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CONTACT: Kim Dellinger, Executive Director
Bacon Street Youth and Family Services
(757) 253-0111 ext. 102
kdellinger@baconstreet.org

Bacon Street Youth and Family Services Receives \$12,000 CVS Health Community Grant

Grant supports CVS Health's commitment to helping people lead tobacco-free lives and to addressing and preventing the nation's opioid epidemic

Williamsburg, VA, March 8, 2019 – Bacon Street Youth and Family Services announced today that it has received a \$12,000 grant from CVS Health to implement the Mindful Schools Program.

Mindfulness, or maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment with openness and curiosity, has a variety of research-backed impacts, including a reduction in stress, and improvements in job satisfaction, emotional regulation, and focus. Mindfulness has also been found to be an effective strategy in lowering substance use and mental health disorders rates with youth, in addition to reducing recidivism with incarcerated youth and increasing assets with youth who are presenting as having high-risk factors.

As part of the grant, Bacon Street staff and interns will receive training in the Mindful Schools curriculum. Bacon Street will begin communicating with interested schools/communities in the Spring of 2019, and will reach at least 240 youth annually. The Mindful Schools curriculum will teach Bacon Street staff and interns key mindfulness concepts and techniques that can be integrated into their work with youth. The curriculum is adaptable for classrooms and after-school programs and uses developmentally appropriate language for explaining fundamental mindfulness practices to youth. Core topics presented in the curriculum include mindfulness of breath, thoughts, and the regulation of emotions. Inadequate regulation of emotions has been tightly linked to impulsivity. Impulsive behavior has been further associated with the development of addictions. Mindfulness can provide youth with basic tools for understanding and navigating through difficult emotions, which can reduce impulsive tendencies to drink excessively or abuse drugs.

Bacon Street will implement its initiatives in Williamsburg, James City County, York County, Poquoson, Hampton, Newport News, Gloucester, and Mathews communities, and plans to provide match funding at \$3,000 to augment curriculum purchases to support the implementation of the program.

“We are so grateful to receive this grant, as it allows us to provide additional prevention services to youth in our community,” said Kamauria Acree, Prevention Coordinator, Bacon Street Youth and Family Services. “Our hope is that youth will apply mindfulness practices to help them effectively manage their thoughts, emotions, and actions.”

The grant is part of *Be The First*, CVS Health's \$50 million, five-year initiative to help deliver the nation's first tobacco-free generation and extend the company's commitment to help people lead tobacco-free lives. The support is also part of the company's commitment to addressing and preventing the nation's opioid epidemic.

“As a pharmacy innovation company, we are committed to building healthier communities and we believe that providing resources to reduce substance abuse is an effective way to helping people on their path to

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better health,” said Eileen Howard Boone, Senior Vice President, Corporate Social Responsibility and Philanthropy, CVS Health. “We are pleased to support the work that Bacon Street Youth and Family Services does in the community and we look forward to working with them in fulfilling their program’s mission.”

About Bacon Street Youth and Family Services

Founded in 1971, Bacon Street Youth and Family Services is a private, not-for-profit organization that provides services to young people and families affected by substance abuse and/or mental illness in the Hampton Road area. To learn more about their services and how to help, visit www.baconstreet.org or call at (757) 253-0111.

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