



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Smart Start of Forsyth County Awarded Funding from United Way of Forsyth County for New Provider Initiative

WINSTON-SALEM, NC (July 7, 2023) – Smart Start of Forsyth County is proud to announce that for the first time, United Way of Forsyth County is working in partnership with the early childhood non-profit organization to positively impact the childcare landscape in Forsyth County, through its Place Matters strategy. United Way of Forsyth County has agreed to fund Smart Start of Forsyth County's new *Forsyth County Provider Initiative*, which will enhance an independent childcare provider and small business owner within the Place Matters footprint (zip code 27105). Through the United Way Place Matters funds, Smart Start of Forsyth County (SSFC) will work with a provider to open a new childcare facility with two classrooms that will serve approximately 34 children between the ages of 3 and 4 years old.

Through the New Provider Initiative, the new childcare center/provider will be supported to recruit and train 2 degreed early childhood staff, purchase new technology, classroom materials, playground equipment and environmental safety enhancements, and evidence-based curricula and assessment tools. The Initiative will also employ a .5 PTE Education Success Manager who will provide training, technical assistance, coaching and support.

As childcare programs continue to struggle, with many remaining closed and others unable to fully open post-pandemic, Smart Start of Forsyth County's new Provider Initiative aims to address the childcare centers and provider shortages currently affecting availability and increase the access of quality care for low to middle income families who fall between the definition of low income and the inability to qualify for outside funding sources or assistance.

United Way's Place Matters is "an innovative, asset-based strategy to focus investments on interconnected solutions in 13 neighborhoods within Winston-Salem." The organization chose 27105 because Forsyth County Census data shows that "the average household income of a child of low-income parents who grew up in the 27105-zip code, who is now in their mid-30s is \$17,000 per year," while in other neighboring zip codes the average is \$45,000 per year.

To ensure that more children have a future that is not determined by their zip code, the Place Matters strategy chose the 27105-zip code, which is why the two classrooms created by the Forsyth County Provider Initiative will be located within that area. Glynnise Highsmith, Senior Director of Pre-K Initiatives of SSFC states that "we look forward to the results this partnership will generate in addressing the socio-economic gap and childcare desert."

For additional information, please contact:

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