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COMMUNITY PARTNERS CRITICAL TO LOCAL AGENCY

*Children's Hope Alliance work to combat effects of child abuse not possible
without support from partners like Food Lion in Troutman*

Barium Springs, NC: The effects of child abuse are long-lasting. And patterns of child abuse can last for generations. It's a tough cycle to break, but one month each year is dedicated to doing just that.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, designed to promote awareness of how to promote the wellness of children and families. And it's a month that Children's Hope Alliance (CHA) President and CEO Celeste Dominguez wishes would last all year long.

"It's so important to support the well-being of families, to increase the protective factors that enable them to be resilient and spring back from adversity," Dominguez said. "If our community and its resources provided families with enough resources and support on the front end, I really believe we could put an end to child maltreatment."

A shift like that could make a world of difference in Iredell County. It's been well over a decade since numbers have dipped below 2,000 for the cases of child abuse or neglect reported each year in Iredell County. That's roughly 5 percent, or almost 1 in 20 children who face circumstances in their lives that warrant a report to social services. And that doesn't count the number of situations that are never reported.

That's why Children's Hope Alliance exists. In Iredell County, CHA provides therapy for children and families, and they have teams of specialists who work directly with families in their homes and in many of the Iredell- Statesville schools. In addition, CHA has programs on the campus at Barium Springs for teens who have aged out of foster care as well as young people who are struggling with acute emotional and behavioral challenges.

But these services wouldn't exist without the community partners who support these programs. One of those community partners is Food Lion in Troutman. Through the Food Lion Feeds program, CHA received a generous \$2500 grant to offset food costs for the children and teens living in the programs on the Barium Springs campus.

Want to find out more? Visit www.childrenshopealliance.org to learn about all of the services available and how to get involved.

About Children's Hope Alliance: Children's Hope Alliance works in communities across the state to end the cycle of child abuse by fulfilling our mission to provide hope, health, and healing for generations through comprehensive services and programs that provide safe homes, heal their hurt, and encourage a healthy start. CHA's foster care and adoption, residential, education, outpatient, and family programs touched nearly 2,000 children's lives last year. For more information, visit www.childrenshopealliance.org.

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