



## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### ADDRESSING YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS: YMCA DALLAS & HEALTH EXPERTS INTRODUCE VITAL NEW PROGRAM

*"YES YOU CAN!" Initiative to Focus on Brain Plasticity and Comprehensive Support*

**DALLAS, TEXAS (May 6, 2025)** – The YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas in partnership with Grant Halliburton Foundation, Metrocare, Momentous Institute, and Center for BrainHealth, have developed the "YES YOU CAN!" pilot program set to launch in June 2025. This project is made possible in part through support from Lyda Hill Philanthropies, the Hersh Foundation/Ken Hersh and Regen Horchow, and The Bette Rathjen Foundation for Emotional Health.

The initiative is specifically designed to reinforce the concept of brain plasticity, the brain's ability to change and adapt. The program will also focus on refining existing training, platforms, and interventions from partner organizations in a cohesive approach to support comprehensive care to children, teens, parents, and counselors at select Y summer programs.

In a recent report by the CDC, the percentage of high school students experiencing sadness or hopelessness has steadily increased over the span of the decade. In 2023, 40 percent of teens reported experiencing symptoms of depression, compared to 20 percent in 2011.

The Y is deeply committed to addressing the growing mental health needs of youth in North Texas. Recognizing the critical importance of mental wellness, the Y established a mental health advisory board in 2022 and recruited leading experts from across North Texas, all of which are a part of the "YES YOU CAN!" initiative.

"The organizations' collective expertise have been instrumental in shaping our approach for an effective program that can be replicated sustainably," said **Giselle Patterson, Associate Vice President of Community Health** "Our goal is to help children and

teens become more resilient and improve their overall well being. We look forward to seeing how 'YES YOU CAN!' will touch the lives of our community."

Groups in the program include the Y's summer learning academy, teen camps, and Kamp K'aana at Camp Grady Spruce, a two-week sleep away camp that serves children above a healthy weight. Combined, nearly 600 campers, parents and Y staff will have mental health resources through a combination of virtual and in-person methods to maximize accessibility and impact.

"YES YOU CAN!" will provide mental health support through several channels, such as:

- **Counselor Training:** Camp counselors will receive training using resources from the Grant Halliburton Foundation, Metrocare, Momentous Institute, and The Center for BrainHealth, to address the needs of campers more effectively.
- **Camper Programming:** Children and teens will have access to robust mental health programming designed to promote well-being.
- **Parent Resources:** Parents will receive training and tools to support their child's mental health long after camp concludes.
- **Professional Support:** Metrocare will provide licensed mental health professionals on-site and virtually, ensuring access to expert care.

As a frontline organization, the Y is dedicated to being a thought leader on mental wellness as an issue that is important to North Texans and surrounding communities. If families would like to learn more about "YES YOU CAN!" and other Y programs visit the website: [www.ymcadallas.org](http://www.ymcadallas.org)

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### **About The YMCA Of Metropolitan Dallas**

The Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas serves thousands of men, women and children each year, regardless of age, income or background. Anchored in 18 North Texas communities, the Dallas Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver lasting personal and social change. The Y ensures all people have access to the essentials needed to become thriving members of the community. Daily, the Y bridges and fills individual and community needs as a catalyst for impactful change. The YMCA makes accessible the support and opportunities that empower people and communities to learn, grow and thrive, with three areas of focus: Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. To learn more or get involved in improving our local communities, have opportunities to make an impact and support your neighbors, please visit us at [www.ymcadallas.org](http://www.ymcadallas.org).

### **About Metrocare**

Metrocare is the largest provider of mental health, developmental disability and permanent supported housing services in Dallas County serving over 50,000 individuals annually. For over 55 years, Metrocare has provided a broad array of services from mental health care, primary care, services for veterans and their loved ones, accessible pharmacies, homeless outreach, and supportive social services. Metrocare provides specialty mental health services to over 10,000 children and teens and has numerous programs for babies, children and adults with disabilities, including Early Childhood Intervention, Flourishing Families, Supported Employment and two specialty autism clinics in Dallas and DeSoto. In conjunction with clinical care, Metrocare's Altshuler Center for Education and Research (ACER) is transforming the community mental health landscape of North Texas through workforce development focused on innovative partnerships and exceptional trauma-informed training. If in need of mental health support, visit [metrocareservices.org](http://metrocareservices.org).

### **About Center for BrainHealth**

Center for BrainHealth®, part of The University of Texas at Dallas, is a research institute committed to enhancing, preserving, and restoring brain health across the lifespan. Leading-edge cognitive neuroscience exploration is translated quickly into practical innovations, empowering people of all ages to thrive and unlock their brain potential. Translational innovations leverage 1) the BrainHealth Index, a proprietary measure that uniquely charts one's upward (or downward) holistic brain health trajectory whatever their starting level; and 2) Strategic Memory Advanced Reasoning Tactics (SMART™) brain training, a strategy-based toolkit developed and tested by BrainHealth researchers and other teams over three decades.

The Center's Youth and Family Innovations initiatives place a strong emphasis on supporting parents and caregivers, equipping them with science-backed tools to foster healthy brain development, social connectedness, and resilience in their children. Through engaging workshops and digital platforms like Parenting Minds, the Center empowers families with practical, brain-healthy strategies to navigate everyday challenges and strengthen relationships.

### **About Momentous Institute**

Momentous Institute, founded by Salesmanship Club of Dallas in 1920, is a leading mental health organization that exists to strengthen children, families, and communities. By working alongside and within larger systems, we are cultivating a world of emotionally thriving people reaching their full potential. We are on track to positively impact the mental health of 1,000,000 children and their families by 2031 through innovative approaches, including mental health services, our nationally recognized Momentous School, Changemakers curriculum, nature-based experiences, and professional training for educators, mental health professionals, and other child-serving professionals.

### **About Grant Halliburton Foundation**

Grant Halliburton Foundation was established in 2006 in memory of a Dallas teen who battled depression and bipolar disorder for several years before his suicide death at the age of 19. The Foundation that bears his name works to help families and young people through education, resources, and support. Since 2006, the Foundation has

provided mental health and suicide prevention education and training to more than 350,000 students, educators, parents, and professionals. The Foundation also offers Here For Texas, which includes [HereForTexas.com](http://HereForTexas.com) and the Here For Texas Mental Health Navigation Line. These free community tools, available in English and Spanish, aim to offer easy access for North Texans seeking mental health and substance use information and resources. Learn more about Grant Halliburton Foundation at [GrantHalliburton.org](http://GrantHalliburton.org).