NEWS RELEASEContact info:

June 2, 2021 Dina Gentry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Communications Director

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## Program supports EDC homeless children and youth

As part of the Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program (EHCY) at the El Dorado County Office of Education (EDCOE), a discretionary fund has been established from a competitive Impact grant by Women’s Fund El Dorado. These funds will allow EHCY to respond to the immediate needs experienced by unhoused students that may otherwise cause them to miss school. The generous El Dorado County (EDC) community typically fills these needs through various groups and events; however, there remain unique and unexpected needs that sometimes go unfilled.

Dr. Ed Manansala, El Dorado County Superintendent of Schools, expressed, “We greatly appreciate Women’s Fund El Dorado and the opportunity to fulfill basic but crucial needs experienced by this vulnerable population.”

Since the 2020-21 school year began in August 2020, there have been 631 children and youth identified as experiencing homelessness in EDC. The number of children identified is larger than the entire population of unhoused people in EDC, according to HUD’s most recent point-in-time 2019 census information. This difference is attributable to the definitions of homelessness. In the educational system, under the Federal McKinney-Vento Act, homelessness is given a unique definition which includes, “…those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.” This encompasses children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons, living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or campgrounds. These challenges are due to loss of housing, economic hardship, lack of alternative adequate accommodations and can include those who are living in emergency/transitional shelters or are unsheltered.

A second arm of the fund will be used to support specific drives that, while not necessarily designed to mitigate lost class time, will improve and encourage activities that may otherwise be unavailable. For example, over the past three months requests for 20 youth bicycles with helmets have been received. Although this is not a school-related event, Margaret Lewis, EDCOE Homeless Youth Coordinator and EHCY Coordinator, has worked to ensure this need is met by collaborating with community partners.

“After a year of being ‘sheltered-in-place’ we hope to offer these youth a healthy, outdoor activity for the summer,” expressed Lewis. “The impacts on students who are having this life experience, in whichever form they are experiencing the lack of personal housing, can affect academic, social, and/or emotional health. However, as a community we have a great deal of ability to counter some of the trauma that arises out of these challenging situations by offering positive experiences as well.”

If you are interested in contributing to either of these opportunities, please contact Margaret Lewis at (530) 295-4539. You can also send a direct contribution to EDCOE at 6767 Green Valley Rd, Placerville, CA 95667 – please note EHCY Bikes (or discretionary fund) in the memo section.

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