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For Immediate Release

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Fighting Childhood Obesity with the First Lady

Tampa, FL (February 26, 2013) – The Florida Blue Foundation, formerly the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, has selected one of its *Embrace a Healthy Florida Initiative* grantees, the Tampa Metropolitan Area YMCA, to attend First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" event in Chicago Thursday, Feb. 28th. Saima Qadree, senior program director with the Sulphur Springs YMCA and director of the *Embrace a Healthy Florida Initiative*, will participate in the event.

Thursday's event is one of several stops Mrs. Obama will make during a national tour to celebrate the third anniversary of her "Let's Move!" initiative promoting exercise and nutrition among kids. "I am extremely honored and proud to represent the Tampa Y at the First Lady's event showcasing innovative ways to prevent childhood obesity across the country," says Qadree. "This special invitation speaks volumes about the work the Tampa Y is doing to promote healthier lifestyles among children and families, especially in the underserved area of Sulphur Springs, where children and families are in need of healthy environments that help them thrive." Thursday's event starts at 11am Eastern time at Chicago's McCormick Place.

Research suggests the issue of childhood obesity is more prevalent in low-income areas like Sulphur Springs due to limited access to healthy foods, safe places for outdoor activities and access to preventative health care services. *Creating a Healthier Sulphur Springs for Kids* is a network of community residents and community-based organizations working together to turn the childhood obesity epidemic around and, as a result, improve the health of the entire Sulphur Springs community. This group, which includes residents, service providers, government leaders and university partners, began in 2010 when the Tampa Y received an *Embrace a Healthy Florida* grant from the Florida Blue Foundation.

The Tampa Y's partnership with the Florida Blue Foundation offers strategic opportunities for families in Sulphur Springs to learn about and experience healthier food options and increased physical activity. Many of the Y's efforts to reduce childhood obesity are centered around the *5-2-1-Almost None* campaign. This campaign, developed by Nemours Health & Prevention Services, promotes five daily servings of fruits and vegetables; two hours or less of screen time; one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity; and almost no sodas and sugary drinks. We also know parents' activities play a direct role in how kids approach a healthier lifestyle. That's why the Tampa Y is leading the charge to help the whole family become healthier.

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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

About the Florida Blue Foundation

The Florida Blue Foundation, formerly the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida Foundation, is a separate, philanthropic affiliate of Florida Blue, Florida's Blue Cross and Blue Shield company. The Foundation and its parent are independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, an association of independent Blue Cross and Blue Shield companies. For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.bluefoundationfl.com.