



## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jahara Davis  
Public Relations Director  
Riverbend Head Start & Family Services  
Office: (618) 463-8913  
For Media Use Only | Cell Phone: 314-583-5691  
jdavis@riverbendfamilies.org

### Longtime Riverbend Head Start President/CEO Chuck Parr Retires at Year's End; New President/CEO Appointed

**Madison County, IL, Dec. 22, 2017** – Chuck Parr, President and Chief Executive Officer of Riverbend Head Start and Family Services, officially announced he will retire at the end of December 2017, after leading the children and family development organization for 30 years. Chuck has played a critical role in the development and success of the organization since 1987 when he was first hired as the Head Start program director and division Vice President of the agency from 1992-1997. At that time the agency was known as Family Service and Visiting Nurse Association. Prior to Chuck's employment with Riverbend Head Start, he was instrumental in the development of the Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) as co-founder back in the 1970's. Chuck has worked with children's programs his entire career, beginning in 1973 as a social worker for a children's residential center and community mental health youth advocacy. "It has been a privilege for me to have this responsibility and opportunity to make a difference," he said. "My time with Riverbend Head Start and Family Services has been worthwhile."

"Speaking on behalf of the entire Riverbend Head Start Board of Directors, we thank Chuck for his service and his contribution to Riverbend Head Start, the employees, children, families and all of Riverbend Head Start's partners and stakeholders," said James Wing, Chairman of Riverbend Head Start's Board of Directors. "As the face of Riverbend Head Start and Family Services, Chuck has earned the respect and admiration of all our constituent communities. He is respected and admired by civic, educational, and governmental leaders alike. We are grateful for all of his efforts and the many accomplishments under his leadership," said Wing.

After months of seeking and interviewing several qualified candidates the board said they have selected Chuck's successor and are thrilled to announce the appointment of Gene Howell, who has over 23 years with the organization and most recently served as Operations Director for the past 6 years. "The appointment of Gene Howell has already taken off with a seamless transition as the organization continues to combat poverty through education and family development which transform the lives of over 800 children and families each year," said Wing. Parr said so far he's been working through a smooth and effective transition, serving as support to the newly appointed leader until the end of the year.

"We look forward to working with Gene and all of the dedicated staff as we transition through the next stage of growth and development. The Board of Directors agree that Gene will bring a tremendous amount of leadership capabilities and a solid track-record from his social work and management experience," said Wing. "We're anticipating that the next chapter for Chuck, Gene and Riverbend Head Start and Family Services will be one focused on brightening the future for all who live, work and play in our community."

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**Photo:** See Photo File Attachment in Email: Chuck Parr; Gene Howell

**Caption:** Chuck Parr, Riverbend Head Start President and CEO retires at end of 2017; Gene Howell Officially leads as newly appointed President and CEO on January 1, 2018.