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YMCA/EASTERSEALS MEETS CHALLENGE GIFTS

Bloomington, IL – January 11, 2019 – The Bloomington-Normal YMCA and Easterseals Central Illinois today announced they successfully met a \$4 million matching challenge made by a local McLean County family last September to build a new YMCA/Easterseal facility in the heart of McLean County adding a total of \$8 million for a grand fundraising total of \$13,401,733.

The gift, the largest in Bloomington-Normal YMCA history, is from an anonymous family to build a new YMCA/Easterseal facility on Washington Street between OSF Healthcare and the main State Farm campus. In order to receive the match, the YMCA/Easterseal committee raised \$4 million among more than 100 donors, all from the Bloomington-Normal area. The project is now in the final stretch with an additional \$3 million left on the goal to raise the total \$16 million and begin construction in the near future.

Earlier this year, the project secured a property gift from OSF Healthcare St. Joseph Medical Center providing a new site along East Washington Street in a central location in the county, with easy accessibility to both auto and public transportation.

"This family challenge gift is a great achievement for our volunteers pursuing this dream to bring a world class facility to serve our Y and Easterseal families in ways we can only imagine." said BJ Wilken, President and CEO of the YMCA. Wilken also noted a challenge issued by members of the health care community. Dr.'s Jerry and Laura Randolph-Oakey along with other physicians brought in a combined \$400,000 from healthcare providers. "Dr's Jerry and Laura challenged our volunteers to double their gift and the healthcare community responded. Our physicians, dentists and healthcare providers really see the benefit of this YMCA/Easterseal facility. That \$400,000 from the medical world was critical to reaching our family challenge as well. Another win-win for the community."

The YMCA and Easterseals envision a future facility with an indoor competitive pool and warm water therapy pool, a full-size gymnasium, health and wellness center, teen and senior program center, as well as consultation and therapy space for Easterseals' client families and their children.

"We are seeing support from all corners of the community," said Campaign Co-Chair Julie Dobski. "The health care providers, larger employers, small employers and most of all, just average citizens of our community." Dobski noted of the 105 donations, 90 percent of the gifts are from individuals and families.

Campaign Co-Chair Steve Snyder confirmed that the fundraising effort would need to be complete in order to move forward with groundbreaking and construction. "We have 100 percent of our boards committed. We have an ideal, centrally-located site and we have a generous community that has the capacity to finish this capital campaign effort. We are so motivated to finish our campaign and get started," said Snyder. "We just have that last \$3 million and we will get underway."

About the YMCA: Established in 1855, the Bloomington-Normal YMCA is the oldest continually existing human service organization in McLean County. Serving more than 5000 people annually, the YMCA is dedicated to instilling Christian principles through programs that build healthy spirit, mind and body for all. As a charitable, non profit organization, the Y seeks to establish programming in the community for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

About Easterseals of Central Illinois: Easter Seals has been helping individuals with disabilities and special needs, and their families, live better lives for nearly 100 years. From child development centers to physical rehabilitation and job training for people with disabilities, Easter Seals offers a variety of services to help people with disabilities address life's challenges and achieve personal goals.