

**News Release – For Immediate Release, May 2, 2017****Media Contact: Cheryl Taylor, 422-2900****Half-million dollar grant from Foellinger Foundation will empower local leaders who serve youth and families.**

The Foellinger Foundation announced a multi-year grant to Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES. With this half-million dollar grant, Foellinger has now provided more than \$2.2 million to support the work of Great KIDS in Allen County.

For nearly 20 years, Great KIDS has worked to equip those who serve youth in our community with the knowledge and resources they need to help kids succeed. Great KIDS offers training built upon scientific, evidence-based practices for youth-serving agencies, parent groups, faith-based organizations and community groups.

This latest grant will allow Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES to both continue its excellent work and expand in two important ways.

First, it will fund the creation of a new Youth and Family Development Academy. The Academy will greatly extend the positive influence of Great KIDS by offering training for leaders in organizations that serve youth and families regardless of the sector. This would include social services, faith-based organizations, juvenile justice, education, nonprofits, business, law enforcement, and more.

Great KIDS will be partnering with nationally recognized academic and youth development practitioner, Shay Bilchik, in the development of the Academy curriculum.

Mr. Bilchik is the Founder and Director of the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy. Prior to joining Georgetown University, he was the President and CEO of the Child Welfare League of America, and served as the Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the U.S. Department of Justice, during the Clinton Administration.

**"Our vision with the Academy is to help leaders in all areas of our community better understand the science of youth development,"** said Judge Charles F. Pratt, Allen County Judge and Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES founder. **"We have the science. We know what works. Now the challenge is to take that knowledge and move it into sound policy and practice in Allen County, allowing us to achieve better outcomes for our children and families."**

In addition to the Academy, this grant will also allow Great KIDS to expand its Lecture Series and further align it with the Academy. The expanded format will provide community leaders with high-level educational concepts presented by nationally recognized thought leaders and academics. Sector-specific training from local experts will help implement those concepts in specific focus areas.

**"With decades of experience and the respect of the nonprofit community, Great KIDS is uniquely positioned to prepare leaders to best serve children and families in our community,"** said Cheryl Taylor,

Foellinger Foundation President. **"Foellinger is proud to support the development of leaders in this important work."**

###

#### **About Foellinger Foundation**

The Foellinger Foundation is a private, charitable foundation that awards grants to nonprofit organizations that strengthen Allen County children and their families. The Foundation was created in 1958 by Helene Foellinger, *The News-Sentinel* publisher from 1936 to 1980, and Esther Foellinger, her mother.

#### **About Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES**

Great KIDS make Great COMMUNITIES is a community education initiative supported by the Allen Superior Court, Family Relations Division. Its mission is to motivate and equip individuals and organizations to join together in nurturing competent, caring and responsible children and adolescents. For more information, visit [GreatKidsAllenCounty.org](http://GreatKidsAllenCounty.org)

For more information about Shay Bilchik and his work, visit <http://cijr.georgetown.edu/about-us/meet-the-director/>