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NEWS RELEASE EMBARGOED until 4 p.m. on 6/4/2024

Groundbreaking Ceremony Held for Early Childhood Development Center at Shimer Square

Mount Carroll, IL – In a strategic move to further job creation and community development, GROWTH, at the request of the City of Mount Carroll, has embarked on the development of a high-quality Early Childhood Development Center adjacent to new housing units currently under construction within the Shimer Square campus in Mt. Carroll, IL. This initiative aims to provide childcare and workforce solutions by creating 27 jobs.

Over the past two years, GROWTH has worked to raise the necessary funds to develop the childcare center. After considering various options and locations within existing buildings on the campus, it was determined that a new construction facility would best meet the needs of the childcare center while being cognizant of costs.

GROWTH applied for funding from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Community Services (OCS) through its Community Economic Development (CED) program. In October 2022, GROWTH was awarded the maximum grant of \$800,000 towards the \$1.67 million development. This accomplishment is particularly notable as GROWTH was the only 2022 grantee from the state of Illinois.

The significance of this project further resonated in 2023 when GROWTH, in collaboration with the City of Mount Carroll, conducted a comprehensive feasibility study to assess the need for an early childhood development center for families living within a 30-minute radius of Mount Carroll. The study results indicated a strong demand for such a facility, underscoring the relevance of the development within the Shimer Square campus.

Development Team:

- Economic Growth Corporation, Developer
- Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen, Legal Counsel
- Growth General Contracting, LLC, General Contractor
- Baranski Hammer Moretta Sheehy, Architect

- Home Base Property Management, Property Manager

Beyond the initial \$800,000 grant, support for the childhood development center has been made possible by Bridge Investment Community Development Corporation, the City of Mount Carroll, and the Joint-County Opportunity Benefit Support Fund. Plans for the center exceed 5,000 square feet and include a designated pick-up and drop-off location, a new parking lot, and plans for future expansion.

"The development of the Early Childhood Development Center at Shimer Square is a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to foster job creation and enhance community development in Mount Carroll," said Brian Hollenback, President/CEO of GROWTH. "This center will not only provide essential childcare services for families but also create 27 new jobs, contributing to the local economy. We are proud to be leading this initiative in collaboration with the City of Mount Carroll and our dedicated partners. This project exemplifies our commitment to adaptive reuse and revitalization, ensuring that Shimer Square remains a vibrant and thriving community hub for generations to come."

"The groundbreaking of the Early Childhood Development Center at Shimer Square is a remarkable achievement for our community," said Mayor Carl R. Bates of Mount Carroll. "We are grateful for GROWTH's continued commitment to revitalize Shimer Square and excited to see it evolve into a vibrant hub that honors our heritage while paving the way for a prosperous future. The City of Mount Carroll's contribution to this project represents a crucial investment in our economic and workforce development, addressing the urgent need for childcare services and supporting the growth of our community."

A Request for Proposal for an operator was published in early May, and GROWTH is currently in discussions with an operator to manage the facility and hire the 25 new positions needed to staff the center.

For more information about the Early Childhood Development Center at Shimer Square or GROWTH's initiatives, please contact GROWTH or visit <https://www.shimersquare.com/>.

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