



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Homeless Children's Education Fund Announces \$500,000
in Transformative Foundation Support**

Pittsburgh, Pa – The Homeless Children's Education Fund (HCEF) is proud to announce three major foundation grants totaling \$500,000 - \$250,000 from The Heinz Endowments, the largest foundation gift in the organization's 26-year history, \$150,000 from The McElhattan Foundation and \$100,000 from The Pittsburgh Foundation.

These combined investments will fuel HCEF's general operations and its Continuum of Programming Model, a longitudinal, comprehensive support system that serves students experiencing homelessness from early childhood through adulthood, while also addressing immediate needs resulting from gaps in federal funding and general operating support.

"This generous support from The Heinz Endowments, The McElhattan Foundation and The Pittsburgh Foundation represent far more than financial assistance, it represents a lifeline," said AJ Jefferson, president and CEO. "It sends a powerful message to our students that their community sees them, believes in them and is committed to their future. When a child's world is uncertain, education serves as an anchor. These grants help us keep that anchor strong, ensuring our students can continue learning, growing and thriving despite the challenges they face."

The funding arrives at a pivotal time, as shifts in federal policies and programs continue to affect the region's most vulnerable students. Families are facing urgent needs, such as food, clothing, and housing, threatening the stability and future of the children and youth HCEF serves. Support from The Heinz Endowments, The McElhattan Foundation and The Pittsburgh Foundation enable HCEF to respond to these challenges while safeguarding the resources needed to reach 1,500 children by 2027.

"In this time of uncertainty and changes in federal policy and funding, we are pleased to support HCEF's innovative, comprehensive approach to ensuring children and youth experiencing homelessness have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed," said Endowments Equity & Learning Vice President Carmen Anderson. "Strategic partnerships like this reflect our belief that every young person deserves a chance to learn, thrive and contribute to a stronger Pittsburgh."

HCEF's Continuum of Programming Model meets students where they are, providing consistent support from early learning through post-secondary education. Families with young children participate in enrichment workshops that spark creativity and school readiness. Elementary students receive targeted tutoring and enrichment; high schoolers build leadership, financial literacy, and workforce readiness skills; and post-secondary students access coaching, financial aid, and career guidance.

The results are compelling. Students engaged in three or more Continuum programs achieve a 90% retention rate, and at least 90% of HCEF high school seniors graduate or earn their GED, well above the national average for students experiencing homelessness.

For more information on HCEF, visit www.homelessfund.org.

About The Heinz Endowments

The Heinz Endowments works to grow an exemplary, sustainable Pittsburgh region where everyone prospers and belongs. Our work in Arts & Culture; Civic Participation; Climate, Environment & Health; Community & Economic Development; Food Systems; Veterans; and Workforce is supported by reliable data based on results-focused goals. The Endowments is among the 60 largest philanthropic organizations in the United States, distributing approximately \$90 million in grants annually.

About The McElhattan Foundation

The McElhattan Foundation is a Pittsburgh-based grantmaking organization established in 2017 following the sale of Industrial Scientific Corporation. The Foundation challenges nonprofits to bring us bold ideas that advance the goals of our program areas: eliminating death in the workplace, driving economic development in Knox and Franklin, PA, easing suffering at the end of life, and providing high quality out-of-school-time learning in Allegheny County.

About The Pittsburgh Foundation

The Pittsburgh Foundation works to improve the quality of life in the Pittsburgh region by evaluating and addressing community issues, promoting responsible philanthropy and connecting donors to the critical needs of the community. The Foundation is committed to creating a vibrant, equitable and just Pittsburgh region where everyone to thrive and fulfill their potential.

About Homeless Children's Education Fund

The Homeless Children's Education Fund (HCEF) is dedicated to ensuring that children and youth experiencing homelessness have access to the educational opportunities, support, and stability they need to succeed. Through advocacy, funding, and partnerships, HCEF works to break barriers and empower students facing housing insecurity.