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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ECECD Tackles Early Childhood Workforce Shortage with New Recruitment Campaign

SANTA FE – Today, the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) announced the launch of “Developing Futures,” a new campaign designed to address the shortage of early childhood professionals in New Mexico. Developing Futures, with the tagline “Develop your future. Develop the future,” highlights a varied set of career paths within early childhood education and care through the personal stories of a diverse group of New Mexicans currently serving in those roles. In addition to showcasing the fulfilling careers available in early childhood, ECECD highlights the financial, educational, and professional supports available to New Mexicans in the early childhood profession.

“It’s truly amazing the kind of impact you can have with a career in early childhood education and care,” said ECECD Cabinet Secretary Elizabeth Groginsky. “Early childhood professionals work with children during their most important developmental years and set the stage for a lifetime of learning, growth, and well-being. With Developing Futures, we wanted to showcase the fun and rewarding careers available in the early education and care sector and encourage New Mexicans to take advantage of the incentives offered by the State to professionals entering the field.”

Despite strong demand for early education and care in most New Mexico communities, many child care programs and service providers report understaffing as a major barrier to operating at capacity or expanding operations. As child care shortages remain one of the most significant barriers to parents and caregivers reentering the workforce, early childhood professional recruitment is key to supporting the overall economy in New Mexico. ECECD is working to address the worker shortage through a robust program of educational supports, wage supplements, and professional development opportunities. The Developing Futures campaign is designed to raise awareness of these supports and the various career paths available in early childhood education and care.

The Developing Futures campaign website futuresnm.org features the stories of eight early childhood professionals in New Mexico hand picked to showcase the varied and exciting careers available in early education and care. The featured professionals include:

- [Valeria Holloway](#), an early childhood educator who runs a home-based child care business in Las Cruces, NM
- [Mikila Crespin](#), a community-based PreK teacher at the WNMU Child Development Center in Las Cruces who benefits from ECECD's PreK pay parity program
- [Byrickson Henderson](#), a Home Visitor in Farmington, NM who works to strengthen traditional Navajo fatherhood practices in NW New Mexico
- [Maria Herrera](#), a school-based PreK teacher at Parkview Early Literacy Center in Roswell, NM
- [Robyn Martin](#), a developmental specialist providing early intervention services in Clovis, NM through ECECD's Family Infant Toddler (FIT) program
- [Stephanie Aquino](#), an educator at the Ohkay Owingeh Head Start, who helps pass traditional language and cultural knowledge to a new generation of Ohkay Owingeh children
- [Alex Miller](#), an Albuquerque early educator with an astrophysics degree whose passion is getting young children excited to learn about science, engineering, and nature
- [Kristie Foreman](#), an Albuquerque early childhood educator who found her calling supporting the development of infants from 6-weeks to one year old and is a beneficiary of ECECD's wage supplement and scholarship programs

"We wanted to showcase that early childhood education and care is a profession to be proud of," said Secretary Groginsky. "We know there are New Mexicans out there who would be incredible in these roles, but who maybe haven't considered turning their love for children into a fulfilling career. By telling the stories of these accomplished and passionate professionals, we hope to inspire more people to follow in their footsteps."

"There has never been a better time to explore a career in early childhood education and care," said Stephanie M. Rodriguez, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Higher Education Department. "With the Opportunity Scholarship, New Mexicans can earn their early childhood degree without having to worry

about paying tuition or fees. Because of our partners at the Early Childhood Education and Care Department, students may also qualify for an additional stipend to help cover cost-of-living expenses as they earn their early childhood degrees. Supporting these future educators lays a strong foundation for New Mexico's children to learn and grow."

"My career in early childhood education is so rewarding. Every day I have a smile on my face. I know I make a difference in the lives of little ones and their families," said Kristie Foreman, who is featured in the Developing Futures TV advertisement. "I'm happy to be part of the Developing Futures campaign because I know how important this career is—to me and to New Mexico families."

The Developing Futures campaign website is live at futuresnm.org and campaign advertisements are currently featured statewide on billboards, television, and online ads.

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*Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham launched the **New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)** in 2020, making New Mexico among the first states to consolidate all early childhood programs and services under a single cabinet-level agency. Under this administration, ECECD has led the nation by expanding access to free New Mexico PreK, overseeing the largest investment in early childhood infrastructure in state history, and implementing cost-free child care for a majority of New Mexico families. Learn more about how ECECD supports children, families, and the early childhood professionals that serve our communities at nmececd.org. On Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram as @NewMexicoECECD.*

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