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United Way of Southwestern Indiana Announces Latest Pathway Grant Recipients

Evansville, IN - United Way of Southwestern Indiana (UWSWI) announces an investment of nearly \$470,000 into programs improving school engagement for local children and youth, prioritizing services to low-income students. This funding opportunity is the first Thriving Next Gen Pathway Grant since UWSWI shifted its focus to address root causes of poverty. The Thriving Next Gen goal is to equip children and youth with skills to thrive both academically and emotionally.

According to research, school engagement is critical for improving the academic outcomes of students. A rigorous evaluation process was utilized to select nonprofit programs that are proven to strengthen student engagement through their established school partnerships.

EVSC Foundation is awarded \$211,876 to pilot an International Newcomer's Academy, which will provide dedicated staff to support English as a second language (ESL) students and their families. The Academy's staff will connect ESL students with mentors and paid internship opportunities which will enable ESL students to balance supporting their families and staying in school.

YWCA, a long-time Partner Agency, is awarded \$156,000 to expand its highly-successful girl's Live Y'ers program to serve low-income boys, with a focus on boys of color. The Live Y'ers mentoring and afterschool program provides STEM and reading enrichment, as well as social/emotional skill building. Mentorships typically last from 3rd grade through 12th grade and the program boasts a 100% high-school graduation rate.

Youth First is awarded \$99,290 to help underwrite the cost of adding social work staff to two Warrick County middle schools, closing a gap in service between elementary and high school. Youth First Licensed Clinical Social Workers provide social/emotional skill building to all students within their schools, as well as individual support. Students receiving individual service exhibit better attendance, less disciplinary action, and improved grades.

UWSWI grant applications are evaluated by local experts in each respective Pathway, as well as financial experts. A member of the Thriving Next Gen taskforce and retired school administrator commented, "United Way is a great support for educators and community partners who work to provide opportunities for students. I was honored to work with former colleagues and the staff of United Way to review the Next Gen grant applications. The process was well organized and diligent. The grants will assist the recipients in their work to provide educational and emotional support to students during their school days and in their daily living."

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United Way envisions communities where all individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The nonprofit organization serves at the center of a network of partners and programs who are working to improve the upward mobility of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties. To learn more about United Way's work, visit unitedwayswi.org.