

First Chance Delaware Announces Wilmington Community of Hope

Program Supports Neighborhood-Based Legal Services

WILMINGTON, Del. – Delaware First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney, together with the Dual Generation Center at the Stubbs Early Education Center and the Nemours Children’s Health System Jessup Street Clinic, are announcing an expansion of the [First Chance Delaware](#) initiative to build on progress toward strengthening children and families and promoting community resilience in Wilmington.

First Lady Carney launched the First Chance Delaware initiative in 2018 to recognize and facilitate effective partnerships, to share and research best practices, and to promote opportunities to collaborate in support of Delaware’s children.

This expansion establishes the Wilmington Community of Hope, a neighborhood-based initiative, funded through a private grant that promotes family and community resilience through effective partnerships between government, health care, community, and philanthropy. The Wilmington Community of Hope is based in a neighborhood near the Stubbs Dual Generation Center and Jessup St. Clinic on the east side of Wilmington.

*“So many Delaware families have experienced loss and upheaval during the pandemic, and as always, the most vulnerable have been hit the hardest,” said **First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney**. “In our efforts to influence the social determinants of health and opportunity, the Wilmington Community of Hope will*

help to give families a new kind of voice when it comes to issues like health care, employment, and housing. We are deeply grateful for the partnership of Casey Family Programs, the Dual Generation Center at Stubbs, CLASI, Nemours, Children & Families First, and – in a real innovation for pro bono work – Potter Anderson. This collaboration represents exactly the kind of initiative we had hoped to facilitate through First Chance Delaware.”

“When it comes to the health and safety of our children and families, we must support communities in designing and building inclusive, equitable and more effective networks and partnerships that will ensure that all children and families have access to the opportunities and supports they need to thrive,” said **David Sanders, Executive Vice President of Systems Improvement at Casey Family Programs**. “The Wilmington Community of Hope is an example of how we can help community members develop truly effective and sustainable solutions to ensure that every child is safe and every family thrives.”

The partnership combines existing resources and supports currently offered to families at the Stubbs Dual Generation Center such as parenting supports, financial education, and job training, together with access to neighborhood based, multidisciplinary legal aid. Community Legal Aid Society, Inc., (CLASI) is an experienced legal aid organization in Delaware, and currently offers legal aid services across the state, including a medical-legal partnership with the public health department. This newly embedded support will generally follow a medical-legal partnership model, accepting referrals from Nemours’ Jessup Street Clinic & the Stubbs Dual Generation Center to provide legal advocacy that address the social determinants of health. CLASI will partner with Children & Families First to offer multidisciplinary legal aid, incorporating a peer-support advocate with lived expertise to effectively engage with families and build community resilience.

“CLASI is excited to work with our partners to support vulnerable people living in the Community of Hope catchment area,” said **Daniel Atkins, Executive Director of the Community Legal Aid Society, Inc.** “Coming out of the pandemic, it is times like these, where we need to be creative and proactive in delivering crucial services that will assist families in avoiding homelessness, hunger, domestic violence, and other preventable tragedies.

On behalf of the Stubbs Early Education Center and Dual Generation Center at Stubbs, we are grateful for the heart of First Lady Carney and First Chance Delaware,” said **Dr. Whitney Williams, Principal, Stubbs Early Education Center.** “Recognizing, supporting, and providing essential resources to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and families is key to positively transforming their quality of life. A family’s wellness promotes a child’s wellness – physically, academically, socially and emotionally. We are privileged to partner for the expansion of services to strengthen children and families and promote community resilience in Wilmington.”

“The First Chance Delaware Partnership is vital to the work that we do at the Dual Generation Center,” said **Helen Anderson, Director of Dual Generation Services, Stubbs Early Education Center.** “Many of the families that we work with have legal concerns and find it difficult to get assistance. During the Pandemic many of the families had issues with Landlords, Custody Concerns, and legal barriers blocking employment. This partnership will add another opportunity to the residents of Eastside and families of Wilmington. We are excited about this meaningful work and look forward to working with all our partners. I want to thank First Lady Carney for allowing us to be a part of this journey.

“Nemours is pleased to engage in this novel community partnership to help address the complex health and social needs of our most vulnerable patients, said **Abby Nerlinger, MD, MPH, Pediatric Hospitalist, Nemours Children’s Health**

System. “Many of these social determinants of health have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, making this initiative particularly timely. The pediatric medical-legal partnership model aligns with efforts across Nemours Children’s Health System to improve health equity and create healthier futures for all children and families.”

“Years of research have shown that vital social and community supports form the foundation needed for children to thrive,” said **Kirsten Olson, CEO of Children & Families First.** “The Wilmington Community of Hope initiative is a bold model that fulfills our shared obligation to foster every child’s potential. For 137 years, Children & Families First has lived our mission to help children and families thrive. This powerful next step, ensuring that every child, family, and individual receives coordinated support to achieve lifelong physical, social, emotional, and financial well-being, will forever change the trajectory of all our lives as we build vibrant, healthy communities together.”

“Lawyers have a professional obligation to advocate for justice for those who face marginalization,” said **William L. Chapman, Jr., Chief Diversity Officer and Director of Pro Bono Services at Potter Anderson & Corroon.** “Our work with First Chance Delaware is part of Potter Anderson’s longstanding commitment to provide public interest legal services with a focus on changing the social determinants of health and hope for our clients. We are committed to working with our partners to address our clients’ unmet legal needs, and as First Lady Tracey Quillen Carney stated in a speech at our firm, make sure their voices and strengths along with those in their communities are recognized and respected in a way that individuals in other zip codes can take for granted.”

The Wilmington Community of Hope partners are focused on providing direct supportive services to families with a focus on prevention, healing, and wellness. This partnership provides an upstream neighborhood-based approach to address

risk factors related to child maltreatment and improve population and community health for children and families.

Visit de.gov/firstchance to learn more about First Chance Delaware.

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