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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **DALLAS INFLUENCERS IN SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT (DISE) GIVES GRANT TO CHILDREN IN NEED**

*Statement from Bonnie Cook, President and CEO of Mental Health America of Greater Dallas*

DALLAS, August 21, 2020 – Mental Health of Greater Dallas has received grant money in order to help schools in the Dallas-Fort Worth area receive training and materials to help prevent child abuse, family violence, peer pressure, trauma, harassment and other mental health issues facing children. The We Help Ourselves (WHO) program has been a vital part of this community since 1981 and has been very instrumental several school districts not only in the DFW area but in other parts of Texas. This year DISE has chosen the WHO Program to receive training and materials for 9 schools in our area, these schools will receive WHO Program training for their school counselor along with puppets, animated videos and follow-up materials in order to train their school children on prevention. These schools include:

1. Lake Dallas Elementary School, Lake Dallas Independent School District
2. Shore Haven Elementary School, Garland Independent School District
3. Montclair Elementary School, Garland Independent School District
4. Adelle Turner Elementary School, Dallas Independent School District
5. David G. Burnet Elementary School, Dallas Independent School District
6. George H.W. Bush, Dallas Independent School District
7. Seagoville North Elementary School, Dallas Independent School District
8. Stephen C. Foster Elementary School, Dallas Independent School District
9. Trinity Heights Talented and Gifted, Dallas Independent School District

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These schools demonstrated some high needs in their school children. Two of these schools were impacted by the tornado that hit Dallas. Many of these schools are facing economic hardships due to COVID-19. One school said, “our families face mental health issues such as anxiety and depression”. There is also substance abuse, poverty, food insecurity, homelessness and electrical bill assistance are problems many families face. Another school said, “our families face the following problems: Anxiety, COVID anxiety, Depression, Anger, Stress, Aggression, Struggling Home Life, Parent Imprisonment, Homelessness, Foster Care, Racial Inequities, Quality Housing, Hunger, Poverty, and others”. One school said that “they have traumas that they had faced on the way here, and traumas they faced while living in their countries.” One counselor is concerned that children will need additional mental health resources due to the students being away from campus since March.

In addition, the Mental Health of Greater Dallas has decided to award two additional scholarships out of the DFW area. These schools are:

1. Hilley Elementary, Socorro Independent School District (El Paso area)
2. Tarkington Primary School, Tarkington Independent School District (North Central Liberty County)

Mental Health America of Greater Dallas serves as a catalyst to identify, assess, and respond to mental health needs in the community. As a facilitator and coordinator for local mental health service providers, MHA-Greater Dallas operates through strategic long-range planning along with immediate responses to community crises as they arise. In addition to our efforts to supply information, education and advocacy related to mental health issues, we also provide preventive programs designed to equip high-risk populations (including children, the homeless and the indigent) with information and skills to combat stress and adversity. Mental Health America of Greater Dallas is a trusted 501 3(c) regional non-profit since 1947.

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