FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Jan. 11, 2021

*VIRTUAL EVENT*

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF
DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The 36th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Dignity Award Event
Hosted by the Jackie Robinson Family YMCA airs live online Jan. 14, 2021, 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Featuring Dr. Wilma Wooten and Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Nash Weber

SAN DIEGO – Jan. 11, 2021 – The greater San Diego community is invited to pay tribute to the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. during the YMCA’s Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Dignity Award celebration on Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021 from 6:00-7:00pm.

Due to the pandemic, the event will take place virtually. To register and/or donate, visit www.ymcasd.org/mlk. All proceeds benefit the Jackie Robinson Family Y, which serves a diverse community in Southeastern San Diego.

Traditionally, this iconic event is a breakfast that kicks off San Diego-area events dedicated to Dr. King’s impact. “We’re excited to continue doing our part to maintain a healthy community by moving our event to a virtual platform this year,” said Anna Arancibia with the Jackie Robinson Family Y. “By going virtual, we’re able to extend an invitation to more San Diegans so they too can feel the magic of this celebration and honor Dr. King’s life and work.”

Dr. King’s words and selfless actions continue to be an inspiration and call-to-action for tolerance and peace with each new generation. This event not only memorializes and celebrates Dr. King, it recognizes community leaders of the past, present and future, including this year’s Human Dignity Award winner.

The Human Dignity Award is given annually to a person who exemplifies the work and character of Dr. King. Past honorees encompass outstanding qualities of volunteerism, philanthropy and activism in the San Diego community. This year the YMCA is proud to celebrate Dr. Wilma Wooten, Public Health Officer for the County of San Diego.
Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Dr. Wooten has exemplified what it means to be a person of courage and moral strength by providing clear, science-based directives to County leaders that prioritize the health of San Diegans. She has stood firm in advocating for best practices in wearing masks, washing hands, staying six feet apart and avoiding being indoors with non-household members. Dr. Wooten was also named 2020 San Diegan of the Year by the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Dr. Wooten has been with the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency since 2001, initially serving as Deputy Health Officer, and has been the Public Health Officer since 2007. Trained in family medicine, public health and preventive medicine, she has oversight for almost 500 employees and a budget of over $100M, serving a county of 3.1 million residents. Dr. Wooten is an ardent supporter of public health and throughout her life, she has broken barriers and served as a role model for young people, especially African American girls, who wish to pursue a career in medicine and science.

"Dr. Wooten has been a strong leader for our community, not only during the pandemic but for years prior," said Baron Herdelin-Doherty, President & CEO of the YMCA of San Diego County. “She exemplifies the work and character of Dr. King and the YMCA couldn't imagine presenting the 2021 Human Dignity Award to anyone else but Dr. Wooten.”

The event also features keynote speaker Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Nash Weber. Dr. Weber was elected in November 2012 to represent California’s 79th Assembly District. Most recently, she was nominated as California’s next Secretary of State.

Additional entertainment during the virtual event will feature the Buffalo Soldiers presenting the colors, the iconic MLK Choir, singer Rebecca Jade, as well as the youth essay winner to help illustrate the impact Dr. King has had on young lives.

For more details, visit www.ymcasd.org/mlk.

The YMCA of San Diego County is laser-focused on racial justice, developing its strategic process on how to address systemic racism, both internally and externally for the San Diego community. “This is not a sprint – it’s a marathon, and I believe that Dr. King would approve of how our YMCA is focused on eradicating racial injustice,” added Herdelin-Doherty.

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About the YMCA of San Diego County
The YMCA of San Diego County is the largest Y association in the nation, serving nearly 500,000 San Diego County residents and employing more than 5,500 people (pre-COVID). Through a variety of programs and services focused on youth development, healthy living and social responsibility, the Y unites men, women and children - regardless of age, income or background - to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. The YMCA of San Diego County is dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their fullest potential as children of God through the development of the spirit, mind and body. Visit www.ymcasd.org to find your local YMCA or call (858) 292-YMCA (9622).