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FIRST 5 RIVERSIDE PROVIDES FUNDING FOR MARTHA'S VILLAGE AND KITCHEN CHILDREN'S SERVICES CENTER FOR EARLY CARE SERVICES

First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children and Families Commission, has awarded the Children's Services Center at Martha's Village and Kitchen to provide early care and education services for pre-kindergarteners in the Coachella Valley. Due to the dual benefits of these services; to help create a strong foundation for children's future development, and improving their parents' ability to participate in the workforce, the Commission has increased the number of children in Riverside County able to access high quality early care and education services.

This initiative will result in significant positive benefits for children and families in the community. Because it is also a new approach in funding for First 5, and because the Commission is committed to achieving a successful outcome, rigorous reporting requirements have been put in place.

"We make sure that we track every child's progress through their time in the Children's Services Center to ensure that we're doing a great job," said Cecilia Brown, Children's Services Program Manager for Martha's Village and Kitchen. "First 5 has seen what we do and our successes, and support our work to educate and enrich children's lives."

This Access and Quality Child Care Scholarships funding will help Martha's continue to foster family involvement in the educational process, provide staff education, reduce class size, and increase program leadership and teaching opportunities.

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The Riverside County Children & Families Commission, or First 5 Riverside, is a division of the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services and is funded by Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues. First 5 Riverside supports early childhood development through educational outreach, partnerships and funding for early education, health and child care services that benefit children, from 0 through 5 years of age. Research shows that support helps children develop a strong foundation for success in school and throughout their lives. For more information about First 5 Riverside programs and other funded services, call 800-266-3880 or visit www.rccfc.org.

The Children's Services Center at Martha's Village and Kitchen, a licensed childcare facility, has been caring for and educating the children of the homeless and less fortunate in the Coachella Valley since March 2002. Learn more at: <http://marthavillage.org/new/children.html>

Martha's Village and Kitchen is the largest transitional housing program for the homeless in Riverside County. The mission of Martha's is to help its neighbors in need throughout the Coachella Valley break the cycle of homelessness and poverty by attaining self-sufficiency through an innovative continuum of care, multi-disciplinary programs, and community partnerships. The free services at Martha's touch thousands of homeless and impoverished men, women, and children each year through primary and preventive healthcare, serving over 220,000 meals a year, case management, licensed free child care, mental health and recovery services, career coaching and continuing adult education, in addition to clothing, rent, and utility assistance.

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