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Pikes Peak United Way Hosts Family Friendly City Summit *Focusing on Early Childhood Solutions for Businesses*

Colorado Springs, Colo.— Pikes Peak United Way and Joint Initiatives for Youth and Family will assemble elected officials, business executives, nonprofit and community leaders as well as early childhood education professionals to discuss the shortage of child care options and the impact in El Paso County at the first ***Family Friendly City Summit*** on Thursday, May 9.

According to Joint Initiatives, home to El Paso County's Early Childhood Council, of the 46,842 children in the county, 17,452 are in early education child care programs. Approximately 16,000 additional child care spots are needed to meet the needs of families in El Paso County.

"Early Childhood Education programs are the backbone of our community," said Joint Initiatives CEO SherryLynn Boyles.

"Economic indicators show that our local economy is dependent on the availability of child care. We know that a significant number of people leave the workforce because of child care. Even though we have 430 licensed child care centers in the county, most our community is a child-care desert," Boyles continued.

Many of the family child care providers in the community are highly involved in advocacy at the state level, as well as the local level, through professional organizations. Despite that, the early childhood field has many struggles, including a workforce crisis.

The summit will kick off at the Penrose House Pavilion, 1661 Mesa Ave. at 9 a.m. Doors open for registration at 8:30 a.m. The summit will conclude at 3:30 p.m. The summit is by invitation only.

"Finding child care is a huge challenge in our area. We've spoken with employers who have lost employees and are concerned about losing even more due to a lack of quality child care." said Cindy Aubrey, Pikes Peak United Way CEO.

Speakers for the summit include: Colorado Springs Mayor Yemi Mobolade; President and CEO of the Colorado Springs Chamber, Johnna Reeder Kley Meyer; Colorado Council for a Strong America Director; M. Michael Cook and UCCS Dean of Business, Dr. Tommy Aicher.



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About Pikes Peak United Way: The mission of Pikes Peak United Way is to enhance youth success and family stability in the Pikes Peak region by leading and lifting the most vulnerable in our community with mentorship, life resources, and real job opportunities. Our signature programs and partner agencies focus on connecting youth and their families to resources at the front end of their life journey to ensure access to fundamental needs of food, shelter, and learning resources. Visit <https://www.ppunitedway.org/> for more information. #LiveUnited

About Joint Initiatives: Joint Initiatives is a nonprofit organization that was established in 1989 specifically for the purpose of bringing together agencies and systems that serve children and youth to drive collective impact and ensure higher-impact services for young people 0-21 and their families in El Paso and Teller Counties. JI is home to El Paso County's early childhood council Alliance for Kids Council and manages the state's Universal Pre-Kindergarten program for the county. www.jointinitiatives.org