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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AEP FOUNDATION LIGHTING THE WAY FOR WEST VIRGINIA PRE-K TEACHERS**

AEP Foundation Invests \$100,000 Grant to Support T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WV

HUNTINGTON, W.Va.— T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WEST VIRGINIA is pleased to announce the investment of a \$100,000 grant from AEP West Virginia Foundation. The funding will provide scholarship assistance to early childhood professionals seeking degrees in early childhood education.

“We are excited and honored to have received this investment,” said Brooke Hunter, Director of WV Early Childhood Training Connections and Resources (WVECTCR). “The inspiration, of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WV scholarship model, is to develop educational investments in our WV early childhood teachers that have the potential to light the way for affordability and sustainability of child care staff to complete their goals for higher education and teacher certification.”

The AEP Foundation shares the vision for supporting early childhood education professionals and will invest \$100,000 over the next two years to support the scholarship models for T.E.A.C.H., an acronym for teacher education and compensation helps.

A check presentation has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 4 at 11 a.m. AEP representatives will present the \$100,000 award to T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WEST VIRGINIA, at River Valley Child Development Services, 611 Seventh Ave. Huntington, WV.

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WEST VIRGINIA scholarship project was developed to upgrade the level of education of teachers working with young children while making the educational process affordable, increasing wages and reducing turnover. The project started in North Carolina in 1990 by Child Care Services Association and has spread across 22 states, including West Virginia.

“The investment in early childhood teacher education allows classroom design and delivery to focus on intentional certified instruction across the early childhood classrooms of West Virginia,” said Stephanie Geneseo, T.E.A.C.H. Specialist. “The investment in our early childhood teachers is not just an investment in the classroom teacher, but the environment they create for the child, the family and ultimately our WV communities.”

River Valley Child Development Services (RVCDs) operates T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® WEST VIRGINIA under WVECTCR and is funded by grants from Pew Charitable Trust, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources and The Board of Trustees of the Prichard School. Established in 1972, RVCDs has a solid history of providing a myriad of quality child development services throughout the state. Its current services include School Age Programs, Resource and Referral agencies, Birth to Three Regional Administrative Units, the Apprenticeship for Child Development Specialist Program, and WVECTCR.

For more information, visit [www.wvearlychildhood.org](http://www.wvearlychildhood.org) or contact Stephanie Geneseo, T.E.A.C.H. Specialist at (304)529-7603 Extension 118 or e-mail [sgeneseo@rvcds.org](mailto:sgeneseo@rvcds.org).

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