

Local Funders Lend Support to School Readiness Program

Beaufort County, SC - - The Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina and the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry have pledged \$9,000 each to launch a pilot school readiness program in Northern Beaufort County.

The Preschool Tool Tote program was developed by the Legacy Center for Student Success based in Midland, Michigan. The overall objective of the program is to close the school readiness gap. The children selected to participate in the program are three-year-olds enrolled in the WIC program in Northern Beaufort County. Approximately 300 children currently are in this group.

The “totes” are large canvas tote bags that contain learning supplies such as crayons, coloring books, reading books, workbooks, glue, construction paper, etc. and a professionally designed, but simple to use, guide for parents on how to utilize the bag’s contents to teach various cognitive elements to the child. The guide encourages and facilitates parental engagement with the preschool child. The totes will be distributed through the local WIC office in Northern Beaufort County.

The initial bag will be given to the designated three-year-old children with parental instructions and the child will be assessed by WIC staff with respect to four cognitive elements - letters of the alphabet, numbers, shapes and colors. WIC requires that the child return at six months intervals to be weighed and measured to assure proper physical development. During this time WIC employees will provide a “refreshment” bag, a smaller paper bag that contains additional learning supplies such as another reading and coloring book, crayons, glue, etc. and assess the child with respect to his/her cognitive gains. The Legacy Center for Student Success will measure whether to and to what extent participating WIC three-year-olds demonstrate gains in those four specific cognitive areas that are strongly related to success in school.

The program is expected to begin in fall 2009.

###

Community Foundation of the Lowcountry

Founded in 1994, the mission of the community foundation is to strengthen community by connecting people, resources, and needs. In the years since inception, the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry and affiliate Hilton Head Island Foundation have grown through additional gifts and investments and provided more than \$26 million in grants to support local nonprofits.

In addition to grantmaking, the community foundation focuses on assisting donors to meet their philanthropic goals and acts as a convener of resources to address community concerns. In July 2001, the community foundation expanded to serve residents in Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper counties. For more information, visit our website at WWW.CF-LOWCOUNTRY.ORG.

Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina

Established in 1974, Coastal Community Foundation is a public grant making foundation fostering philanthropy for the lasting good of the community in Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Georgetown, Hampton and Jasper Counties.

Thousands of families, businesses, individuals and organizations have built over 532 individual funds and endowments at the Foundation to benefit specific charities and/or broad areas of community life – education, basic human needs, conservation and preservation, arts, health and neighborhood/community development. In its 35-year history, Coastal Community Foundation has awarded more than \$75 million in grants and currently manages assets in excess of \$80 million.