

TO MEDIA:

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NEW PARTNERSHIP WILL SERVE BEREAVED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

LATROBE, PA, October 30, 2018 ... The Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media, Excelsa Health and Seton Hill University will commemorate a new partnership to serve bereaved children and their families in Westmoreland County. On November 13, 2018, beginning at 11:30 AM in the Fred M. Rogers Building, the partners will host a press conference to unveil the brochure "When Someone Your Child Loves Dies: A Guide from the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media" and discuss emerging services to support parents and other adults as they care for a grieving child.

Saint Vincent College students and the staff of the Fred Rogers Center have developed the brochure based on research on child bereavement across age groups and Fred Rogers' work focused on child grief. The brochure was created to give parents and caregivers an understanding of how their child may experience grief, how their presence and support is what children need most as they grieve and to offer resources for emotional support.

As the project continues to develop in the coming year, the partnering organizations are developing age-appropriate curricula for grief support groups for children age 2 to 19. The groups will be offered by bereavement counselors at Excelsa Health in connection with existing support groups provided to parents and caregivers.

"On an annual basis, Excelsa Health Home Care and Hospice cares for almost 9,000 patients and their families," said James Joyce, manager of Excelsa's hospice and

palliative care program. "Part of the care we provide is 13 months of bereavement support after a hospice patient dies. One area of unmet need we identified was grief and bereavement services for children and adolescents. We feel very fortunate to be able to partner with other quality organizations like the Fred Rogers Center at Saint Vincent College and Seton Hill University to provide these needed services to our community."

In the development of the curricula, the Fred Rogers Center will contribute knowledge of child development and the wisdom offered by Fred Rogers on how children grieve and the ways adults can support that process. "Our students are excited about the opportunity to use the resources of the Fred Rogers Archive and their education in child development to expand on the research informing the brochure to create new materials," said Dr. Dana Winters, director of simple interactions and academic programs and assistant professor of child and family studies at the Rogers Center.

"Seton Hill University is honored to partner with two outstanding service-and community-minded organizations -- the Fred Rogers Center and Excelsa Health -- and help bring art therapy to this important project in our neighborhood," stated Dr. Dani Moss, assistant professor of art therapy at Seton Hill. "Artistic expression and play, both of which are foundational in art therapy, are natural languages for children. Grief is not easy to express in words, and sometimes there are too many feelings and thoughts at one time to explain, making it overwhelming. Art holds this, contains this, allows for expressing this, and communicates this. When art therapists provide this natural outlet for children to express their complex feelings, we are playing to their strengths and they can cultivate emotional resilience."

Maureen Ceidro, bereavement counselor for Excelsa Home Health Care and Hospice, shared "Following in the blue sneaker tradition of Fred Rogers, neighbors from Excelsa Health Home Care and Hospice and the Fred Rogers Center are working together to care for children who have lost a loved one. In Fred Rogers' words, 'Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable.' Our collaborative effort, along with help from Seton Hill University, will provide a safe, comfortable space where children and their parents can learn to talk

about those things that are sometimes too hard to put into words.”

ABOUT THE PARTNERS...

Established at Saint Vincent College in 2003 in his hometown of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, the **Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media** supports and enriches the important work of those who help children learn and grow across multiple disciplines, including early learning, education, communication, health, media and more. By focusing on strengthening human relationships and promoting meaningful uses of technology and media, the Center supports the current practice and ongoing development of child-serving professionals; expands educational opportunities for undergraduate students; and collaborates in public service and applied research with educational and research institutions and community organizations. The Center is the official home of the Fred Rogers Archive as well as a straightforward, understanding and compassionate voice for the healthy social and emotional development of children birth to age 8 (www.fredrogerscenter.org).

Excelsa Health serves as the leading health care provider for Westmoreland and surrounding counties, focusing on low-cost, high quality care that has been recognized at the regional, state and national level. Committed to improving the health and well-being of every life touched, Excelsa Health offers care across the continuum, with acute care provided in three hospitals, ambulatory care delivered in multiple outpatient settings, and in-home based services offered through its Home Care and Hospice division. A robust physician’s group engages the community in population health management, focusing attention on living well with chronic health conditions through public awareness and outreach programming. To learn more visit www.excelahealth.org, or <https://www.facebook.com/ExcelsaHealth/>

Seton Hill University, located in Greensburg, Pa., is a leading Liberal Arts university founded by the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill. Celebrating the Centennial of its charter as a four-year institution of higher education in 2018, Seton Hill educates 2,200 students from 49 states and territories and 22 foreign countries on its hilltop campus 30

miles from Pittsburgh, Pa. Seton Hill offers academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the Natural and Health Sciences, Business, Education and Applied Social Sciences, Visual and Performing Arts and the Humanities. For more information, visit www.setonhill.edu.
