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Three Community Foundations Partner to Strengthen Child Care Access Across Central Indiana Boone, Hendricks, and Shelby Counties

The Community Foundation of Boone County, Hendricks County Community Foundation, and Blue River Community Foundation are working together to support Child Care Answers, a regional leader in early childhood resources and services, through a coordinated investment aimed at expanding access to quality, affordable child care. Together, the three foundations are making a multi-year commitment to grow Child Care Answers' reach and impact across their communities—responding to a rising need that affects families, employers, and the long-term vitality of the region.

Across the region, communities are experiencing increased demand for child care alongside reduced public funding and growing barriers to access. In Boone County, an estimated 67 percent of children under age six likely need care due to working parents, with nearly 700 children currently lacking access to licensed child care. In Hendricks County alone, the need for child care resources has risen significantly in recent years, with an estimated shortage of more than 1,100 child care seats. In Shelby County, affordability remains a heavy challenge, with many families unable to access high-quality early learning opportunities. By working together, the foundations aim to not only address local challenges, but also demonstrate the importance of sustained investment in early childhood systems.

In Boone County, this partnership is part of the recent investment in early childhood and lifelong learning initiatives, to help expand service for local families. "Access to quality, affordable child care is essential to the strength of our communities," said Julie Reagan, CEO of the Community Foundation of Boone County. "This partnership allows us to align resources and work alongside our neighboring counties to support families, strengthen our workforce, and create lasting impact across the region."

In Hendricks County, the investment will support ongoing collaboration with the Hendricks County Workforce Coalition and its Child Care Task Force, helping to advance solutions to the growing gap between supply and demand. "Part of HCCF's mission is to understand the needs of our community and align resources to meet them," said William Rhodehamel, President & CEO of Hendricks County Community Foundation. "Since 2020, we have invested in Child Care Answers to meet the growing need for child care resources across the county. As state support has decreased, this partnership ensures that high-quality services remain available when they are needed most."

In Shelby County, Blue River Community Foundation sees this effort as a critical step in strengthening both early learning and long-term community growth. "After bringing Child Care

Answers to Shelby County to meet with local early learning providers, it's evident they will be a key partner in strengthening the child care system in our community," said Jennifer Jones, Executive Director of Blue River Community Foundation. "This work ultimately benefits families, employers, and the future of our county."

Each foundation brings a deep understanding of its local community, while this collaboration allows for shared learning, coordinated strategy, and increased visibility for the importance of early childhood investment. Over the next several years, the partnership aims to expand access to child care resources, support providers with support child care professionals with hands on guidance, and help ensure that families are not forced to choose between employment and care.

About the Community Foundation of Boone County:

The Community Foundation of Boone County exists to unite people, organizations, and philanthropy to create a thriving community for all. Since 1991, its leaders have worked to empower and engage local communities to make a difference right here in Boone County, while also leading a vision to collaboratively address the root causes of challenges facing Boone County in diverse and equitable ways. The Community Foundation continues to invest in the people working to fill local needs and has granted more than \$32.7 million to nonprofit organizations and programs working to solve critical challenges in Boone County. With nearly \$43.6 million in assets, the Community Foundation works with donors to create permanent funds for charitable giving, to strengthen Boone County for generations to come.

About the Blue River Community Foundation:

Blue River Community Foundation (BRCF) has served Shelby County since 1988 by connecting generosity with community needs. Guided by its mission to serve as a catalyst for igniting action to elevate the quality of life in Shelby County, BRCF supports local nonprofits, students, and community initiatives through grants, scholarships, and charitable partnerships. Since 1993, the Foundation has awarded more than \$40.2 million in grants and scholarships and currently stewards over \$70 million in community assets.

The Mission of the Hendricks County Community Foundation: To be a trusted community partner in understanding needs, aligning resources, and empowering people to address today's priorities and create lasting impact. Our vision is Hendricks County as a place where everyone has the opportunity to have a fulfilling life and the tools they need to build a stronger future together. The Community Foundation manages assets of over \$40 million in a collection of funds created by individuals, families, businesses and organizations for charitable purposes. In 2025 the Community Foundation gave over \$2.35M in grants to charitable organizations and scholarships to local students. For more information, call 317-268-6240 or visit www.hendrickscountycf.org.

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