Bright Beginnings has served more than 2,000 children by matching them with a “shopping buddy” and letting them choose clothes and school supplies. The purpose of the program is to outfit children with confidence and the tools they need to start the school year with success.

The YMCA of Greensboro, in collaboration with the American Express Charitable Fund, Lincoln Financial Group, Walmart, Target, News & Record, and many volunteers and donors make this event possible.

“In this difficult economy, we know there are more children than ever who may not have the supplies they need for a successful school year, “ said Robert Garinger, Senior Vice President and General Manager of American Express-Greensboro. “Our company and our employees are passionate about serving this community, and by supporting the ‘Bright Beginnings’ program again this year, we can help more students kick off a great school year with the supplies they need. I was fortunate enough to participate as a volunteer last year, and the experience was one of my personal highlights of 2009.”

More than 600 volunteers and donors are needed. A gift of \$150 outfits a child with school clothes, shoes, underwear, socks and a sweater/jacket. Contributions of any amount are gratefully accepted.

“Without this program, many children wouldn’t have the things they need for school,” states Nancy Calkins, YMCA’s Bright Beginnings chairperson, “and the kids appreciate the special attention from adult volunteers who shop with them and encourage them to do well in school.”

Shopping trips are scheduled for August 6- 19. Individuals and organizations may volunteer as “shopping buddies,” contribute funds, or donate school supplies by contacting their local YMCA, including Bryan YMCA, Hayes-Taylor YMCA, Ragsdale

YMCA, Reidsville YMCA, Spears YMCA, Stoney Creek YMCA, or by contacting Nancy Calkins at (336) 854-8410 for additional information.

The mission of the YMCA is to put Judeo-Christian principles into practice through programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. We build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

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