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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Reach Dane Purchases Property for a new \$4.4 Million South Madison Center and Ascends a New Course for Early Childhood Education in Madison**

MADISON, Wis., May 8, 2020- The Head Start program agency ends its six-year search to locate an innovative education and support center for the most underserved children and families in South Madison. Reach Dane has received grant funds from the Administration for Children and Families and the City of Madison to help support the purchase and renovation of a new South Madison facility. Reach Dane partnered with Middleton-based innovative architectural design firm, Sketchworks, to help pivot away from traditional modes of early childhood support towards a space that embraces emotional well-being, equality, and autonomy. Construction is set to begin in July 2020 to allow some of Madison's most vulnerable children a safe space starting in Fall 2021.

The new property located at 3201 Latham Drive will provide Head Start and infant/toddler childcare programming for the enrolled children at Reach Dane's South Madison site, which is currently a rented space on Park Street adjacent to the Goodman South Madison Public Library. The new center on Latham will be larger and allow all preschool children to receive full school day programming.

Trauma-informed design and equitable placemaking are central to the educational space. Elements of soothing colors, rounded-edges, natural materials, and soft and squishy places to sit and walk are the hallmarks of this unique design process. The multipurpose room emphasizes play and community and include a climbing wall to build gross and fine motor skills, problem-solving processes, and confidence. The eating and meeting spaces are purposefully inviting and include seating configurations that promote conversation and participation.

The project also consists of two playgrounds and an outdoor teaching space, a lactation room, and teaching offices. The space is being designed by Sketchworks' Michelle Schildgen, the same interior designer that created the Wilmar Center's recent renovation and Tangent on East Washington Street.

Reach Dane will accept private donations as it enters the construction phase. Other opportunities to support include major gifts and naming opportunities of the following spaces: outdoor classroom, lactation room, rock climbing wall, entrance memorial, and playground bike path. Every participating donor can appear on the donor wall. Please contact Jen Everson at [jeverson@reachdane.org](mailto:jeverson@reachdane.org) if you are interested in learning more about this development or supporting the center.

Reach Dane provides high-quality early childhood services to over 1,000 underserved children ages 0-5 in Dane County through center based and home visitation programs. Our staff work tirelessly every day to reach the most vulnerable children and families in our community, and the need for our services is growing. The number of infants and toddlers experiencing homelessness enrolled in our programs has tripled over the last four years. Last year, Reach Dane served more homeless children than any other Head Start program in Wisconsin. Reach Dane's mission is to change the lives of underserved children and families through education and supportive services. The vision is, " a child's foundation to learn, a families' opportunity to succeed".

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