



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The FATHER Project's Citizen Fathers Receives Individuals of the Year Award**

PARK RAPIDS, MN (May 3, 2018) – CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health FATHER Project's Citizen Fathers recently received The Individuals of the Year award from the Minnesota Fathers and Families Network for their devotion and hard work in helping create a healthier community for fathers and families.

The FATHER Project's Citizen Fathers have completed The FATHER Project's step-by-step, multi-class program, a special achievement for dads who excel in the program and exemplify strong leadership and fathering skills and have personally made the decision to become leaders, not only in their homes, but in the community.

They are driven to improve the future for fathers, families, and children. They serve as group leaders in our Hubbard County community as well as in neighboring communities of Becker and Cass Counties giving access to more fathers to grow and receive hope.

The Citizen Fathers take part in monthly meetings to discuss ways to provide opportunities for families, some of which include: The Father Daughter Dance; The Annual Christmas Giving Tree, delivering presents and bringing joy to hundreds of families; placing kindness signs all over the community; relationship groups for couples to learn the art of healthy communication; and teaching 8<sup>th</sup> Hour, an after school program that teaches children etiquette, cooking, outdoor survival, sportsmanship and how to be proper role models.

Speaking at the state legislature, they advocate for fathers about the importance of having programming for fathers across the state and influencing policy change for children at risk.

“This elite group of men know that the struggle is real, that fathers and families need help, hope, support, and instead of being talkers, they are doers, and they are making huge positive impacts on the community. Wherever they go they are recognized as Citizen Fathers, an accomplishment that they carry with honor”, said CHI St. Joseph’s Health Father Project Coordinator, Joe Johnson.

Since launching in 2011, The FATHER Project has been making a positive impact in the communities across our region by providing life-changing support for families. The Project’s mission is to help any and all fathers, custodial or non-custodial, or anyone filling in as a father figure (step dads, grandparents, foster parents) learn healthy parenting skills and behaviors, as well as overcome barriers that have prevented them from providing emotional and financial support for their children. By participating in this voluntary, step-by-step, multi-class program, participants learn an array of fathering skills that include healthy disciplinary approaches, parenting and communication styles, and co-parenting skills. Some participants go on to become “Citizen Fathers,” a special achievement for dads who excel in the program and exemplify strong leadership and fathering skills.

Over the past seven years, over 375 dads have been enrolled in The FATHER Project and been empowered to overcome the barriers that prevented them from supporting their children economically and emotionally. “By eliminating barriers and providing a variety of services, we have addressed many social issues affecting our community. We continue to help each individual along the path to achieving goals and becoming independent, productive members for their families and communities.” said Marlee Morrison, CHI St. Joseph’s Health Community Health Director.

To learn more about the FATHER Project or to sign up, please contact Joe Johnson at 218.255.2063 or [JosephJohnson@catholichealth.net](mailto:JosephJohnson@catholichealth.net). To make a donation, please contact CHI St. Joseph’s Health Foundation at 218.616.3383.

###



## Cutline

CHI St. Joseph's Health FATHER Project's Citizen Fathers, receive the Minnesota Fathers and Families Individuals of the Year Award. From left to right; Todd Eastman, Mike Schleicher, Matt Zimmerman, and Brian Loch. (Not pictured: Jamie Roth, Scott Forsberg, Jeremy Engholm, Carlandus Downing, Lucas Fishel, Andrew Burton and Aaron Zierden.)

## About CHI St. Joseph's Health

*CHI St. Joseph's Health is a 25-bed critical access hospital serving communities in Hubbard, Becker, Cass and Wadena Counties since 1946. In recent years, CHI St. Joseph's Health's award-winning teams received several national honors including: The Joint Commission Top Performer on Key Quality Measures in surgery; Top 100 Critical Access Hospital, HealthStrong; WomenCertified's America's Best Hospitals Women's Choice Award in obstetrics; and the Studer Group Fire Starter Healthcare Organization of the Month among other national, regional and state recognitions.*

## About CHI

*St. Joseph Hospital is part of Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI), a national nonprofit health system based in Englewood, Colorado. The faith-based system operates in 18 states and includes 103 hospitals, as well as long-term care, assisted- and residential living communities; community health services organizations; home health agencies and outpatient facilities and services. In fiscal year 2016, CHI provided more than \$1.1 billion in financial assistance and community benefit. CHI generated operating revenues of \$15.9 billion and has total assets of approximately \$22.7 billion.*

###

Contact: Judy Miller  
Communication/Marketing Manager  
CHI St. Joseph's Health  
600 Pleasant Avenue  
Park Rapids, MN 56470  
218.616.3310