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**Clinton COUNTY CHOSEN TO LAUNCH PROMISE PROGRAM**

*Kick-off Event to be held at the Clinton County YMCA on 5/29 from 5:29 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.*

College and technical training may seem far away to kindergarteners, but this fall, Clinton County will bring post-secondary education and career discovery to the front of mind for kindergarten students and their families enrolling for the 2018-2019 school year. The effort (called “The Promise”) is a program that will make educational savings a reality by helping families start a CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings account through their school, seeding the account with an initial investment from the Clinton County Community Foundation, and rallying the community to match deposits that families and champions contribute to the account. Clinton County is among the newest group of communities to launch The Promise program, with the support of Promise Indiana, the Indiana Education Savings Authority, and Lilly Endowment, Inc.

The Promise helps families take that first step to start saving, while also integrating college and career discovery activities into the classroom. Clinton County has selected kindergarten students as the first cohort of students to participate. Youth in the program will not only build assets for post-secondary education, technical training, and learn about college and careers, but they will also visit a college campus for a day of interactive learning and dynamic, hands-on experiences called “Walk Into My Future.” Purdue University and Indiana University Kokomo have graciously offered to host events this fall, with college students and faculty leading campus tours and activity stations for the kindergarten students.

Research from the Center on Assets, Education, and Inclusion at the University of Kansas shows that youth with a college and technical school savings account in their name are between three and four and half times more likely to go to college or technical school than those without an account. CollegeChoice 529 Direct Savings accounts can be used at any eligible institution—2-year community colleges, 4-year colleges, and technical schools. The Promise program began in Wabash County in 2013 and has expanded each year to new communities selected through a competitive application process.

"It was evident that the team from Clinton County had the drive and partnerships to make this a success for the students and families in their community,” said Phil Maurizi, VP of Operations for Promise Indiana. “We look forward to working with all the collaborators, not only to achieve absolute success in their first year, but to also to make The Promise program better and stronger with their innovation. Their work will impact not only local youth, but communities around the state of Indiana.”

To get The Promise underway, Clinton County assembled a steering committee of local partners including the Clinton County Community Foundation, Center Township Trustees, Frankfort Education Foundation, Coach Kids, Clinton County Chamber of Commerce, and community members with a passion for education.  The United Way for Clinton County has graciously accepted the role of convener because of their well-known experience on mobilizing the community for a common cause that change thousands of lives. The United Way is a perfect choice for an opportunity that can change our kids future, and The Promise Clinton County looks forward to seeing United Way lead the way for our county. After setting up their college savings account, youth invite champions—friends, family members, neighbors, coaches, and teachers—to invest in their college savings accounts. Youth who raise $25 in contributions from their champions will receive a matching deposit from a coalition of local partners.

To date, over 13,000 youth around the state have started a CollegeChoice 529 direct savings account through The Promise program. To learn more or get involved with The Promise, contact Carolina Booth at the United Way for Clinton County [cbooth@uwclintoncounty.org](mailto:cbooth@uwclintoncounty.org) or visit [www.PromiseIndiana.org](http://www.PromiseIndiana.org). For more information on the CollegeChoice529 direct savings account please visit <https://www.collegechoicedirect.com/>.