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For Immediate Release

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County Forward Fund Established to Create Opportunities in Education on Workforce

Medina County, OH. Medina County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) is pleased to announce the creation of the County Forward Fund, a 501c(3) non-profit organization focused on creating opportunities to bring education and workforce together.

“The County Forward Fund allows businesses and community members to make tax-deductible donations to fund programs that bring education and workforce together,” said Bethany Dentler, MCEDC Executive Director. “There are a number of great opportunities, and we are excited to bring these programs to fruition.”

The Fund has set forward two big goals and have already begun raising funds. The first is to fund a Career Counselor that would travel among the seven school districts. “This program stands out for a number of reasons. First, the individual would work in the schools but would be part of our organization. When not working with students, they would be visiting businesses, attending networking functions, and learning about the workforce opportunities directly from our companies. Second, the funding for this position wouldn’t be something put on the schools that is then cut when things get tight. We would also have consistency across districts in providing career information,” explained Kathy Breitenbucher, Economic Developer.

The second program the Fund will undertake is a new scholarship program for students who have job commitments prior to graduation. “When you start your first job, there are expenses you may not anticipate: uniforms or appropriate clothing, meals, gas, tools, etc. We want to provide scholarships to students in the same way they could get them if they were to go to college,” said Breitenbucher. “We also want to elevate the conversation about starting your career immediately after high school. It is a great option for many people, allowing them to start in a field and determine what they want to do before spending money on education. Increasingly employers are willing to partially or fully fund tuition to retain their employee while enabling them to further their career.”

“Throughout my career, businesses expressed a desire and a passionate plea for schools to provide more career education & support, but funding wasn’t available. We are confident the Fund will serve as an effective vehicle & stimulus to providing career opportunities to Medina County students through a collaborative tax-efficient funding process.” said Frank Festi, Board Member and Treasurer of the County Forward Fund.

Amy Demlow, Chair of the Board of Fund added, “We have all seen firsthand everything put on our schools and we want to help support them as much as possible. We are fortunate in this county to have

seven school districts focused on employment, enrollment, or enlistment as appropriate outcomes for their students.”

“We have been talking about a career counselor program for several years now and trying to find funding. We are excited about the possibility of the business community funding this important effort,” said Superintendent of Cloverleaf Local Schools, Daryl Kubilus. “Our kids really appreciate the full support of the community shown through programs like this.”

Thanks to an anonymous private donation, the Fund has reached 40% of its financial goal for the Career Counselor position. The County Forward Fund hopes to launch this position for the 2022-2023 school year. Donations can be mailed to County Forward Fund, 144 N. Broadway Suite 119, Medina, OH 44256.

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