



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## CHI **St. Joseph's** Health FATHER Project wins 2016 Program of the Year Award and Leader of the Year Award

PARK RAPIDS, MN (March 15, 2016) – Minnesota Fathers & Families Network has awarded CHI **St. Joseph's Health Community Health FATHER Project** the 2016 Program of the Year award and the 2016 Leader of the Year award to **Joe Johnson, CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health FATHER Project Case Manager.**

Minnesota Fathers & Families Network annually recognizes programs and individuals who are advancing fatherhood policy and practice throughout Minnesota. The Program of the Year award is awarded to the program that has made an outstanding contribution to advancing the field of fatherhood policy or practice. The Leader of the Year award is awarded to a person who has made an outstanding contribution to the field of fatherhood policy or practice in the state of Minnesota or in his/her local community.

The nomination for the program of the year award was submitted by Jamie Roth, a Park Rapids area father who **has been through the program.** **"The father project has helped me become a better father. This program continues to grow even when the grant for the program was denied which could have ended the work they do. But CHI St. Joseph's Health stepped in to keep the program going. Every week we gain new fathers and teach them parenting skills, help them find jobs, and help with every facet of life. I believe that the father project is a great program that is making better fathers and citizens that are an asset to their community,"** said Jamie Roth.

**Roth went on to say, "Joe Johnson is the driving force behind the father project. He goes above and beyond to teach fathers to be great dads and an asset to our community. Joe is the light that guides all of the fathers in the program. He puts a lot of work and energy into making us all better people. Joe does amazing work for fathers, making them not just good dads, but great dads who create great citizens and great people."**

The FATHER Project was started in 2011 to assist low-income and non-custodial dads in overcoming barriers that prevent them from supporting their children economically and emotionally. The project is designed to help fathers become more involved in their children's lives. Individuals served by the program face barriers such as poverty, a history with the criminal justice system, lack of a high school diploma or GED, unemployment or under-employment, child support arrears and/or instability in family relationships. The program assists fathers in achieving individualized goals related to parenting, employment, legal services related to access and visitation, and educational achievement.

Since the project started, over 200 dads have been enrolled in the program. "Over the past five years, the FATHER Project has empowered fathers to overcome the identified 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 Raeann Mayer, CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health Director.

"I have witnessed first-hand the work that the Father Project has done in and around Park Rapids. I have been blessed to meet with many of the dads they have served. I have been able to see some of those fathers change from men who were in a really bad place in life, into leaders in their communities. The program doesn't just make these men better fathers, it restores their sense of purpose and gives them something to be proud of," said AJ Dombeck, Minnesota Fathers & Families Network Chairperson.

###



Accepting The FATHER Project 2016 Program of the Year and Leader of the Year awards are pictured left to right: Kristen Partlow, FATHER Project Employment Specialist and Joe Johnson, FATHER Project Case Manager.

### **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

*Catholic Health Initiatives, one of the nation's largest health systems, was formed in 1996 to strengthen the Catholic health ministry for the future. With deep roots in the tradition of expressing Christ's love by caring for those in need, Catholic Health Initiatives serves more than four million people each year through acute care hospitals; long-term care, assisted and residential-living facilities; community-based health services; home care; research and development; and reference laboratory services.*

###

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