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MEDIA NOTE: A list of scheduled event features and activities, including a 4-mile bike ride led by Venice Mayor John Holic, is provided at the end of this release

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Cyclovia Venice event set for March 11

Back by popular demand, cycling enthusiasts, walkers, runners, inline skaters and people with strollers from around the region will converge on downtown Venice for Cyclovia Venice from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Sunday, March 11. The event, which is free and open to the public, will take place on Venice Avenue between Nokomis Avenue and Venice Beach.

“During the inaugural event held last November, more than 1,300 people enjoyed a non-motorized ‘open street’ complete with vendors, physical activities, and the opportunity to meet their neighbors and learn about all their community has to offer,” says South County Family YMCA Healthy Communities Coordinator Jennifer Tucker-Mogensen.

The Cyclovia Venice event is designed to promote healthy, active living through a series of activities opening the city’s largest public space – its streets – to walk, run, bike and discover active transportation, showcasing the Venice community’s many assets that contribute to its vitality and livability.

“Open streets encourage physical activity in residents who may not normally engage in exercise, thereby promoting healthy living,” said Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) director Kari Ellingstad.

The Cyclovia Venice event promotes the connectivity to more than 20 miles of recreational trails, including The Legacy Trail and Venetian Waterway Park. Three Cyclovia events are planned this year -- two in historic downtown Venice and one on The Legacy Trail/Venetian Waterway Park.

Organizers say that dozens of people volunteer time with Cyclovia because of their commitment to a healthier community. Businesses and other organizations that would like to join as sponsors can contact Jennifer Tucker-Mogensen at 941-504-1905 or by email at jtucker@veniceymca.org.

Activities and features of the March 11 event include:

- 2-mile fun run with SKY Academy Principal Dr. Oleh Bula and students at 10 a.m.
- Health In Motion Mobile Unit will offer blood pressure and blood sugar screenings
- Venice Mayor John Holic will lead a 4-mile bike ride through Venice to bring awareness to the Bike/Ped-Friendly Community initiative. The ride will start at noon at the corner of Venice and Nokomis avenues, and end at the same location.
- bloodmobile
- bike helmet giveaway for children
- Friends of The Legacy Trail surrey rides
- bike rentals and a bike valet parking area
- Marathon Zumba and Hip Hop dance party
- Pilates Reformer demonstrations
- Tai chi, fencing, spinning and Tae Kwon Do classes
- strength testing provided by Venice Regional Medical
- street chalk art, face painting
- YMCA free-throw contests and basketball clinic
- beach soccer clinics
- paddleboard demonstrations
- beach yoga

The event also will feature vendors selling locally grown produce, offerings from health food stores and prepared healthy lunch and snack choices from several local restaurants.

Cyclovia Venice is a project of the South County Family YMCA's ACHIEVE Initiative, a healthy communities' effort started in 2009 to increase access to physical activities and nutritious foods for all Venice residents. Organizational partners include the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, the city of Venice, Sarasota County Parks and Recreation, Venice Regional Medical Center, Sarasota County Health and Human Services, the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) and Sarasota County Schools.

For more information, contact the South County Family YMCA at 941-504-1905 or visit www.CycloviaVenice.com

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