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**For Immediate Release**

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## **THE YMCA OF DELAWARE LAUNCHES A NEW INITIATIVE TO INTRODUCE DEMOCRACY TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**Wilmington, Delaware, August 31, 2016** – A new school year means a fresh start for kids—a chance to begin new routines and habits, build new friendships, discover endless possibilities and interests. Starting this fall, the YMCA of Delaware's Youth in Government (YIG) program will begin a new initiative to introduce Delaware's Middle School students to the democratic process. The YMCA of Delaware will kick-off this new initiative by hosting the First Annual YIG Middle School Conference to be held on Saturday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at Legislative Hall in Dover, Delaware.

"This conference will bring together a diverse group of middle school students from across our state and give them a structured forum to discuss issues facing their communities," said Sam Sachs, State Director for the YMCA of Delaware's Youth in Government Program. "Students will be empowered to advocate for issues they believe in, and gain the tools needed to make a positive impact in the state -- It seems more important than ever before that each generation is educated about democracy," Sachs added.

Students in grades 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> will have the chance to learn about the legislative process, debate, parliamentary procedure, and work with other students from across the state to develop solutions to problems they see facing Delaware. The conference will be held from 9am – 5pm. Registration opens today (September 1st) and space is limited to the first 100 registrants.

### **About YIG**

YIG is a YMCA teen leadership experience that uses hands on learning to empower students to become more involved in their community and local government. By replicating the states 3 branches of government, students are able to learn research, debate, public speaking and servant leadership skills.

The YMCA of Delaware's YIG program has offered a 3-day overnight conference for the past 48 years. Weekly meetings begin in December and will continue leading up to the 1-day Training and Elections Conference scheduled for early March and the Model Legislative and Judicial conferences in early April 2017, both taking place in Dover, DE at Legislative Hall & the Kent County Court House.

For more information about the YMCA of Delaware's YIG Program, contact Sam Sachs at 302-463-1890 / [ssachs@ymcade.org](mailto:ssachs@ymcade.org) or visit [www.DEYIG.ORG](http://www.DEYIG.ORG).

**About the YMCA of Delaware**

The YMCA of Delaware is Delaware's largest non-profit organization committed to strengthening the citizens of Delaware through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. With seven branches statewide and an overnight camp and conference center in Worton, Maryland, the Y has developed long-standing relationships and a physical presence in Delaware so it can deliver lasting personal and social change. We are committed to serving everyone – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of every child and teen, improve Delaware's health and wellbeing and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. [www.ymcade.org](http://www.ymcade.org).

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