

TO MEDIA:

**CONTACT PERSON: Robin Jennings,
Marketing and Communications**

Excelsa Health
724-689-0206 TEL
724-516-4483 CELL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPRING CONFERENCE FOCUSES ON HELPING CHILDREN GRIEVE

LATROBE, PA, April 8, 2019 ... It Takes A Neighborhood is the overarching theme for a free May conference focused on responding to children who are grieving sponsored by Excelsa Health Home Care & Hospice in partnership with The Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media, and Seton Hill University.

Subtitled a "Call To Community To Care for Our Bereaved Children," the event will be held 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday, May 23, at the Roger Center, Saint Vincent College, 300 Fraser Purchase Road. Reservations are requested by May 2 and may be made with Cindy Paul by calling 724-689-1479 or by emailing cpaul@excelsahealth.org with attendee name, affiliation and e-mail address. Continuing education credits are available to nurses and social workers. Inquire when registering regarding any associated fees for credits.

The day-long program includes a light breakfast and lunch as well as visits by animals in Excelsa health's pet therapy program. Presenters will address the following topics:

- Talking with Children about Death, Dying and Spirituality: A Developmental Perspective;
- Learning to Listen Creatively to Children Who Are Expressing and Healing Through Loss and Grief;
- Setting the Stage: A Death in the Family Case Study;
- The Opioid Epidemic: Stopping the Cycle of Dependency;
- Using Music to Unify Families

The event will also serve as an Introduction of “Neighborhood Kids: Family-Based Grief Support Program”.

The program is the continuation of the partnership to serve bereaved children and their families in Westmoreland County that was announced last November. That event included the unveiling of the brochure “When Someone Your Child Loves Dies: A Guide from the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media.”

Saint Vincent College students and the staff of the Fred Rogers Center 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 Excela Health beginning in the fall in connection with existing support groups provided to parents and caregivers.