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For Immediate Release

Carnegie Corporation Commits \$1.3-million to Help Our Piece of the Pie Reduce High School Dropout Crisis in Connecticut

HARTFORD, CT.... Carnegie Corporation of New York has awarded a \$1.3-million three year grant in support of Our Piece of the Pie's ® (OPP®) efforts to advocate for, and implement a strategy to re-engage young people who have fallen behind or have dropped out of high school.

The funding will enable OPP to replicate a youth development strategy to get over-aged and under-credited students back on track to earn a high school diploma, and be successful in post-secondary education and careers. The model has been jointly developed with Hartford Public Schools.

OPP, a leading youth development agency in Hartford, helps young people age 14-24 with multiple barriers earn economic independence through education and employment programs. OPP's cornerstone program Pathways to Success matches each young person with a Youth Development Specialist (YDS) who serves as a mentor and helps the youth establish a concrete plan for the future. In Pathways, each youth has the long-term goals of a college degree or vocational certification and/or employment in that person's chosen field.

In August, OPP and Hartford Public Schools (HPS) opened Opportunity High School (OHS). The partnership school infuses the youth development strategy of OPP with the rigors of HPS curriculum.

"Momentum is building for state-driven reform to tackle what is arguably the widest socio-economic and racial achievement gap in the country," said Bob Rath, OPP President/CEO of OPP. "I thank the Carnegie Corporation for their foresight and confidence in OPP to address this serious issue. This funding will be monumental in helping to address the high school dropout crisis in Connecticut," Rath said.

Support from Carnegie will enable OPP to establish additional partnerships throughout the state and disseminate information on this model to communities statewide. This will allow OPP to strengthen its practice in Hartford while using its work to help spark changes in other communities.

In addition, funding will aid OPP in advocating for policy changes needed to support recuperative education across Connecticut.

Leah Hamilton, Program Officer, Urban Education at Carnegie Corporation said, “Our Piece of the Pie is an important component of the foundation’s efforts to invest in innovative designs for schools and systems. Their ambitious strategy aims to radically increase student achievement, graduation rates, and college readiness in some of Connecticut’s highest-need, lowest-performing urban districts.”

OPP has established a core partnership group to help facilitate this revolutionary change in education. The partnership includes Hartford Public Schools Superintendent Steven J. Adamowski, State Commissioner of Education Mark McQuillan, Commissioner of Higher Education Michael Meotti, and Alex Johnston CEO of ConnCAN. Over the next few months, the group plans to form a broader network of stakeholders dedicated to building a strong recuperative education strategy statewide.

“Hartford Public Schools is proud to serve as a leader in the field and help disseminate this innovation across the State of Connecticut,” said Adamowski.

Carnegie Corporation of New York is a philanthropic foundation created by Andrew Carnegie in 1911 to do "real and permanent good in this world." In education, the Corporation works to create pathways to opportunity for many more students by promoting systemic change and innovation in secondary and higher education.