COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BRINGS READY! FOR KINDERGARTEN™ AND READ UP™ TO BOULDER COUNTY

Up to 100 families to benefit from nationally recognized parent engagement program

Boulder County (January 31, 2014) – The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County, in collaboration with our local school districts and other community partners, introduces two complementary programs that give essential information, tools and activities to parents and caregivers of pre-school age children living in Boulder County to prepare them for school.

“READY! for Kindergarten™” and “Read Up: Stop the Summer Slide™” support current Boulder County-wide efforts to close the achievement gaps between children from low-income and monolingual Spanish-speaking families and their peers, through an increased emphasis on early learning. Please see www.commfound.org/ready for more information on these efforts.

The program “READY! for Kindergarten™” was recently named “Reader’s Choice Top 100” by District Administration Magazine (Please see accompanying press release about that recognition). It is designed to provide information to parents and caregivers of children aged infant to five years old, as a way to prepare and encourage children to begin their educational journey. Children show specific signs, or milestones, of growth and development as they mature, and unfortunately, there are children who enter kindergarten unprepared to learn. Once a child is behind, it is difficult for them to catch up, and the potential for them to struggle year after year significantly increases. “READY! for Kindergarten!” ensures that children will begin developing a basic learning foundation at an early age, leading to increased success in the classroom.

“We are using READY! for Kindergarten as one strategy to reach monolingual Spanish speaking parents, increasing their knowledge of child development and the importance of their children starting kindergarten prepared,” said Chris Barge, Director of School Readiness at The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County, the most recent community to launch the READY! for Kindergarten program. “We know children who start kindergarten behind, stay behind. Research shows the READY! program has been successful in other communities; we want to bring that success to Boulder County to help reduce our significant achievement gap.”
When a parent registers for a two-hour “READY! for Kindergarten” class, offered three times a year, the parent attends the class targeted for the age of their child. The parent will receive informational materials from the instructor, is given a “kit” of age appropriate learning tools, and is taught how to use the items in the kit to create a positive and effective learning environment at home. As the child grows and matures, the tools and activities received from the program change to match the development stage of the child.

READY! for Kindergarten classes began in December in Longmont, Lafayette and Boulder. There is room for up to 100 families, and space remains available for parents to sign up for these free classes, offered in Spanish only. Parents interested in enrolling should contact Ready! for Kindergarten and Read Up Coordinator Angelique Velasco, at 303-807-0820 or avelasco@readingfoundation.org. Or sign up online, at www.readyforkindergarten.org/bouldercounty.

The program “Read Up: Stop the Summer Slide℠” helps families, caregivers and children make reading aloud part of their daily summer routines. READ Up offers weekly storytimes in convenient locations and provides free books and fun take home items for eight weeks. Materials are available in English and Spanish. All children from birth to age 8 are welcome with their parents or caregivers. Each 20 minute story includes simple read-aloud tips modeled by trained volunteers. Oral language and print concepts are emphasized. Each week, adults leave with new skills and motivation to encourage reading and children leave with a new book. Research shows that access to books, books in the home, and reading aloud directly lead to gains in pre-literacy and literacy skills.

Both programs are funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education’s Innovative Approaches to Literacy program, in collaboration with the International Children’s Reading Foundation.

Members of the media: Please call Chris Barge, at 303-442-0436, for more information, or to schedule coverage of an upcoming Ready! for Kindergarten class.

**About The Community Foundation Serving Boulder County**

The Community Foundation is the recognized leader in preparing Boulder County for its future challenges, expanding the culture of giving, and galvanizing diverse resources to improve the quality of life for all. Through donor-advised funds and a number of grant cycles, The Community Foundation connects resources to non-profit organizations in Boulder County and beyond. Groups working in the arts, civic life, education, the environment, and health and human services all benefit from grants, as well as numerous programs designed to build organizational capacity.

*Please visit [www.commfound.org](http://www.commfound.org) for more information.*