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## **YMCA of Greater Seattle Joins Welcoming America & Hundreds of Communities to Celebrate New Americans During Welcoming Week**

SEATTLE, September 8, 2017 —This Welcoming Week, taking place Sept. 15–24, the YMCA of Greater Seattle will join Welcoming America, hundreds of YMCAs and other organizations nationwide in hosting free events to celebrate immigrants' contributions to communities and bring together all residents in a spirit of unity. Welcoming Week activities are all free, open to the public and include a focus on cultural experiences including dance, food, music and immigration rights.

"At the YMCA of Greater Seattle we believe we are stronger when everyone in the community feels welcome and we can all work together for the common good," said YMCA of Greater Seattle's Jackie Martinez-Vasquez, Vice-President, Social Responsibility. "Welcoming Week is an opportunity for neighbors – both immigrants and U.S.-born residents – to connect, find common ground and celebrate our shared values – all for a better us."

Welcoming Week activities are being held across the thirteen YMCA's of Greater Seattle. To find a Welcoming Week event near you, click [here](#). Some highlights include:

- Auburn Valley YMCA: Welcome Cards and Know Your Immigration Rights Sessions
- Dale Turner Family YMCA: Food and Dance International Festival
- Coal Creek Family YMCA: Community Resource Fair
- Meredith Mathews East Madison YMCA: Cultural Dance Classes including West African Dance, Belly Dancing, Salsa Dancing, and Capoeira
- West Seattle Family YMCA: Cooking Across Cultures, an Orisha Dance Class and a Cultural Photography Display by artist Katherine Frith.

"Communities recognize the benefits of being welcoming and ensuring that everyone can fully contribute to a community's prosperity," said David Lubell, founder and executive director of Welcoming America. "Welcoming Week events are a powerful way to promote cross-cultural understanding and build bridges between new and long-time residents, which results in stronger communities for all."

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### ***About the YMCA of Greater Seattle***

The YMCA of Greater Seattle is the Northwest's leading nonprofit organization strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Founded in 1876, the Y reaches more than 253,000 people of all backgrounds, abilities and financial circumstances annually through 13 branches, two overnight camps and more than 200 program sites throughout King and south Snohomish counties. It nurtures more than 142,000 kids and teens to develop their gifts and give back to our community and engages nearly 23,000 volunteers who contribute more than 372,000 hours of service each year. Visit [seattleyymca.org](http://seattleyymca.org).

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### ***About Welcoming Week***

Welcoming Week is an annual celebration bringing together thousands of people and hundreds of local events that celebrate the contributions of immigrants and refugees and the role communities play to foster greater welcome. Welcoming Week is Sept. 15-24 across the country and now expanding to other parts of the world.

Welcoming America is leading a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone who lives there feel like they belong. Welcoming America believes that all people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of both our communities and our shared future. [www.welcomingamerica.org](http://www.welcomingamerica.org).