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PRESS RELEASE

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Greene County Public Health, a Healthy Families America Site, Accredited for Quality Service by Prevent Child Abuse America

Leading National Child Abuse Prevention Organization Accredits Healthy Families America Site in Xenia, Ohio, to Serve Families

XENIA, OH – Prevent Child Abuse America (PCA America) announced today that the Healthy Families America (HFA) affiliate, Greene County Public Health (GCPH), has been accredited as a provider of high-quality home visiting services to pregnant families and families with infants and young children.

HFA is the signature program of PCA America and has been providing home visiting services for nearly 30 years. Expectant and new parents are facing new stressors and have questions about their child's development. HFA connects with families through community partners like hospitals and pediatricians to support parents, meeting them in the familiarity and convenience of the family's home. HFA is an accessible, voluntary, and well-received service.

"HFA sites utilize evidence-based best practices to provide individualized support to families when needed most, and linkages to community services," said Melissa Merrick, President and CEO of PCA America. "We congratulate GCPH, and we commend the staff for their leadership and commitment that has contributed to this most notable and highly regarded achievement."

The accreditation process is based upon a stringent set of 12 critical elements grounded in more than 30 years of research. The process involves an in-depth examination of the site's operation, as well as the quality of the visits made by HFA home visitors.

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“We commend GCPH for opening itself up to such an intensive review process,” said Kathleen Strader, National Director of HFA. “We believe that all families and all communities deserve access to quality home visiting services.”

The HFA site is located at 360 Wilson Drive in Xenia, Ohio.

According to Nancy Kessinger, HFA Program Manager at Greene County Public Health, “The program embraces the belief that ‘your history doesn't have to be your destiny’. As Joyce Meyer, author, speaker, and President of Joyce Meyer Ministries, said, ‘I did not have a good start in life, and many of you did not have a good start in life. But it's really how you finish that people remember. No matter how you got started, you can have a phenomenal ending.’”

Making a Difference That Lasts
The program regularly shares success stories with the Ohio Department of Children and Youth, highlighting the meaningful and lasting impact home visiting services have on Greene County families. Here are just a few examples.

Building Relationships That Last a Lifetime
Family Support Specialist (FSS) Miss Iva emphasizes that "one of the program's greatest successes is the lasting relationships it builds with families, and the parenting skills participants carry with them long after the program ends".

“The lessons families learn continue to last a lifetime. We help parents become the best parents they can be while supporting them as they navigate parenthood. We encourage families to focus on the positive, work through challenging times as a team, and remember they are not alone. Together, we help them build a supportive community,” she added.

Celebrating Milestones Beyond the Program
The impact of these relationships often extends well beyond a family's time in the program. Recently, a mother who graduated approximately one year ago reached out to her former Family Support Specialist, Miss Cassidy, to share the exciting news that she had regained custody of her two children.

Her decision to reconnect speaks to the trust and meaningful relationships that develop between families and their Family Support Specialists. Home visitors often work with families from pregnancy through the child's third birthday, providing guidance, encouragement, and support during some of life's most important and challenging moments.

Small Steps. Big Accomplishments.
Families participating in the program identify their hopes and dreams, develop individualized family goal plans, and celebrate milestones along the way. Goals are as unique as the families themselves and may include earning a driver's license, purchasing a vehicle, finding employment, having a healthy pregnancy and delivery, returning to school to earn a diploma or GED, or pursuing a college degree.

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Other goals may focus on everyday parenting milestones, such as helping a child transition between activities or celebrating those exciting first steps.

Every goal achieved represents progress, greater confidence, and an opportunity for families to build a stronger future for themselves and their children.

One of the primary goals of HFA home visiting is to promote nurturing, responsive parent-child relationships. Home visitors in each community receive extensive training on a wide range of topics important to just about every new parent, such as caring for a new baby, ensuring the baby is receiving the nutrition needed, promoting healthy child development, and coping with a myriad of other potential stresses, such as financial, housing, partner relationship, etc., that may become heightened with an addition to the family.

PCA America was established in 1972 with the belief that child abuse and neglect is preventable. The not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization is committed to preventing child abuse in all forms through education, research, public awareness, and public policy development. Today, PCA America supports a network of state chapters across the United States.

PCA America implemented the Healthy Families America (HFA) initiative in 1992. HFA serves families of all ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, meeting the needs of close to 600 communities in 38 states, D.C., the U.S. Territories, and Israel.

Healthy Families America is an effective, proven, evidence-based home visiting program, according to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. PCA America is proud to support HFA and to be part of a national movement dedicated to improving the lives of families and children.

For more information about Greene County Public Health's HFA program, call 937-824-0889, email nkessinger@greenecophoh.gov, or visit the website at https://www.greenecophoh.gov/wellness-services/maternal-and-child-health/help-me-grow/home-visiting#HFA

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