



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**NORTH SUBURBAN
YMCA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annual YMCA Strong Kids Dinner Planned for March 8, 2018

Ashley Blankstein-Delaney and Whitehall of Deerfield to be Honored for Community Involvement

Northbrook, Illinois: January 2018 – Plans are underway for the 12th Annual North Suburban YMCA Strong Kids Dinner, scheduled for Thursday, March 8 at Pinstripes. This popular event draws the community together for an evening of delicious food, exciting auctions, and warm socializing with 500 friends of the Y. The dinner's "Be a Hero!" theme supports the NSYMCA Strong Kids Fund, making Y programs accessible to families in need.

This year, the Y will honor Ashley Blankstein-Delaney and Whitehall of Deerfield as the recipients of the Thiel Award for Leadership and Social Responsibility. Blankstein-Delaney is Whitehall's Director of Business Development & Physician Relations. An outstanding healthcare and post-hospital rehabilitation center in Chicago's North Shore, Whitehall has been a major sponsor of YMCA community events including Seniorpalooza, the Strong Kids Dinner, and the Wheels vs. Wheels event that showcases the athletic potential of individuals with physical challenges or special needs. Ashley Blankstein-Delaney has taken a leadership role in partnering with the Y, and also has been a dedicated volunteer for other non-profits including the Northbrook Chamber of Commerce, NorthShore University HealthSystems Auxiliary Board, The Kindness Connection, Faith in Action, Exclusive Professional Women's Networking Group (EPWING) and Illinois Continuity of Care. In addition, she is chairing this year's Cancer Wellness Center's Run/Walk to be held on April 29.

"Ashley's selfless volunteerism and Whitehall of Deerfield's support of charitable causes, including the Y, makes them a natural choice for the Thiel Social Responsibility Award," noted Kim Nyren, NSYMCA Director of Community Investment. "This award honors those who exemplify what it means to be part of the Y movement; fostering experiences that emphasize inclusion, encouraging others to give back, and making a lasting difference in the continued development of our community."

"On behalf of Whitehall of Deerfield and myself, I am so humbled to be chosen for this wonderful honor," exclaims Ashley Blankstein-Delaney. "It is an organization that I greatly admire for the wonderful opportunities they provide to families in the community. Helping our children and seniors live life to the fullest and succeeding in all their potentials is critical to all of our futures. I believe it's an

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important part of what I do each and every day, so I help, I give back, and I celebrate the community that I live and work in.”

The Ken & Alta Thiel Strong Kids Dinner provides critical funding that enables the Y to keep its life-changing programs and services available to all. More than one out of five individuals at the Y – over 2,800 people – receive financial assistance through the Strong Kids Fund for after-school programs, summer camp, life-saving swim lessons, and other wellness activities for all ages. In the last eleven years, the Strong Kids Fund has provided over \$4.7M to assist over 20,000 children, families and seniors.

Guests at the Strong Kids Dinner will enjoy time to socialize over cocktails and appetizers, browse an extensive silent auction, and participate in entertaining games and raffles. After a delicious dinner, auctioneer Ron Bernardi will open live bidding on trips, sports tickets, and other exciting items. WBBM News Radio Anchor Lisa Fielding will serve as MC for the evening. Special guests this year will be Northwestern University athletes dressed in superhero costumes, and the NSYMCA will be honoring local heroes from the police, fire and first responder departments. Last year’s dinner set records for both attendance and money raised, so hopes are high for a repeat performance.

The Strong Kids Dinner will be held from 5:30 to 9:00 pm on Thursday, March 8 at Pinstripes, 1150 Willow Road in Northbrook. Ticket and sponsorship information is available on the North Suburban YMCA’s website, NSYMCA.org/strong-kids.



Photo Caption: At the 2017 Strong Kids Dinner, superheroes from Northwestern University athletic teams joined honorees Stacey and Pat Fitzgerald (4th from left), Tensley Garris, Northbrook Chamber President; Glenn Weintraub of AA Service; and Howard Schultz, NSYMCA President/CEO. The 2018 fundraiser on March 8 will continue to encourage participants to be heroes for those in need.

About the [North Suburban YMCA](#)

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2018/19, the North Suburban YMCA provides individuals in Northbrook and 15 surrounding communities with programs and tools that help them become healthier, more connected, and confident, ensuring that everyone, regardless of age, income, or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. The NSYMCA focuses on Youth Development, Healthy Living, and Social Responsibility and is a charitable organization, inclusive and welcoming to all in our community. Learn more at NSYMCA.org.