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**ForKids to Transform Rooftop into Urban Orchard**

**Norfolk, VA** – February 25, 2021 – The Virginia Department of Forestry is spearheading their latest Urban Orchard project on the rooftop at the ForKids Center for Children and Families (CCF) in Chesapeake. Friday, February 26th, from 10am and 2pm, staff and volunteers from the Virginia Department of Forestry, Healthy Chesapeake, Chesapeake Master Gardeners and ForKids will gather to begin planting on the rooftop, a space planned as a private outdoor recreation area for families staying in the Family Shelter wing of the CCF.

“We are excited to grow healthy food, create a rooftop green space and provide food security to our families,” said ForKids CEO Thaler McCormick. “Low-income neighborhoods are typically 5 degrees hotter than wealthier residential areas. The rooftop garden will provide a respite to families experiencing the trauma of homelessness.”

The orchard will include fruit bushes and small fruit trees on the rooftop, as well as larger fruit-bearing trees on the land surrounding the CCF. The harvest from the orchard will provide nutritional education opportunities for children in ForKids programs and parents in their Healthy Eating classes, “grow bags” or small plants families can place on an apartment balcony as they transition out of the shelter into permanent housing and many other garden-to-table initiatives.

ForKids partnered with Tymoff + Moss Architects, Hourigan Construction, Healthy Chesapeake, the Virginia Department of Forestry, the Chesapeake Master Gardeners, the Chesapeake Department of Health and the South Norfolk Civic League for this project. These partners bring a wealth of knowledge in construction, design, agriculture, and community health. Ongoing maintenance of the urban garden will be supported by the Chesapeake Master Gardeners and volunteers in the community.

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**About ForKids**[**ForKids, inc.**](http://www.forkidsva.org/) is a non-profit agency founded 33 years ago with a mission to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty for families and children. On any given day, ForKids’ in-depth programs assist approximately 290 families including 870 children; our services now touch the lives of over 70,000 individuals each year. The agency provides housing, education and wrap around services for families experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Services include counseling, tutoring, field trips, summer camps, classes in life skills, parenting, budgeting, GED tutoring, job coaching and case management. For more information, please visit [www.forkids.org](http://www.forkids.org) or call (757) 622-6400.