

Release at Will

Media Contact: Lisa Desatnik, 513-984-5474

**Williams YMCA Exercising Minds and Bodies of People with
Disabilities
In Weekly 'Blast' Class
*Anonymous \$7000 Donation Allows Program To Continue Thru 2008***

They bend and stretch; raise their arms, then their legs; lift a water bottle or a can to build strength. Everything is modified to their ability in the Williams YMCA weekly 'Blast' fitness class designed specifically for adults with developmental and other disabilities. Each Wednesday at 4 p.m. since last fall, between 15 and 20 participants – and their support staff – have been getting healthier and energized together with instructor Ossie Johnson. Thanks to an anonymous \$7000 donor, the popular class will be able to continue through 2008.

“The YMCA believes everyone deserves the opportunity to strive toward their God given potential. Fitness and healthy lifestyles are an important piece of that. In 'Blast', we've adapted exercises to ensure participants can perform the exercises at their own level with success,” said Chuck Barlage, executive director of the Williams YMCA. “We encourage people in the class to set realistic goals, have fun, and keep coming back.”

The class includes cardiovascular, stretching and strengthening exercises and healthy snacks. It always ends with a healthy tip of the day.

'Blast' is a partnership between the Williams YMCA (1228 E McMillan St in Walnut Hills) and Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (MR/DD). It is offered free to adults with developmental disabilities; however space is limited to 20 people per session. Sessions are seven weeks, and the next session will begin in April. For information or to reserve a space, individuals can contact Chuck Barlage at the Williams YMCA at 513-362-2055.

The YMCA is the largest non-governmental, non-profit community services organization in this area that is committed to helping everyone reach their God-given potential in spirit, mind, and body – regardless of their ability to pay. Each year tens of thousands of people from children to seniors are able to participate in YMCA programs and services because of financial assistance, including health and wellness, active older adult programs, youth and teen camp, swimming and water safety lessons, teen achievers, college readiness, and job preparedness. With 60 locations, the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati is also the largest provider of child care programs, that in 2007, served nearly 10,000 kids on YMCA scholarships. The annual Strong Kids Campaign helps make that possible.

###