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WOODS CHARITABLE FUND AWARDS BREAKTHROUGH GRANT TO SAFE AND HEALTHY FAMILIES INITIATIVE

Woods Charitable Fund's Board of Directors has awarded its fourth Breakthrough Initiative Grant to Family Violence Council for the Safe and Healthy Families Initiative, which provides a coordinated response to child abuse cases in Lancaster County in which domestic violence also occurs.

The grant, approved by Woods Charitable Fund's board at its May meeting, is pledged for \$900,000 over three years. It provides for staffing and related expenses for Family Violence Council and five Lincoln partner organizations: Voices of Hope; Friendship Home; CASA for Lancaster County; Child Advocacy Center; and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Center on Children, Families and the Law.

The project's goal is to improve child safety through a more domestic abuse-informed coordinated response by agencies that work with families, improve partnerships with parents, provide professional development and education for professionals engaging with these families, and hold perpetrators more accountable. Family Violence Council is leading this initiative with its collaborators, which also include the Department of Health and Human Services' Children and Family Services and the office of Lancaster County Attorney Patrick Condon.

The initiative will bolster the Separate Juvenile Court of Lancaster County's Safe and Healthy Families Court, which is in the application process of becoming the state's first domestic violence-centered child welfare problem-solving court upon approval by the Nebraska Supreme Court.

"We are excited about the possibilities to work together as a community to improve the safety and health of children and adults experiencing abuse," said Bob Moyer, Family Violence Council's Executive Director. "This is truly a breakthrough project in its ambition to create systemic change toward domestic abuse-informed work on child abuse cases in the juvenile system."

"This tackles an important and often very hidden societal issue in a collaborative manner," said Tom Woods, WCF's President. "This work and coordination with Judge Elise White on the Safe and Healthy Families Court could lead to a true paradigm shift in how domestic violence and abuse cases are handled."

Woods Charitable Fund's Board of Directors also awarded \$570,000 in grants to 18 nonprofit organizations serving Lincoln at its May board meeting. Including the grants awarded with the Breakthrough Initiative Grant, in 2021, Woods Charitable Fund has approved \$1.47 million in grants to benefit Lincoln. Previous Breakthrough Initiative Grants totaled \$2.275

million in 2017, 2018 and 2020. Woods Charitable Fund has paid grants and loans totaling more than \$100 million since the Fund's inception in 1941.

Woods Charitable Fund makes grants twice a year to tax-exempt organizations seeking funding for Lincoln-focused programs in the areas of Human Services, Civic & Community, Education and Arts & Culture and through its Breakthrough Initiative Grant program. For more information on funding guidelines, call (402) 436-5971, visit the Fund's website at www.woodscharitable.org or write to Tom Woods, Kathy Steinauer Smith or Nicole Juranek at 1248 O St. Suite 1130, Lincoln, NE 68508, or at info@woodscharitable.org.