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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cash Achievement Awards for Early Childcare Educators

The Cloudsplitter Foundation today announced a Childcare Excellence Award Program to make awards for Early Childcare Educators. The awards will recognize dedicated educators who have demonstrated a commitment to providing high quality early childcare education, and to continually improving the standards of education that they provide. The award program is intended to improve early childhood education outcomes by promoting participation in the QUALITYstarsNY initiative, a program that trains and rates childcare professionals as they progress through a proven five-step program. In addition to recognizing the hard work and dedication of early childhood educators, the Program aims to foster continued improvement and retention of high-quality educators. Eligible participants may be nominated for multiple \$2,000 cash achievement awards as they progress through the QUALITYstarsNY program.

The Childcare Excellence Awards are an outgrowth of Cloudsplitter's continued investment in the Adirondack Birth-to-Three (BT3) Alliance. Administered through the Adirondack Foundation, the BT3 Alliance has expanded access to QUALITYstarsNY programs and helped to fund a regional QUALITYstarsNY Improvement Specialist for the North Country. In 2020, four new childcare programs were added to the QUALITYstarsNY family. These new awards are intended to further those goals and improve childhood education and early childhood education outcomes by accelerating the addition of more QUALITYstarsNY qualified providers and quality educators.

This pilot program will measure the impact of cash achievement awards on recruiting, retention, and quality improvement. The initial 125 awards will be made available through the Cloudsplitter Foundation. Additional funders are being encouraged to join the program to make more awards available.

Any employee of a fully-qualified early childhood education and childcare provider, including sole proprietorships, operating in Clinton, Essex, or Franklin Counties, or in the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne within the State of New York, who is engaged in full-time educational and childcare activities and whose employer participates in the QUALITYstarsNY program is eligible for this award. Awards are made directly to the educator and not to the employer, in recognition of the educator's efforts in helping their employer achieve qualification for or progression to the next level in the QUALITYstarsNY program. Childcare educators become eligible for awards when their employer achieves the requisite qualifications to be fully enrolled in QUALITYstarsNY. Self-employed sole proprietorships are also eligible. Eligible persons are nominated for an award by their QUALITYstarsNY Quality Improvement Specialist and awards are authorized by a Selection Committee comprised of representatives from the Child Care Coordinating Council of the North Country and the QUALITYstarsNY Program.

This announcement does not constitute an offer or commitment. For full rules and eligibility requirements of the Childcare Excellence Award Program, the official guidelines for the award program are available at www.Cloudsplitter.org.

In 2014, Cloudsplitter Foundation, Adirondack Foundation, and other partners established the Birth to Three (BT3) Alliance which crosses boundaries to bring together agencies and childcare providers to give every child the best possible start in life. The BT3 Alliance was founded based on studies that show that the first 1000 days of life are the most important in a child's development. For more information:

adirondackbt3.org, Lindsay Turner 518-523-9904.

The Cloudsplitter Foundation is a 501c3 registered charity that since 1987 has been dedicated to improving the lives, economies, and environment in the Adirondack Park. For more information, please contact Chenelle Palyswiat at +1 518-992-4900 or email: Chenelle@Cloudsplitter.org

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