



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 26, 2019

CONTACT: Robin Winchell

rwinchell@nhsa.org

NHSA Honors PA Head Start Program with 2019 Zigler Innovation Award

Pocono Services for Families and Children will be Celebrated at National Conference

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Head Start Association (NHSA) today announced that a Head Start program in northeastern Pennsylvania is the 2019 recipient of the Edward Zigler Innovation Award for their unique and impactful partnerships that engage their community in serving Head Start children and families.

Pocono Services for Families and Children (PSFC) in northeastern Pennsylvania operates The Mountain Center, a facility housing several Head Start classrooms and more than a dozen vital community health and human services agencies all under one roof.

“The partnership, innovation and collaboration at [The Mountain Center] has been improving lives and making a positive difference,” wrote PSFC in their application for the Zigler Award. “The impact can be seen every day, whether in the smile of a child, the peace of mind of a mom, or a family’s assurance that there are people who care and can help beyond the classroom.”

Located in rural Monroe County, The Mountain Center co-locates partners who can provide Head Start families and other vulnerable community members with necessary services like a food pantry, a summer meal program, housing support from Habitat for Humanity, nutrition assistance from WIC/Maternal and Family Health Services, legislative/constituent information from local elected officials, and counseling for victims of domestic and/or sexual abuse. The Center also hosts sessions offering aid to the homeless, guidance on job searches, classes on learning English as a second language, and support for women starting their own businesses. About 17,000 community members accessed services at the Center during the 2017-2018 program year.

One of the agencies housed within The Mountain Center, Women’s Resources of Monroe County, works with PSFC to provide trauma-informed primary prevention education to the children in the Head Start programs, as well as training for staff and teachers on responding to the effects of domestic violence and other forms of abuse on children.

In their letter of support for PSFC’s Zigler Award application, community partner Women’s Resources wrote, “Before The Mountain Center families would need to travel over 20 miles to access any county services—for

those without access to their own transportation this was very difficult if not impossible....Without The Mountain Center and the vision PSFC had for the space —community support and services all in one location—these families would never have been able to access services like Women’s Resources counseling and legal advocacy, our prevention programs for adults and children, as well as other community service agencies.”

The Edward Zigler Innovation Award celebrates Head Start programs like PSFC that demonstrate the integrated, collective approach of Head Start by developing partnerships that create innovative ways to serve their community.

NHSA will be honoring all of the [2018-2019 scholarship and award](#) winners with the “Academy Awards” of Head Start during the 2019 [National Head Start Conference](#) in San Antonio, TX. Walk the red carpet on Wednesday, May 1, beginning at 6:30 p.m. and enjoy a special awards show hosted by School Outfitters. This event is complimentary to all attendees and attire is black tie optional.

***The National Head Start Association** is a not-for-profit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in school and in life. The opportunities offered by Head Start lead to healthier, empowered children and families, and stronger, more vibrant communities. NHSA is the voice for more than 1 million children, 250,000 staff and 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States. Visit www.nhsa.org and follow @NatlHeadStart for more information.*

###