



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The FATHER Project wins Minnesota Touchstone Energy Community Award

PARK RAPIDS, MN (April 4, 2016) – CHI St. Joseph's Health is pleased to announce that the Fostering Actions to Help Earnings and Responsibilities (FATHER) Project of Park Rapids was named the 2015 winner of Minnesota's Touchstone Energy Community Award. The FATHER Project received the award March 23 during the Minnesota Rural Electric Association's annual meeting in St. Paul.

The FATHER Project was selected from among all the local award winners throughout the state for the special honor. The organization received an engraved award and \$1,000 for its efforts. "Thank you so much to Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative and Touchstone Energy for believing and affirming the work we are doing with area dads and families and helping us continue our mission," said Joe Johnson, CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health FATHER Project Coordinator.

"The FATHER Project clearly demonstrates the strong commitment to community that Itasca-Mantrap Cooperative, a Touchstone Energy cooperative, values," Mike Monsrud, Itasca-Mantrap President-CEO, said.

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 helps 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. It is designed to assist fathers in achieving individualized goals related to parenting, employment, legal services related to access and visitation, and educational achievement.

Over the past five years, 260 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 RaeAnn Mayer, CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health Director.

Last fall, Touchstone Energy cooperatives throughout the state presented local awards to individuals or organizations for outstanding contributions to their communities. Local award recipients were automatically entered for the statewide recognition.

"As Touchstone Energy cooperative, Itasca Mantrap Cooperative is pleased that our local program, The FATHER Project, which impacts our community in so many positive ways, was chosen the recipient for the state recognition." Monsrud said.

The Touchstone Energy Community Award highlights the Cooperative Principle-*Concern for Community*.

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Pictured, l to r: Mike Monsrud, Itasca-Mantrap President-CEO; Joe Johnson, CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health FATHER Project Coordinator and RaeAnn Mayer, CHI St. Joseph's Health Community Health Director.

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.

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