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For Immediate Release

## CPPR’s unique program provides opportunities for statewide change around issues affecting children and their families

**Thursday, September 30, 2021** – The Center for Public Partnerships and Research (CPPR) has officially launched Kansas Future Fellows, the first structured, statewide network of ambassadors dedicated to futures thinking strategies for advancing solutions to problems experienced by young children and their families. The creation of Kansas Future Fellows was in direct response to the ever-rising number of social, economic, health and political inequalities that affect the state’s ability to support children and families. The program, created in partnership with Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund and foresight experts at Openfields, will lead this year’s 11 participants in a series of innovation labs. These futures thinking labs are designed to create and develop new ideas and to prepare Fellows to address the challenges affecting Kansas families and children.

“The lives of Kansans are rapidly evolving – economically, socially, technologically, culturally. My educational experience and training in public service did not focus on long-term thinking, designing multiple futures, or anticipatory methods. And, we are in a moment where we’re recognized that our current ways of designing and implementing public services will not get us to the impact we want for Kansans,” said CPPR Director Jackie Counts. “Future Fellows will expose exceptional leaders to resources and techniques to design the futures that they dream about for their communities,” she added.

With the support of national and international experts in the field of futures forecasting and planning, selected Future Fellows participants will learn analytical frameworks and approaches like foresight methods, experiential futures, and complexity and sensemaking techniques. The group will identify how these themes and trends of futures design translate directly to their everyday work.

“CPPR and the Kansas Children’s Cabinet are ahead of the curve in terms of preparing public sector leaders to tell a compelling story about what a flourishing future for Kansas children and families could look like, said Grady Powell, CEO of Openfields. “We want to equip them with the tools and mindset to anticipate and prepare Kansans to thrive in this climate of unprecedented change.”

During the program, fellows will identify how they can collaborate with others, and how their local ideas can connect to spur change at a state level. The 9-month experience will culminate with a large group convening of private- and public-sector Kansas leaders – a Futures Forum – to share and join in the advancements achieved and lessons learned.

“We believe social sector work requires, and Kansas families deserve, the best tools and frameworks we can find to successfully adapt and provide the most responsive services possible. The scope of investment in innovation narrows when it comes to the social sector, yet these services and resources are essential contributors to our local and statewide economies. The aim of Future Fellows is to change this for the benefit of children and families in Kansas,” said Melissa Rooker, executive director of the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund.

## 2021 Future Fellows Cohort

The inaugural group of Kansas Future Fellows are leaders with established track records of creativity and community successes. Beginning in September, they are embarked on a 9-month process to take local steps to create statewide change in support of children and families.

**Dr. Craig Correll, Superintendent**

USD 445, Coffeyville Public Schools

Coffeyville, KS

**Tatiana Darby, Public Health Practice Researcher**

University of Kansas Medical Center

Kansas City, KS

**Lona DuVall, President/CEO**

Finney County Economic Development Corporation

Garden City, KS

**Jason Gant, Lead Pastor**

KIDSCOR Children & Family Ministry

Leawood, KS

**Lynnette Keo, Program Supervisor**

Native Connections Program

Horton, KS

**Jennifer Keomany, Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology Department Manager**

University of Kansas School of Medicine-Wichita

Wichita, KS

**Britany Lemon, Mental Health and Disabilities Specialist**

Child Start

Wichita, KS

**Marci Penner, Executive Director**

Kansas Sampler Foundation

Inman, KS

**Travis Rickford, Executive Director**

Livewell Northwest Kansas

Colby, KS

**Tabatha Rosproy, Early Childhood Support Teacher**

USD 233, Olathe Public Schools

Olathe, KS

**Johnathan Sublet**, **Lead Pastor at Fellowship Hi-Crest Church and Chairman for SENT Inc.**

Fellowship Hi-Crest Church

Topeka, Kansas

Funds for All In For Kansas Kids activities are partially provided through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The **Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Renewal** 90TP0078-01-00 ($8,943,000) was awarded to the Kansas Children’s Cabinet and Trust Fund. The Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Department for Children and Families, and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment are leading this work with the Children’s Cabinet. This information or content and conclusions should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by, HHS, ACF, or the U.S. Government. Any food or refreshments are not paid for by federal funds.

Funding was provided as part of the The Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five Renewal grant.

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