



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Contact: Mbude, (Communications, CT YMCA), Kadalie, B (Programme Director, CT YMCA)

Tel: +27 (0) 21 447 6217

Email: [mbude@ymcacapetown.org.za](mailto:mbude@ymcacapetown.org.za), [brandon@ymcacapetown.org.za](mailto:brandon@ymcacapetown.org.za)

## **The Cape Town YMCA celebrates 150 years - a special ‘Sesquicentennial’ tribute of service to young people.**

**Observatory, Cape Town, July 22, 2015** --- With thirty days to go until its 150<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration party, the Cape Town YMCA extends its strong roots of Christian values and holistic (body-mind-and-spirit) based youth education, by putting the spotlight on environmental awareness during the birthday celebration.

The Cape Town Y (as is affectionately known), was established in the Cape CBD in 1865, and housed for many years at its popular youth residence *44 Long Street*, now a heritage site. In 1990, the board of directors marked the 125<sup>th</sup> birthday by planting a tree in Cape Town. This year, the Cape Town Y extends this gesture through planting of a special indigenous tree, the ‘*Forest Bushwillow*’, also known as ‘*Combetrum Kraussi*’. This tree is also South Africa’s designated ‘2015 Tree of the Year’; a beautiful plant bearing white flowers in spring and an unusual fiery red in winter before falling. Loved for its natural beauty, high drought-resistance and easy-to-grow nature once planted, the name ‘Kraussi’ lends honours to Dr. F. Krauss of the Stuttgart Museum, who made a collecting trip to South Africa in 1837-1840. The *Cape Town Y* also aims at heightening awareness of the need for more tree-planting in our communities; a sustainable habitat is as important to the Cape Town Y just as the nurturing of young minds in youth development programmes.

A team of Cape Town Y volunteers with their young program attendees, supporters and partners, are tasked with planting a total of 150 *Forest Bushwillow* during August and September, marking a tree for every year of YMCA’s active service to young people in Cape Town. The planting initiative will also give an opportunity for the Cape Town Y team to engage other youth NGO’s about the importance of trees in sustaining our natural habitat. The planting will be conducted at various locations housing the YMCA weekly programs such as *Wallacedene Library, Pollsmeer*

*Prison* and at other youth partners like *Bonnytown Child and Youth Care Centre*, and at selected youth NGO's in Cape Town.

In his 150<sup>th</sup> birthday message, the Cape Town Y chairman, Stephen Stockdale, spells out the anniversary's significance "the *YMCA* as a global movement has grown immensely, with many partnerships formed, and voluntary work being one of the cornerstones of our mission – it is crucial we celebrate our service thus far". A volunteer at Cape Town Y for the past three years, an ex Pollsmoor Prison inmate and *YMCA* programme graduate, 31 year old Michael Henry endorses this sentiment, "My volunteer work at *Pollsmoor Prison (Y-Justice* pre-release program for young offenders) every week ensures that I share positive life-skill lessons to young inmates having difficulty re-integrating themselves back into society positively".

###

For more information on the 150<sup>th</sup> events, please visit [www.ymcacapetown.org.za](http://www.ymcacapetown.org.za)

The *Cape Town YMCA* is a registered non-profit, running weekly youth development programmes (YZone, YArts and YJustice) for young people between 7-25 years. *Cape Town YMCA* also offers affordable accommodation in Observatory with amenities suitable for people from all walks of life. The *Cape Town YMCA* also has Little Stream - a unique restaurant and conference center in Klein Constantia. For more information on the *Cape Town YMCA*, its youth development programs and public services, please visit [www.ymcacapetown.org.za](http://www.ymcacapetown.org.za), or engage on social media on Twitter (@ymcact), Facebook (YMCACapeTownPage), and Instagram (ymcact)