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CONTACT:

Megan Streng
Communications Manager
616.528.4552 | 616.450.8521
mstreng@firststepskent.org

Farewell to Our Fellow

(Grand Rapids, Mich., July 22, 2020)—In 2018, First Steps Kent was able to bring an early childhood fellow to the Kent County community. Kent County was one of 29 communities across the country selected to be part of the Pritzker Family Foundation's Pritzker Children's Initiative (PCI) to increase the number of children who are developmentally on track for kindergarten. Anissa Eddie has filled the role of Pritzker Fellow for the past two years and as her work comes to a close, we wanted to say farewell and share some highlights and updates.

The Pritzker Children's Initiative (PCI) is a national effort to promote high-quality early learning and development for children from birth to age three focused on reaching those in states, cities and communities across the country who are in a position to shape early childhood systems and increase investments in core services for infants and toddlers.

During the course of the fellowship, Anissa Eddie was able to accomplish movement in the areas of Data Systems, Child Care with the introduction of the Shared Services Child Care Business Model, Healthy Births with a pilot for a Doulas of Color initiative, and Public Will and Engagement. To hear her full report, sign up for her Capstone project here.

The projects that were initiated will not end with the end of the fellowship, the transition of the Shared Services project will be headed up by Kristen Sobolewski, the Doulas of Color initiative has been taken on by Baxter Community Center, and First Steps Kent and KConnect will continue the work of Anissa's important work in order to not lose any momentum.

The Pritzker Fellowship, through Anissa has touched so many of the early childhood partners through the many community partnerships including KConnect's Prenatal to Third Grade workgroup, and the Kent County Literacy Convening. This is an example of how systems partners can come together for the collective good.

"Anissa understands both the opportunities and challenges our community faces in ensuring that children have the start they need to be successful in school and life," said First Steps Kent President/CEO Annemarie Valdez. "She is committed to equity and ensuring that Kent County

is a community in which all children and families thrive."

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About First Steps Kent: First Steps Kent is an independent nonprofit organization that works with parents, service providers, funders, advocates, and other stakeholders to build a comprehensive early childhood system in Kent County. Our community vision is that every young child in Kent County will enter kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed in school and life. First Steps Kent is working with our community partners to make that vision a reality. Learn more at www.firststepskent.org.