

## For Immediate Release

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### ***YWCA HARTFORD REGION TAKES A STAND AGAINST RACISM***

Hartford, CT – On Friday, April 30, 2010, the YWCA Hartford Region will host its second annual **Stand Against Racism** event across communities throughout the capital area. **Stand Against Racism** is a program of the YWCA aimed at raising awareness that racism still exists in our communities and that it can no longer be ignored or tolerated.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a civil rights organization located in Montgomery, Alabama, the number of hate groups operating in the United States has grown by 54% in the last eight years (there are close to 1,000 active hate groups in the United States today). SPLC's Intelligence Report cites "immigration fears, a failing economy and the successful campaign of President Obama" as the factors that have fueled the increase. Hate groups have beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people. They promote hate, hostility, and sometimes violence.

In response, the YWCA created the **Stand Against Racism** event in order to combat the spread of hate and intolerance and to honor and celebrate the richness of diversity. In 2009, the program included more than 330 participating organizations in Connecticut, New Jersey, and New York that hosted local "Stands" which drew over 30,000 individuals at participating sites. Participants ranged from school-age children to elected officials, executives of large corporations, faith leaders, and others. In the Hartford area, 32 organizations were part of the Stand and drew over 1,700 participants pledging a lifetime of promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all people in their community and in the world. This powerful, unified effort helped raised awareness that racism hurts everyone.

Planning for the 2010 **Stand Against Racism** is underway and the YWCA Hartford Region will be working closely with approximately 75 organizations in the Hartford area to attract over 5,000 participants. Today, the YWCA Hartford Region is calling on all local organizations, schools, corporations, churches and other houses of worship, government agencies and individuals in the Hartford area to join with us by becoming a

participating site of the 2010 **Stand Against Racism**. Any group of any size that believes in a society free of racism is invited to join us. We hope you will be one of them!

Any organization or group of individuals can become a participating site by signing up through the **Stand Against Racism** Web site: [www.StandAgainstRacism.org](http://www.StandAgainstRacism.org). A participating site will host their

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own Stand Against Racism event at their own location (which can be private or open to the public).

Participation in the **Stand Against Racism** is free and becoming a participating site is very simple.

The YWCA will provide all the necessary materials and documents, including a *How to Run the Event Template* that can be customized to meet the organization's needs. Each organization's "Stand" will range from gatherings at work to larger scale stands like rallies and marches. No matter what shape the "Stand" takes in each participating site, all activities will echo the theme "racism is unacceptable." Organizations are urged to visit [www.StandAgainstRacism.org](http://www.StandAgainstRacism.org) to join this important movement.

The persistence and pervasiveness of racism divides our community and keeps individuals from achieving success in education, economics, employment, and quality of life. This year the **Stand Against Racism** will be a collaboration of numerous YWCA Associations throughout the United States. Strength comes from numbers.

For more details, please visit [www.StandAgainstRacism.org](http://www.StandAgainstRacism.org). For local information, please contact Caroline L. Mitchell, Director of Racial Justice and Advocacy for the YWCA Hartford Region at: 860-525-1163, ext. 218 or email: [carolinem@ywc Hartford.org](mailto:carolinem@ywc Hartford.org).

The YWCA Hartford Region seeks to bring people together across communities for one common goal—the elimination of racism—and we ask you to please make your voice heard by joining the **Stand Against Racism** on April 30, 2010.

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Established in 1867, The YWCA Hartford Region is the third oldest affiliate of the YWCA USA, a women's membership movement dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. The YWCA Hartford Region provides programs and services in the greater Hartford area including, child care, supportive housing, teen leadership development, racial justice awareness and financial literacy.