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YMCA of Greater Seattle Sponsors Mt. Rainier Memorial Climb Benefitting Y Outdoor Leadership Programs

SEATTLE, July 9, 2015 – The YMCA of Greater Seattle is partnering with the Chris Hooyman Outdoor Education Fund for a 3-day memorial climb of Mt. Rainier July 17 -19, benefiting the Y's BOLD/GOLD youth outdoor leadership programs.

In it's eighth year, the Chris Hooyman Memorial Climb raises funds to provide wilderness experiences and outdoor leadership opportunities to youth who might otherwise be unable to participate. The Outdoor Education Fund was founded by Nancy Hooyman after her son Chris was killed as he was providing aid to another climber while guiding a climb on Mt. McKinley. Chris grew up in Seattle, developing a love for the wilderness on family trips and first climbed Mt. Rainier at 16, the first of nearly 40 summits. To honor his passion for teaching through outdoor experiences, his family established the memorial fund so that others would be able to experience the things that were so important in Chris' life.

As part of the Y's commitment to youth development, our GOLD program inspires courage and leadership in girls through exploration of the natural environment. Girls discover their potential, learn about community, develop responsibility, and gain the skills to confidently pursue their goals. Since the opportunity for girls to work together in diverse groups is rare, the Y strives to bring together girls of different race, ethnicity, socioeconomic background, family makeup, and sexual orientation. Nancy and the Hooyman Outdoor Education Fund began supporting GOLD because of it's mission to inspire young women to be confident and courageous. Chris always hoped to nurture a love of the outdoors in his younger sister Mani, adopted from India, believing that she would develop greater confidence if she was literally able to climb mountains.

Approximately one-third of GOLD participants are girls of color and two-thirds receive full or partial scholarships. As part of the memorial climb, each of the nine participating climbers have committed to raising a minimum of \$2000 which will go directly to the Y's outdoor leadership programs. Y staff and board members are joining this year's climb which will end with a meetup on the descent with ongoing BOLD/GOLD trips that will be hiking and camping at Mt. Rainier during the same time period.

YMCA OF GREATER SEATTLE

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About the YMCA of Greater Seattle

The YMCA of Greater Seattle is the Northwest's leading nonprofit organization strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Founded in 1876, the Y reaches more than 280,000 people of all backgrounds, abilities and financial circumstances annually through 13 branches, two overnight camps and more than 200 program sites throughout King and south Snohomish counties. It nurtures more than 92,000 kids and teens to develop their gifts and give back to our community and engages more than 18,000 volunteers who contribute 340,000 hours of service each year. Visit seattleyymca.org.