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‘Let Their Greatness GROW’ campaign launched by the ‘Get Ready to GROW’ collaborative. Developmental checks are one of the best ways to support children’s health and well-being.

Rochester - Young children in the City of Rochester and surrounding region now have access to free developmental checks, or screenings, that can help families better understand their child’s strengths and possible needs for healthy development. Only 20 to 30% of children with health, behavioral, and development problems are identified and receive appropriate interventions prior to entering school. Children's Institute along with Causewave Community Partners and a collaborative of child-serving organizations, announce a new community campaign to ensure families are aware of the benefits and availability of screenings.

The Get Ready to GROW collaborative, led by Children’s Institute, features screenings designed to support a child’s doctor by providing complementary information that they would not get during a typical well visit. In addition to height, weight, vision, and hearing, these development checks look at movement, dental, speech & language, thinking & reasoning, and social & emotional well-being, as well as social determinants of health and education. The free checks are an easy and fun way for families to engage in their child’s development, and leverage state-of-the-art technology to ensure best practices.

“This campaign helps parents know about Get Ready to GROW’s comprehensive, convenient, and fun checks - with trusted follow-up and support. Every parent should have as many people as possible in their corner and help at their fingertips - as growth is rapid during childhood and a worry can rise quickly,” said Ann Marie White, Ed.D, Executive Director of Children’s Institute.

A regional advertising agency, Mower, donated time and talent totaling more than \$90,000 to develop the ***Let Their Greatness GROW*** campaign. The initiative aims to raise awareness and educate parents about these important screenings. The advertising acknowledges that parents

often see things in their child's behavior they are unsure of or think will go away with time. With the help of a screening they can uncover their child's strengths and, if a need is identified, take action to ensure their development is on track. Additional pro bono production support for the campaign was donated by PushMP and dPost.

"This was a complex challenge, as parents have a lot on their plates, and it can be scary to think about your child needing help in order to thrive," said Todd Butler, President and CEO of Causewave Community Partners. "We needed the team at Mower to come up with a messaging strategy that was clear, focused, optimistic and empowers parents to take action for their child. They really delivered."

The Get Ready to GROW comprehensive screening model is more than just a one time check. A GROW navigator partners with the family, school, child care providers, and physicians to better understand a child's developmental path. Navigators will assist parents and work with the support network to help ensure the child is prepared for success in school.

Providers and families have been benefiting from this new screening model since 2014. Initially called GROW-Rochester, this community effort initiated by Children's Institute and the ROC the Future School Readiness Outcome Team has been scaling to meet new needs and challenges. With several health provider pilots taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic, Get Ready to GROW has developed a flexible screening model that can be delivered virtually, through partnering providers, in the child care or school setting, and out in the community in a mobile screening unit.

Dr. Sarah Collins-McGowan, Pediatrician with Rochester Regional Health at Genesee Pediatrics and the Center for Refugee Health noted, *"Get Ready to GROW screenings are more comprehensive than what I would normally be able to do in the office, and provides links to services and navigation support not typically available. It's so easy to work with the GROW team as a provider. They figured out what our office needed and personalized processes for maximum efficiency and value."* She reflected further on the impact of GROW. *"I had a parent that was really concerned about her child being 'labeled'. She opened up to our practice and began to trust our processes. With GROW she received quick evaluation results, talked with supportive, non-judgmental, knowledgeable specialists, and learned to move past her barriers and obtain services for her daughter, probably at least a year earlier than waiting for school screenings. This was a real success. Actually, if it was available earlier, I would have jumped at the chance to have my children checked by the GROW team."*

Another example of Get Ready to GROW's impact on school success came from a parent. *"The exam by the eye doctor helped pinpoint exactly what was wrong with Gabby's vision. I did not*

know that she had an astigmatism and that she needed glasses to correct it. When she wears her glasses her behavior seems to be more focused, now she does not need to sit so close to the television and she seems more interested in school work.”

Ida Pérez, Director of the Children and Family Stability Services for Ibero American Action League, is a Get Ready to GROW Partner with a focus on their Early Childhood Center. She has shaped the initiative in many ways, including bilingual bus design and culturally responsive parent engagement. Ida notes, *“Being able to complete screening right at our facility with the help of the Get Ready to GROW Bus, connecting families to the resources they need to help their child and having the right professionals in place to guide us only enhances the services Ibero provides and prides itself on. Partnering with Get Ready to GROW is an additional level of support, reassurance, and resources that our staff, children, and families we serve need. Get Ready to GROW helps us create a brighter future for our children.”*

The Get Ready to GROW community initiative is managed by Children’s Institute but is the result of multiple years of collaborative planning efforts with more than 30 partnering organizations across education, health, and human services. Each partner provides vital knowledge, services, and funding, with roles including funding, family and community connections, direct services such as screening, child care and medical service provision, and parent navigation support.

Initial funding from Rochester’s Child, Rochester Area Community Foundation, Greater Rochester Health Foundation, United Way of Greater Rochester, City of Rochester, New York State Education Department, and Rochester City School District helped to launch the development of the comprehensive screening model and has been vital in getting the initiative to where it is today. Value-based payment in healthcare is also a source of funding, recognizing the value of early intervention and reimbursing screening costs. Children’s Institute is also working from additional funding from the Finger Lakes Performing Provider System (FLPPS), Florence M. Muller Foundation, and NYS Office of Children and Family Services (NYS OCFS), Council on Children and Families (CCF), Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Impact Initiative (ECCS) Birth to Five, Strong by Six grant that will allow Get Ready to GROW build on the energy of the launch and upcoming advertising over the next 2 years. In addition, the Farash Foundation in early August awarded \$100,000 to support GROW's summer effort addressing kindergarten readiness in Rochester.

Parents or providers can learn more about Get Ready To Grow or sign up for a free check at www.GetReadyToGrow.org or by reaching out to the GROW team by email at support@getreadytogrow.org or by phone at (585) 295-1008.

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