

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 26, 2016

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Community Foundation Awards Final \$100,000 Focus Grant to Two Local Groups

MONTGOMERY – Central Alabama Community Foundation (CACF) surprised two local nonprofits on Wednesday, September 21 with \$50,000 each for their work with mentoring youth and truancy prevention.

Staff members from District Attorney Daryl Bailey’s “**Helping Montgomery Families Initiative (HMFI)**” program were hosting their weekly meeting with support agencies when CACF surprised them with the \$50,000 award. Later that day, CACF stopped by **Common Ground Montgomery (CGM)** to surprise staff and students with a \$50,000 check for their “Life on Life Mentor Program.”

HMFI partners with Montgomery Public Schools, the City of Montgomery and the Montgomery County Commission to work with youth by keeping students in school, out of the criminal justice system or becoming a victim of crime. HMFI intervenes in the lives of youth suspended from school for serious disciplinary infractions. The HMFI staff serve as a bridge to link the children and their families to 50 agencies and organizations that provide intervention and prevention services throughout the community. HMFI also received \$50,000 from CACF in 2014 for same program.

“This grant will assist with our efforts to continue our programs and expand services to public school students in the county. In addition, there are a number of youth that are being exposed to the juvenile justice system at a young age as a result of a misdemeanor offense. HMFI will implement a Juvenile Diversion Program in partnership with Juvenile Court that specifically targets first time non-violent offenders in an effort to reduce any further contact with the system,” said Sandra Edwards, Director of HMFI.

The CGM Life on Life mentoring program places children in the fourth grade from Washington Park neighborhood (on the West side of Montgomery) with adult mentors until the child graduates from high school. 97.6% of the children from this neighborhood have single mother households, live in poverty, are exposed to crime daily, have a high rate of school dropouts and other societal problems.

“There is a critical need for funding for this program because we as parents cannot raise and develop children on our own. Loving and caring partners who are relational collaborators are needed in order to avoid destructive or even apathetic behavior that will leave our youth not knowing how to function in society. Mentoring is about breaking those cycles and developing our youth in a way that holistically prepares them to thrive in life,” said Kevin King, Associate Director of CGM and Mentoring.

The program currently has 41 matched mentors and fully expects to have 100 by next year. CGM also received \$100,000 in 2015 and \$50,000 in 2014 for the same program during the CACF’s “Curbing the Violence” Focus Grant series.

This series of focus grants was announced in 2013 with hopes to combat and prevent violence in youth in the River Region by identifying the root causes and investing in local programs. The project was funded because of local donors’ gifts to CACF’s unrestricted fund.

The Central Alabama Community Foundation is a nonprofit philanthropic foundation created by and for the people of central Alabama. Individuals and corporate donors make gifts and bequests of any size for the betterment of our community. Through our grants program, the Foundation addresses a wide variety of needs and opportunities, supporting programs and projects in education, human services, health, cultural arts, and other civic concerns.

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