

Contact: Pastor Roger Reece, 422-3528

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## **Associated Churches announces \$100,000 grant program aimed at improving early childhood education**

DECEMBER 15, FORT WAYNE -- More Allen County children will have good early childhood education experiences and enter pre-school ready to learn if a \$100,000 funding program announced today by Associated Churches is as successful as anticipated. Associated Churches is a human services organization with about 130 member congregations joining together to help children and families in Fort Wayne and Allen County.

“We hope to help local non-for-profit childcare programs that have a developmental focus enhance their programs to create an even stronger environment where children can learn and develop to their full potential,” said Pastor Roger Reece of Associated Churches. “These grants will be based on what the program directors and teachers tell us they need to better serve the children in their care.” Grant projects might include classroom materials and supplies, educational toys, equipment and other needs identified by these nonprofit weekday programs that care for children ages 0-5 years.

Associated Churches of Fort Wayne and Allen County will administer up to \$100,000 in grants to eligible programs in selected ZIP codes, primarily near the city’s core. This funding is being provided by the Foellinger Foundation to extend the reach of its commitment to early childhood development, a strategic component of its mission.

“Assuring that young children have opportunities for good early childhood education and development is one of the Foellinger Foundation’s highest priorities,” said Cheryl Taylor, President. “Working through Associated Churches is a new way for the Foundation to provide support where it can do the most good – in the child care centers, meeting the needs identified by the staff and teachers themselves.”

Not-for-profit child care centers in the following ZIP codes are eligible to be invited to apply to Associated Churches for grants.

46802	46808
46803	46809
46805	46816
46806	46774
46807	

In addition to financial support, Associated Churches hopes some of its member churches will partner with grantees, Reece said. “We may have some churches with resources to help grantees leverage the grant funds

by working together. This program builds on the word 'Unity' in Associated Churches' motto, 'CommUNITY Together For The Greater Good.' ”

Eligible child care programs interested in being invited to apply for a grant should call Deanna Wilkirson at 422-3528 for information on the process.

### **About Associated Churches**

Associated Churches is a unique faith-based organization that brings together 1,800 volunteers from about 130 congregations to pray, serve, and work together to improve our community and respond to those in need.

### **About the Foellinger Foundation**

The Foellinger Foundation is a private charitable foundation that awards grants for the benefit of people in Fort Wayne and Allen County, Indiana. The Foundation was created in 1958 by Helene R. Foellinger, *The News-Sentinel* publisher from 1936 to 1980, and Esther A. Foellinger, her mother.