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**For Immediate Release**

**Contact:**

Lalita Llerena  
Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA  
813.224.9622 ext. 240  
813.545.7772 (cell)  
[Lalita.Llerena@tampaymca.org](mailto:Lalita.Llerena@tampaymca.org)

## **Continuing the Tradition of Father's Day at the Y**

**Tampa, FL (June 7, 2013)** – More than a century ago, Sonora Louis Smart Dodd aspired to create a holiday to honor fathers. Dodd, the daughter of a single father and Civil War veteran, was inspired by a Mother's Day sermon and wondered why there was no holiday for fathers. After securing support from ministers in Spokane, Wash., her idea came to fruition with the first Father's Day celebration at the Spokane YMCA on June 19, 1910.

On Sunday, June 16, the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA joins the nation in celebrating Father's Day and recognizing the impact fathers and adult male role models make in children's lives. Nationally, one out of three children lives in a home without their biological father, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. And, societal factors such as unemployment, work-life balance or a lack of resources can affect fathers' ability to seek support in strengthening their parenting skills and more fully engaging in the lives of their children. The Y remains dedicated to providing resources and opportunities for fathers to further involve themselves in the well-being and development of their children.

As a single dad, Ron Bent recognizes the importance of involvement and time together with his two young sons. When he signed them up for soccer at the New Tampa Family YMCA, he also volunteered to be a coach. "It makes me proud to say I have pictures of me coaching my own boys and the imprint that puts on them," shares Bent who's been volunteering at the Y for six years now.

Studies show children with close relationships with their fathers and other adult male role models have more self-confidence and exhibit less depression, perform better academically and engage in significantly less drug and alcohol use. "One way to improve child well-being is to increase the proportion of children growing up with involved, responsible, and committed parents and adult role models," said Lalita Llerena, communications director for the Tampa Y. "Father's Day reminds us why it's important to provide parents with the support they need to be the best parents and caregivers they can be."

The Tampa Y offers a variety of programs that foster understanding and companionship between children and their caregivers such as parent/child swim class, parent/child gymnastics, kids and family fitness classes, youth sports, Teen Achievers and [Caring and Learning with Me](#) - all designed to strengthen families. To learn more about programs and activities available at the Tampa YMCA, visit [your nearest branch](#) or the website at or visit [www.tampaymca.org](http://www.tampaymca.org).

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### **About the Y**

The Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA is one of the area's leading nonprofits, strengthening Hillsborough and East Pasco communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the Association, 19 facilities engage more than 142,000 men, women and children — regardless of age, income or background — to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve our community's health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. The Tampa Y has long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change. [www.tampaymca.org](http://www.tampaymca.org)