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****PRESS RELEASE****

**FAMILY MATTERS OF GREATER WASHINGTON CELEBRATES 135 YEARS AS ONE OF
THE NATION'S OLDEST, NATIONALLY-ACCREDITED SOCIAL SERVICES
ORGANIZATIONS**

***Organization Marks 135 Years by Looking Back at Major Milestones and Achievement
in Social Services for Youth, Families and Seniors***

Washington, DC – Family Matters of Greater Washington, one of the nation’s oldest, nationally-accredited social services organizations, announced today the launch of their 135th anniversary in providing compassionate solutions for underprivileged and at-risk youth, families and seniors across the Greater Washington Metropolitan Area.

Founded in 1882 as The Associated Charities, over its 135-year history, Family Matters has compiled a legacy of firsts and groundbreaking moments in social service provisions.

“Our legacy of service for an astonishing 135 years is a remarkable testament to the men and women who founded and sustained this organization over the past century and then some,” noted current President and CEO Tonya Jackson Smallwood. “To have impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of children, families and seniors for more than a century, particularly overcoming economic deprivations that saw so many non-profit social service organizations fail, is an achievement of unparalleled success. I am proud and honored to serve at the helm of this organization and to play a role in charting a course for the next century and beyond.”

In the year 1882, there was a new president named Chester Arthur, who was sworn in after the assassination of President James Garfield in 1881. The Washington Monument was only partially completed, and the outlaw Jesse James was finally gunned down. Washington, D.C. was a city in transition as many former slaves freed in the Civil War made their way north to find freedom and a new life.

A group of men and women concerned about the growing poverty in the nation’s capital, embarked on an effort to aid the poor and less-fortunate. They incorporated as the Associated Charities of the District of Columbia Annual and set out to promote cooperation among charities to provide “relief from destitution” and to improve the condition of the “dependent poor and pauperism.”

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Over the years, they launched a number of new programs which broke new ground in social services. Some of their notable firsts included:

- Establishment of the first Christmas Opportunity Fund in 1896, later adopted by the U.S. Postal Service, to stimulate the poor to save.
- Formation of the first Boys Club in 1903.
- In 1907, they opened the first camp for African-American mothers and children.
- Helped write legislation for the 1910 School Attendance law making school attendance for children compulsory.
- In 1934, concurrent with a name change to "Family Service Association," they pioneered the development of social casework with a mental hygiene emphasis, in response to mental health awareness around veterans' issues following the war.
- In 1937, they were instrumental in helping draft the first national Social Security program.
- They started the first daycare program for children of working parents during World War II.
- In 1986, they created the first weekend respite program for Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

"I trust that the experience of the past and the challenge of the present and future may make for even greater usefulness as you enter your second half-century," wrote President Herbert Hoover in a letter to the organization in 1932, on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary.

Today, Family Matters provides assistance for more than 20,000 children, families, and seniors in the region in the areas of therapeutic and traditional foster care, youth development programs, mental health/counseling services, and services & activities for seniors. Accredited by The Council on Accreditation Services for Families and Children, Inc., The Commission on Accreditation Facilities, The Joint Commission, and The American Camping Association, Family Matters oversees and operates the following programs:

- Camp Moss Hollow – a summer camp for inner city youth that offers youth development and empowerment.
- Foster Care & Adoption — with a goal of achieving permanency and family placements.
- Bright Futures – Teen Mother Independent Living Center that helps teen mothers acquire the skills they need to care for their child.
- Aging and Disability Resource Centers – Senior Services that provide for basic needs as well as programs that introduce arts and technology.
- Mental Behavioral Health — for families, seniors, and military veterans.
- Community Resources — including home-delivered meals, financial counseling and other services.
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program.

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Family Matters also recently announced the acquisition of Regent Healthcare, LLC, a for-profit private duty & home health care agency. Regent Healthcare, LLC provides a range of home health services including companion care, personal care and skilled nursing services to assist homebound seniors. They also offer the full continuum of care, including basic companionship, housekeeping services, personal care services, and assistance for patients recovering from injury, illness or disease. Services are currently provided in Anne Arundel, Northern Prince Georges and Howard County with plans to expand to the District and other sites in Maryland in the coming year. The acquisition will help Family Matters in their efforts to build sustainable revenue to ensure their longevity for the future.

“Family Matters is proud of the work we have done for nearly 135 years to support and enhance the lives of so many members of our community,” noted Board Chair Thomas L. Johnson. “As we continue to grow to meet the needs of an evolving community, we pledge to keep our eye on sustainability and longevity to ensure the provision of these vital services for area families for the years to come.”

To learn more about Family Matters of Greater Washington, visit us on the web at www.familymattersdc.org, like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/FamilyMattersDC/> and follow us on Twitter at @FamilyMattersDC.

About Family Matters of Greater Washington (www.familymattersdc.org)

Family Matters of Greater Washington is a non-government, nonprofit organization accredited by the Council on Accreditation Services for Families and Children, Inc. and the American Camping Association. Formerly known as Family and Child Services of Washington, D.C., Inc., Family Matters was founded in 1882 and has been an integral part of the Washington, D.C. community for 135 years. One of the oldest, nationally accredited social services organizations in the nation, Family Matters provides comprehensive, accessible, low-fee services to thousands of residents of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Northern Virginia. Family Matters of Greater Washington is a member of the Child Welfare League of America and the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities.

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