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Community Children's Center & O'Connell Children's Shelter Showcase Multi-generational Family Support Programs During Visit from HHS-ACF Secretary and Regional Administrator

Lawrence, Kansas - May 29, 2024—Community Children's Center (CCC) and O'Connell Children's Center (OCS) were excited to host a visit from Barbara Lacina, the Secretary and Regional Administrator of the Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families (HHS-ACF) and Laura Howard, the Secretary of Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), to highlight the innovative practices of CCC's Family Resource Center (FRC) and OCS's Generations Program.

The May 28 visit allowed Regional Administrator Lacina, members of her team, and DCF administrators to witness firsthand the impactful work of CCC and O'Connell in the Lawrence community. The visit began at 2:00 PM with a presentation on OCS's prevention programming, including the newly funded Generations program, followed by a presentation on CCC's Family Resource Center from 2:30 to 3:00 PM.

"We are excited to expand our prevention programming in Douglas County. Generations allows us to meet families where they are and profoundly affect families impacted by poverty in the hope of helping them create a brighter pathway for generations to come," said Gina Meier-Hummel, Executive Director of O'Connell Children's Shelter. "O'Connell has been supporting children and families for nearly 50 years, and this innovative program, which creates strong connections for families, is truly upstream preventative work before system involvement is necessary. We believe strong families make a strong community, which makes a strong state."

At 3:00 PM, the visit transitioned to CCC's new location at 346 Maine Street, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the FRC's new space and facilities and discussing how the Family Resource Center will be an integral part of CCC's new Early Childhood Community Center.

"We are so grateful," said Suzy Green, the Community Children's Center's Family Resource Center Director, "this was a fantastic opportunity to showcase the work by O'Connell Children's Shelter and CCC. In the afternoon, we highlighted DCF-funded, multi-generational supportive services for families in Douglas County from prenatal through young adulthood."

Community Children's Center and O'Connell Children's Shelter are extraordinarily thankful to Kansas DCF and HHS-ACF for supporting and recognizing CCC's and OCS's efforts to promote

family well-being in Lawrence and beyond.

For more information about Community Children's Center and its programs, please visit communitychildrens.org

For more information about O'Connell Children's Shelter and its programs, please visit oconnellchildrensshelter.org