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Pre-K Counts funding helps children in Susquehanna County

Submitted by Stephanie Thornton

More three and four year olds in Susquehanna County will take part in high quality pre-kindergarten programs this year, thanks to a new state funded initiative called Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts.

Proposed by Governor Rendell and approved by state lawmakers, Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides grants totaling \$75 million dollars to providers across the state targeting children at risk of school failure.

Forest City Regional School District and Treasure House Child Development Center in Montrose received grant funding.

"We are very pleased to provide this early education experience for the children of our community," said Dr. Robert Vadella, Forest City Regional School District Superintendent.

Forty-five children are now enrolled in the pre-kindergarten program. The school district expanded from providing half day programs to full day. The expansion also included hiring an additional teacher and providing space for another classroom.

Treasure House Child Development Center is now able to offer quality Pre-K to 17 children beginning September 17. The plan is to provide a full day curriculum five days a week.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for pre-school children in the Montrose area," said Judith Graziano, President, Northeastern Child Care Services. "They will be much better prepared to enter school, ready for a successful kindergarten learning experience."

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts requires grantees to provide a qualified teacher and teacher's aide, small class sizes, a curriculum that is aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning standards, regular assessment of the children's progress and reporting of the program's performance.

These quality expectations will ensure that the children enrolled have a high quality learning experience. Studies show children who receive a quality educational start before the age of five have a greater chance of success later in life.

Susquehanna County CARES (Childcare, Agencies, Resources and Educational Services) is proud to partner with Forest City Regional School District and Treasure House Child Development Center. CARES is an early education community engagement group dedicated to enhancing the quality of early childcare and educational

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programs in Susquehanna County.

For information about Pennsylvania's Pre-K Counts or other quality early learning initiatives, contact Susquehanna County CARES at (570) 879-8766 or email stcares@epix.net.

CARES is helping fulfill Pennsylvania's Promise for Children because every child is Pennsylvania's future.

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