



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 2, 2017

Contacts:

Melissa Nichols, Heath Village Community Relations Coordinator: 908-852-5006

Jennifer Jensen, Friendship Center Executive Director: 908-852-2221

**THE FRIENDSHIP CENTER AT SCHOOLEY'S MOUNTAIN
CELEBRATES TWENTY FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

Washington Township – The Friendship Center at Schooley's Mountain celebrated its 25th anniversary on September 30, 2017. To celebrate this milestone anniversary, the intergenerational child care center located on property adjacent to Heath Village Retirement Community held a good old-fashioned birthday party for its current students and their families and Friendship Center alumni. Joining in on the fun were also many Heath Village residents who volunteer at the Center.

The Friendship Center at Schooley's Mountain was the very first Intergenerational Child Care Center in Northwest New Jersey. It was conceived in 1990 when members of the Heath Village Board of Trustees saw a promising opportunity – a chance to provide a unique learning and development experience for the children while enriching the lives of Heath Village residents at the same time. That opportunity was intergenerational childcare in a retirement community setting.

At the time of its creation, no one had any idea of how wildly successful the Center would become. Since opening its doors to the first students in 1992, The Friendship Center has touched the lives of over 1,000 pre-school age students. Helping to nourish these young students is the rich pool of caring adults at Heath Village who are eager to volunteer their time to make each child seem special. Interested residents regularly visit with the students to teach a variety of topics, including music and foreign language. They also read to the students, expose them to their first library experience, and share other special talents such as wood working and sewing.

Likewise, the unique Center has helped grow and enrich the lives of countless Heath Village residents. “The partnership with Heath Village is just magical...it works extremely well,” said John Reynolds, Founder and current Board Member of the Friendship Center and former member of the Heath Village Board of Trustees.

It was John Reynolds and Patrick Brady, Executive Director of Heath Village, who were instrumental in making the dream of a true intergenerational center a reality. In the early days of the school’s creation it was the two of them who encouraged the development of an award winning video, The Friendship Experience, which, along with their passion and hard work helped make the school a model for various other centers throughout the country. In fact, Patrick Brady just recently spoke about the value of intergenerational programs at the International Conference on Ageing held in Australia in July, 2016. He is also a Past President of the New Jersey Intergenerational Network board of directors.

About the Friendship Center and Heath Village Retirement Community

The Friendship Center at Schooley’s Mountain is an intergenerational Child Care Center located at 420 Schooley’s Mountain Road on property adjacent to Heath Village. The Center encourages relationships with Heath Village residents and sponsors a unique pen pal program, which allows resident volunteers to mentor the children and be involved in their everyday learning experience. For more information on the Friendship Center, please contact Jennifer Jensen, Director, at 908-852-2221 or <http://www.friendshipctrchildcare.com/>. You can also visit them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friendship-Center/725659560858209>

Heath Village is a full-service retirement community located at 430 Schooley’s Mountain Road in Washington Township, Morris County. For further information, please call 908-852-4801 or visit us on our website at www.heathvillage.com. Visit them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/heathvillage.

###