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Community Action Project of Tulsa receives \$750,000 in grants for Promise Neighborhoods initiative

TULSA, Okla. – Community Action Project (CAP) of Tulsa will receive a combined \$750,000 in grants to fund the development of a plan to provide educational opportunities to children from birth to career in the Kendall-Whittier and Eugene Field neighborhoods.

The Promise Neighborhoods program aims to address significant challenges faced by students and families living in high-poverty communities by providing resources to plan services from early learning to college and career. Plans include a range of services from improving a neighborhood's health, safety, and stability to expanding access to learning technology and Internet connectivity, and boosting family engagement in student learning

“We are proud to lead a close partnership with Tulsa Public Schools, other organizations, and community residents to transform these two neighborhoods and pave the way for future generations of educated, successful citizens,” said Steven Dow, executive director of CAP. “We applaud the vision, commitment and willingness of our partners to challenge the way we do business so we can produce better long-term outcomes for disadvantaged kids. We are especially grateful for the funding that George Kaiser Family Foundation (GKFF) has been providing for the planning work that we have been doing in the last year which positioned us to write such a competitive application, as well as GKFF's generous support in funding the required match for the federal grant over the coming year.”

CAP is one of 15 organizations across the U.S. to receive a \$500,000 planning grant from the U.S. Department of Education for the Promise Neighborhoods initiative, with its application having received the fourth highest score of all applications. The federal funds will be enhanced by a \$250,000 matching grant from GKFF. Earlier this year, CAP was selected by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as one of 17 grantees in the Choice Neighborhood effort, with matched funding also provided by GKFF.

“Our focus is to create and support evidenced-based programs that help meet the foundations mission of breaking the cycle of poverty,” said Ken Levit, executive director of George Kaiser Family Foundation. “This grant builds on the years of positive work already being done in the Kendall-Whittier and Eugene Fields neighborhoods and creates a solid foundation for future development and support of current efforts.”

Tulsa has a history of utilizing public-private partnerships to support the growth of early childhood education efforts in our state and has emerged as a national leader in establishing the highest quality and evidence-based programs for early learners. Tulsa is the first city in the nation with two Educare schools, which focus on early childhood education for at-risk children, with a third school scheduled to open in 2012.

“We applaud Community Action Project and all of our community partners in being named a recipient of a Neighborhood Promise Grant,” said Dr. Keith Ballard, superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools. “This will provide Kendall-Whittier and Eugene Field neighborhoods with increased resources and support to improve educational outcomes for two of Tulsa’s most deserving school communities.”

Last year, CAP’s application just barely missed the threshold to receive federal funding. Dow attributed the rise in the score to the phenomenal changes within TPS, particularly the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative, Project Schoolhouse, and the transformation of Rogers High School.

“Much of our narrative between last year and this year’s application was the same,” said Dow. “However, what clearly distinguished this year’s narrative was the compelling story which we were able to share about the incredible and rapid changes being instituted by Dr. Ballard, the TPS Board, and the staff of TPS. The amount of progress which they have made on their major initiatives certainly got the attention of the U.S. Department of Education.”

The Kendall-Whittier neighborhood, which covers 2.5 square miles near downtown Tulsa and has 14,000 residents, including nearly 3,000 children, is home to Educare I. The neighborhood is anchored by Kendall-Whittier Elementary, which serves more than 1,000 children.

“I want each child in Oklahoma to be successful in school and in their future,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Janet Barresi. “By working with our partners to remove impediments such as poverty, we are ensuring that each child will have a chance to learn and eventually to be college, career and citizen ready.”

More than 200 organizations from 45 states, as well as American Samoa and Puerto Rico, applied for 2011 Promise Neighborhoods grants.

Promise Neighborhoods, launched in 2010, made available a total of \$10 million for one-year planning grants to 21 communities across the country. The 2011 grants announced today will reach an additional 16 communities. Between both rounds, 18 states and D.C. will have plans in place to help revitalize disadvantaged neighborhoods. Congress recently passed a fiscal year 2012 budget, which will include an additional \$60 million for Promise Neighborhoods.

About George Kaiser Family Foundation

George Kaiser Family Foundation (GKFF) is a charitable organization dedicated to breaking the cycle of poverty through investments in early childhood education, community health, social services and civic enhancement. Based in Tulsa, Okla., GKFF works primarily on initiatives developed in collaboration with Tulsa-based direct service organizations. For more information about George Kaiser Family Foundation, visit www.gkff.org.

About Community Action Project of Tulsa County

Community Action Project (CAP) of Tulsa County is the largest anti-poverty nonprofit in Oklahoma and a nationally recognized provider of research-based, high quality early childhood programs for low-income children from birth through age 5. CAP combines early childhood education of the highest caliber with innovative family financial and health services and targeted community improvement efforts, with a strategic vision to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty by improving the prospects of long-term economic success for very young, low-income children, their families, and the communities in which they live. More information is available at www.captc.org.

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