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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE INDEPENDENCE CENTER AWARDS \$75,000 IN FUNDING FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO, September 22, 2015 –The Independence Center (The IC) announces its second year of The IC Fund grant awards totaling nearly \$75,000 for local community projects that benefit persons with disabilities. Checks will be awarded on Sept. 30, 2015 in a private ceremony with a light lunch being served in the Dart Room at The IC from 12:00 – 1:00 pm. Members of The IC board and committee members will be presenting checks. Members of the press are invited.

“It’s worth noting that the committee did not choose projects only from El Paso County. We are committed to serving people with disabilities in six counties in the Pikes Peak region and these awards affirm that commitment,” said Patricia Yeager, CEO at The IC.

Funding will benefit citizens of El Paso, Park, Kit Carson, Cheyenne, and Lincoln counties. The 11 successful applicants and the amount of grant funds awarded are:

1. **Rocky Mountain Rural Health (RMRH) (Fairplay): \$5,000;** Funds will pay for a needs assessment regarding the size and location of the Park County disabled population to address service gaps.
2. **Prairie Family Center (PFC) (Burlington): \$5,000;** Funds will allow PFC to continue conducting several daily living skills classes for people with disabilities.
3. **Pikes Peak Urban Gardens: \$5,780;** Funding will make the Harlan Wolfe Ranch accessible by improving pathways, building an accessible greenhouse, toolshed, picnic area and more.
4. **Amblicab: \$10,000;** Funds expand the “Engage and Explore” program, by providing nearly 350 recreational trips for disabled adults and children living in the Pikes Peak Region.
5. **Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind: \$10,000;** Grant will buy equipment and uniforms for the athletic department, including Special Olympics, goalball, volleyball and football teams.
6. **Lincoln Community Hospital Care Center (Hugo): \$10,000;** Funding will provide an accessible door that will allow residents to access the new “Healing Garden” independently.
7. **Community Transit Coalition, submitted by Women’s Resource Agency: \$8,000;** Funds an economic impact study to frame transit as not only a community need but an economic driver.
8. **Colorado Springs Amateur Hockey Association (CSAHA): \$5,000;** Funds allow CSAHA Jr. Tigers Sled Hockey to purchase equipment to extend their program to more people with disabilities.

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9. **Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA)/ Colorado Springs Chapter: \$10,000;** Funds an educational outreach program and the extension of an incentive program for businesses that install a loop or other assistive listening device or captioning program.
10. **Rocky Mountain Wildlife Foundation (Guffey): \$6,830;** Funds improving walkways between animals' enclosures to make traversing easier for those with walkers, wheelchairs or crutches.
11. **Educating Children of Color: \$5,000;** Grant will fund CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation), American Sign Language interpretation services, and tactile interpretation services for those who are deaf/blind at the 9th Annual Educating Children of Color Summit to be held at Colorado College on 1/16/16.

History of The IC Fund

The IC Fund was initially set up and invested in 2011. In 2013, The IC Fund committee went through training and worked with a foundation consultant to set up the rules. The first competition and awards totaling \$75,000 occurred in 2014. Recipients in 2014 included Blue Star Recyclers, Friends of El Paso County Nature Center, Lake George Community Park and Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition. The process begins in June of each year, when letters of intent are submitted and ends in September with The IC board approvals. All nonprofit organizations in the six county Pikes Peak region are eligible to apply. A committee of eight community members with disabilities decides upon the proposals that will be sent to the board for approval.

About The Independence Center

The Independence Center is a local nonprofit organization that provides traditional and self-directed home health care, independent living, and advocacy services for people with disabilities. These services range from providing peer support, skills classes, and employment assistance to individual and systems advocacy. The IC's mission is to work with people with disabilities, their families, and the community to create independence so all may thrive.

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