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Tri County Community Action Receives Grant from The Perry County Community Foundation

(Perry County, Pennsylvania, May 26, 2022) Tri County Community Action (TCCA) will change the lives of more families living in Perry County thanks to a \$10,000 grant from the Perry County Community Foundation, a regional foundation of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities. Last week TCCA CEO Jennifer Wintermyer accepted a grant for the Perry County Resource Center's Parents as Teachers (PAT) program.

Intervening in children's lives at a young age can help break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Children who start kindergarten off at a good developmental level are more successful throughout their school-aged years and are more likely to earn a diploma and advance their education through college or a trade field. Research tells us that high school graduates coming from low-income families who do not go on to further their education will have a 77 percent chance of raising their children in poverty.

TCCA's PAT program utilizes short- and long-term strategies to work with enrolled pregnant mothers and/or families of children, birth through kindergarten. The PAT program serves all families; many of the enrolled participants are navigating the reality of poverty in their lives and actively seeking ways to move beyond it.

PAT is a free evidence-based early learning program that promotes optimal child development by supporting and engaging parents and caregivers. The philosophy of PAT acknowledges that babies begin learning at birth and that parents and guardians are their children's first and most influential teachers. It equips pregnant mothers, parents, and caregivers with the skills necessary to become that first and most influential teacher and lay a strong foundation for their child's future success in school.

Program participants gain the knowledge, skills, and tools they need to become the first teacher in their children's lives. Children complete learning encounters with their parents to nurture critical early learning skills and enhance their relationship with their parent(s) or caregiver. Children also receive periodic screenings to identify learning, sensory (hearing or visual), or developmental problems and ensure children are meeting developmental milestones.

Participants gain a network of resources and monthly group meetings. TCCA's resource network connects individuals and families with unique services to meet needs beyond the PAT program's scope (e.g., clothing, food, employment development and case management services, fatherhood programming, utility, and other public forms of assistance).

Parents and caregivers can participate in monthly group meetings (called Group Connections and Parent Cafés). Group Connections offer adults the same opportunities while including their children in the background of learning through play together in a group context. Parent Cafés offer adult participants the opportunity to connect with other parents and guardians to share parenting experiences, gain new insights, and talk about topics that interest them.

"We are grateful to Perry County Community Foundation and their commitment to end poverty through early childhood and family development. With this funding, we can extend our work to families in Perry County and create a better future for low-income children," said Sheila Derr, Director of Early Childhood and Family Development.

About Tri County Community Action:

Tri County Community Action has been helping people and changing lives throughout Cumberland, Dauphin, and Perry Counties for over 50 years. Offering a comprehensive approach to individual, family, and neighborhood success, Tri County Community Action provides a myriad of programming and initiatives around early childhood and family development; employment, education, and financial empowerment; housing security; and community development - all to create strong families and thriving communities. Tri County Community Action's Promise is to care about the entire community, and acknowledges that even today, structural inequities leave some behind. TCCA believes that lifting diversity, equity, and inclusion and standing against hate is core to combating those structural inequities, making all communities a better place to live.