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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**COLLOBARATIVE LAUNCHES 2-YEAR EVALUATION PROJECT TO IMPROVE THE IMPACT OF HEAD START SERVICES FOR DETROIT CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES**

**INKSTER, MICH. (July 07, 2017)** – Thrive by Five Detroit (TB5D), a collaborative led by Starfish Family Services and in partnership with Focus: HOPE, Development Centers, Inc., and Southwest Solutions, has begun a project to assess the effectiveness of their birth to five preschool services in Detroit and apply learnings to program improvements.

The project is funded by a \$450,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF) of Battle Creek Michigan.

Selected by the Office of Head Start, in 2014, to participate in a national birth to five pilot program to create innovative and effective early childhood programs, TB5D currently serves over 1,100 children and their families annually.

“Process evaluation doesn’t sound very exciting,” said Ann Kalass, CEO of Starfish Family Services “but we know it’s critically important that we objectively assess our programs to ensure that they are effective and impactful. Thrive by Five has a transformational vision: *that preschool services in Detroit will be superior to any other community in our nation.* By supporting a process evaluation of our collaborative efforts, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation ensures that the lessons we’ve learned thus far will help inform early childhood efforts within Detroit and throughout the nation.”

The two-year project will examine key program components such as effectiveness of the model, collaboration, infrastructure, professional development, costs, and impact. The evaluation will result in an Evaluation Report, Executive Summary, and Recommendations for Improvement.

**About Starfish Family Services:** Founded in 1963, Starfish Family Services is a private, nonprofit agency serving vulnerable children and families in metropolitan Detroit. Our passion is early childhood development. We strive to prepare young children for a successful start to school. Our programs and services uniquely recognize and respect the important role of parents and other caregivers in the long-term success of children. As a leading provider of Early Head Start and Head Start programs we embrace a comprehensive strategy that also works to address the complex challenges that children and their families may face in their every-day lives. In addition to early childhood services, we provide parenting programs, children’s mental health services, after-school programs, and other youth services including an emergency shelter for teens and youth in crisis. [www.starfishfamilysevrices.org](http://www.starfishfamilysevrices.org).

**About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation:** The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit [www.wkkf.org](http://www.wkkf.org).

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