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SCCF Commits to 2 More Years of Quality Early Childhood Education Grant

Angola, IN – In March 2019, Steuben County Community Foundation committed two more years of grant funding to improve the number and quality of daycare and early childhood learning options in Steuben County. SCCF has partnered with Early Childhood Alliance (ECA), a Fort Wayne based nonprofit who is recognized as a leader in the early childhood care and education field in northeast Indiana. This additional funding is part of almost \$45,000 that SCCF has invested in early childhood education in Steuben County over the last 3 years. With this grant, ECA will continue to offer classes for Steuben County childcare staff to work towards their Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, as well as networking events, professional development, and capacity building grants.

“SCCF is working with experts in the field, but all the grant funds are designated to directly benefit local childcare providers across the entire area of Steuben County. The board is excited by the progress made so far, and we look forward to continuing to help address this crucial need in the community,” said Jennifer Danic, SCCF President & CEO.

This grant supports childcare centers throughout Steuben County, including Heaven Sent Preschool and Day Care in Angola, Kingdom Kids in Hamilton, and Little Lambs Daycare in Fremont. Brooke Ridenour, director of Heaven Sent, shared, "Participating in Paths to QUALITY has encouraged my staff to start CDA classes and participate in professional development opportunities, which has improved our classroom environment and hands on learning opportunities for children. Having these tools available has helped with our quality of care and work with children. This has also helped me as a director, on how I am able to support my staff in their work with children." Amber Hukill, Director of Little Lambs, shared, "Early Childhood Alliance's networking has helped us a lot with connecting with the other child cares around us. It's nice to be able to attend meetings where we can all provide resources for each other and offer advice in areas we may be struggling in. The professional development opportunities have been a great resource as well for helping our staff meet their annual training hours for PTQ and licensing, and enhancing our quality of child care provided."

The grant also allows SCCF to support home-based childcare options. For Roxanne Johnson of Miss Roxy's Daycare, the coaching from ECA has helped her classroom support a wide range of age groups. "Being able to continue my education through training and getting very close to completing

my CDA, I have been exposed to an in-depth approach to handling all of the various challenges that are associated with operating a licensed child care.”



Pictured is Brooke Ridenour of Heaven Sent Preschool and Day Care with Achaiah McCue. Heaven Sent is one of many Steuben County programs working to take advance on Indiana's state rating system, Paths to QUALITY™.

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Through philanthropic services, strategic investments and community leadership, Steuben County Community Foundation helps people support the causes they care about, now and for generations to come. The Steuben County Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization with assets totaling more than \$28 million. Our vision: Serving as a community leader and improving the quality of life by assessing, supporting and coordinating philanthropic giving and endowment building. Our mission: Connecting people who care with needs that matter to our community. For more information on the Foundation, visit its website at www.steubenfoundation.org.