

## MEDIA ALERT

### YWCA SWIMMERS AND GYMNASTS STRIVE FOR GOLD AT 2007 EMPIRE STATE GAMES

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**White Plains, July 20, 2007** – A dozen youth from the YWCA of White Plains will participate in swimming events and three in gymnastics at the 30<sup>th</sup> Empire State Summer Games, July 25-29.

Ten of the YWCA Synchronized swimmers will be representing both the Hudson Valley and the New York regions at the Empire State Games this summer. The venue for Synchronized Swimming is the pool at IONA College in New Rochelle. This is the second year that the swimmers from the YWCA are participating in the Empire State Games. YWCA participants were the youngest swimmers in the Games last year. (*See box.*)

YWCA Synchronized swimmers have won many medals in local and regional competitions this year, including **Alison Commender**, who won four gold medals at the Association Championships on April 20, in Hamden Connecticut. At the Region B Synchronized Swimming Championships, which took place on May 19<sup>th</sup> in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, **Elissa Feist** took first place in the 13 and over Solo Competition. **Kaylyn Oates** and **Chirlien Pang** received silver medals for their solos.

“Over the past year and a half, we are proud to have established a program with a cohesive, congenial and diverse group of swimmers and families who successfully combine hard work, creativity and fun,” said the YWCA Head Coach, Rowena Dale Mohammed, an active Masters swimmer who received a silver medal at the last World Masters Competition. She is also the Head Coach of the Gotham Synchronized Swimming Team. "I expect this talented group of young swimmers to demonstrate that Hudson Valley and New York City are regions with bright future prospects." At the Empire State Games she will be the head coach for the New York region.

The YWCA's synchronized swimming program currently consists of over 20 students, ages 5 to 50, and is growing. The group hosted their first annual show at the YWCA pool on Saturday,

#### Synchronized Swimmers representing the Hudson Valley:

**Alison Commender**, 14, of Larchmont, will compete in the duet, trio and team events;  
**Corinna "Coco" Darelus**, 13, of Rye, will compete in the duet, trio and team events;  
**Elissa Feist**, 12, of Briarcliff Manor, will compete in the solo, trio and team events;  
**Sebastianne Kent**, 12, of White Plains, will compete in the trio event; and  
**Kaylyn Oates**, 16, White Plains, will compete in the solo, trio and team events.  
Synchronized Swimmers representing New York City:  
**Chloe Jones**, 12, of the Bronx, will compete in the duet, trio and team events;  
**Chirlien Pang**, 12, of New York, will compete in the solo, duet and team events;  
**Kristen Rondon**, 12, of the Bronx, will compete in the duet, trio and team events;  
**Zuri Mena** 11, of the Bronx, will compete in the trio and team events; and  
**Jodi Tam** 11, of Staten Island, will compete in the solo, duet and team events.

June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Over 100 swimmers and guests arrived for the event and some had an opportunity to participate.

In addition to our Synchronized representatives, two members of the YWCA Middies Swim Team will be at the Scarsdale Town Pool competing for the Hudson Valley in the 200 and 400 Individual Medley and the 40 freestyle. **Alex Gianino**, 14, (IM Competitions) will be a sophomore at Hackley School in Tarrytown this Fall. **Ben Iszkowitz**, 14, (Freestyle) will be a sophomore at New Rochelle High School.



Our gymnastics athletes include **Makeda Constable** (*left*), 13, who will compete in all events (vault, uneven parallel bars, balance beam and floor) with the open team. **Annmarie Graziosa**, 15, will compete in all events with the scholastic team. **Jessie Baum**, 12, qualified as a first alternate and will compete should one of the members of either team, open or scholastic, be unable to compete.

“The YWCA is extremely proud of all three girls because they were judged two levels higher than their own,” said Chezdis Sanchez, Assistant Coach and Program Coordinator. “All three girls are Level 8 and were judged at Level 10.”

Constable was the first girl in YWCA history to qualify to be on a New York State Regional Team. The New York team placed first in every age group during the competition in Rhode Island this season. Last year, Constable took home the all-around title for Level 7 gymnastics at the New York State Championship meet.

Constable is a recent graduate of Sacred Heart in Hartsdale and in September she will be attending the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the Ursuline School in New Rochelle.

The YWCA’s year-round gymnastics program serves children of all ages and abilities. The 8,000 square foot air-conditioned gymnasium is exclusively dedicated to gymnastics and includes a spring floor, trampoline, BAB system and 40 foot Tumbletrack. The team is comprised of girls from all age levels who have advanced skills.

“The coaching staff is very proud of our Tumblettes team, which numbers 77 from pre-team to Level 8. To have representatives participate at this year’s Empire State Games demonstrates the strength of the program and the dedication of our members,” said Lissette Rios, Program Director, Gymnastics.

Information on the YWCA’s synchronized swimming, Middies and gymnastics programs are available on the YWCA website, [www.ywcawhiteplains.com](http://www.ywcawhiteplains.com). For more information regarding

the YWCA's Synchronized Swimming program contact Head Coach/Instructor Rowena Dale Mohammed at (917) 533-4811. For the Middies Swim Team contact Head Coach, Bryan Dorsey at (914) 949-6227, ext. 151 or visit the Middies website: [www.middiesswimming.org](http://www.middiesswimming.org). For the YWCA Tumblettes Gymnastics team, contact the Director at (914) 949-6227 ext 135.

*The YWCA is a women's membership movement that strives to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.*

*The YWCA of White Plains & Central Westchester serves over 4,000 women, men and children weekly at its facility on 515 North Street through its programs for youth and families. It offers a significant number of social programs and services including: Early Childhood Development; Childcare and After School Programs; Summer Camps; County Courthouse Childcare, the G.E.M.S. program servicing youth at risk; and Women's Health. In addition, the YWCA has a Residence for women on North Broadway that provides housing for approximately 185 low-income working women, students and women in transition.*

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