

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Media contact:

Kim Frye Smith 540-948-2237 X200

ksmith@skylinecap.org

Community Action Agency and Rappahannock Public Schools partners to bring comprehensive Head Start services to 18 income eligible county children.

MADISON- After more than 15 years in Rappahannock County the Head Start Program offered through Skyline Community Action Program (C.A.P.) is now located within the Rappahannock County Elementary School. According to Skyline CAP's Executive Director, Kim Frye Smith, "This is a tremendous opportunity for children and families living in Rappahannock County to experience the creative, nurturing and educational opportunities that Head Start offers within the public school setting". Skyline C.A.P.'s Head Start Preschool Program is a comprehensive school readiness program offered to income eligible 3 to 5 year old children and children with disabilities. Smith expressed that one of the purposes of the program is to bring services to children who might not otherwise have the opportunity to participate because of income or other barriers. The program is free to income eligible families and will not only help to socialize, but prepare them for their school career. "Skyline C.A.P. now becomes integral to the growth of Rappahannock County's preschool services and demonstrates the County's commitment to the needs of its children and families, and we are very thankful to work in together with Rappahannock County Schools".

Laura Hunt Trull, Skyline CAP's Head Start Director, was instrumental in bringing the program to the school as she worked with school officials including School Superintendent Dr. Robert Chappell, Principal Ms. Carol Johnson and Director of Special Services, Mr. Mike Tupper to negotiate and coordinate opening the classroom to 18 children and three staff members. The County provides transportation for 9 of the 18 children as a result of creative bartering for a 20 passenger, disability equipped bus that is now owned and operated by the county for a multitude of uses. Also, Rappahannock's Child Care Learning Center (CCLC) where Skyline C.A.P. Head Start previously operated for many years continues to partner with the Agency by donating transportation services to children attending the CCLC "After School Program". "It all has worked out wonderfully" said Trull..."we are fortunate to have a 'stand alone' Head Start classroom within the elementary school and students will have access to the

library, computers, art, music, cafeteria, gym and the playground in collaboration with Ms. Patti Hottinger's Early Childhood Special Education classroom" .

Skyline CAP's Head Start classroom is under the guidance of teacher Christina Fitzgerald, and teacher assistant, Carolyn Birckhead. Each County with Head Start services has a Family Service Worker dedicated to the families needs and assists them with advocacy and their special needs throughout the year; Julia Beglane is the Family Service Worker for Rappahannock County. The Agency partnership with Rappahannock County Schools mirrors partnerships with other public schools in Warren, Page and Shenandoah counties and in Greene and Madison County where there are similar collaborations.

Skyline Community Action Program administers the award winning Head Start program under the strictest of federal guidelines to assure families that their children are receiving mandated curriculum and services including educational, mental health, health and nutritional assessments (medical and dental) throughout the year and in preparation for their transition into kindergarten. Skyline CAP currently provides Head Start services in Rappahannock County, but plans to seek designation to provide other services by the county and Governor. The Agency provides referral services and information and works with community partners to provide much needed assistance to families in need of educational, housing, emergency assistance and other services identified within counties it serves.

Please call 540-948-3916 for more information about Skyline CAP's Head Start Program in Rappahannock County or other localities. Visit the Agency's website at www.skylinecap.org

Skyline Community Action Program is one of 26 Community Action Agencies (CAA) operating throughout Virginia and organized to change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve communities and make America a better place to live. CAA's are about the entire community and are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.