



## PRESS RELEASE

**Contact: Janina Akins**

**Ph.: 609.695.3739**

**Email: [jakins@peikids.org](mailto:jakins@peikids.org)**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **PEI Kids Receives \$316K in Federal Funding to Support Youth Victims of Gang Violence in Greater Trenton**

**Trenton, NJ | October 2, 2019** – Today, PEI Kids announced that it is the recipient of a three-year grant award from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) to support victims of gang violence in the greater Trenton area. According to the funding announcement, this federal initiative seeks to support jurisdictions with high levels of gang violence that could demonstrate a willingness and readiness to develop community- and data-driven responses to youth and their families who are victims of gang-related crime and violence.

PEI Kids will be the lead agency for the collaborative project called The Greater Trenton Outreach to Support Youth Victims of Gang Violence. The project will be based on a multidisciplinary team (MDT) response model and will incorporate several of Mercer County's youth-serving organizations, the Mercer County Gang Prevention & Intervention Task Force, and the Mercer County Department of Human Services.

According to PEI Kids' Executive Director, Roz Dashiell, "We are honored to work as the lead agency of this community-based collaborative to increase the availability of direct support services for victims of gang-related violence and to develop and enhance the responses to youth exposed to this violence in their homes, schools, and communities."

Under this initiative, JJDP expects recipients to provide support services, improve responses to impacted youth, and enhance public safety in their communities. The project will be spearheaded under the Mercer County Gang Prevention & Intervention Task Force which is chaired by PEI Kids' Program Coordinator, Rob Fiorello, who also runs PEI Kids' Intervention programs for adjudicated youth and youth at-risk of justice-system involvement. "This is a clear victory for youth in our community who are disproportionately impacted by this kind of violence," explained Fiorello. "I look forward to working closely with our project partners to create a meaningful network of support that

meets the specialized needs of youth victims of gang violence in Trenton and in the surrounding area,” Fiorello added.

PEI Kids plans to have the project operational by January 2020. Over the next three months, PEI Kids will conduct planning and organizational meetings, hire project staff, and contract with other community-based providers who can provide specialized services for youth victims of gang violence – many of which were involved in the project’s initial development. Organizations currently committed to the project include Capital Health Regional Medical Center, Mercer County Department of Human Services, Catholic Charities, Capital County Children's Collaborative/Care Management Organization, The Mercer County Sheriff’s Office, Youth Advocate Programs, and YWCA Princeton.

To learn more about PEI Kids and the Greater Trenton Outreach to Support Victims of Gang Violence project , please call 609-695-3739, visit [www.peikids.org](http://www.peikids.org) or go to [www.facebook.com/peikidsnj](https://www.facebook.com/peikidsnj) .

### **About PEI Kids**

PEI Kids’ mission is dedicated to promoting and maintaining a safe environment for all children. PEI Kids works with the child, family, educators and caregivers to provide Prevention, Education and Intervention programs relating to personal safety; sexual abuse; delinquency prevention, and the overall well-being of the child. Established in 1985, PEI Kids is a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit which provides school-based Prevention Education programs serving over 10,000 students, teachers and parents annually. PEI Kids’ Intervention programs include crisis counseling for child victims of sexual abuse, anger management for youth at risk of juvenile justice involvement and juvenile offender diversion programming for adjudicated youth. Through its Support Services programs, PEI Kids also provides transportation and supervised visitation for children in foster care and their families.

###