

BC3 announces \$1 million gift to fund expansion of children's center

September 21, 2016

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College announces a \$1 million gift to the Pioneer Proud Campaign by John L. Wise III and family to fund an expansion of the Children's Creative Learning Center (CCLC) on BC3's main campus. Mr. Wise, Vice President and Treasurer of the Butler Eagle, made the gift in honor of his sister, Amy W. Wise.

The announcement was made at the BC3 Board of Trustees meeting this afternoon by Ruth Purcell, Executive Director of the BC3 Education Foundation, Inc., on behalf of Nancy Hunter Mycka and Bob Hunter, Co-Chairs of the Pioneer Proud Campaign. With this gift, the comprehensive campaign has raised \$6.8 million.

Amy Wise had a lifelong passion for early childhood education and a special talent for creating a love of nature in young students. She was dedicated to her professional career in teaching. From 1994 to 2012, Amy was the head teacher at Poker Hill School in Underhill, Vermont. Her teaching experience also included the Community College of Vermont and Trinity College. In 2006, Amy was awarded the Vermont Governor's Award for Outstanding Community Service.

"We are honored that the Wise family has chosen BC3 to pay tribute to Amy. We believe that our childcare program reflects the values that Amy held dear – that children learn best when allowed to explore and discover at their own pace. This is a wonderful legacy gift," said Dr. Nick Neupauer, BC3 President.

The CCLC is a state-licensed preschool and childcare center for children of BC3 students, employees, and community members. The center is also a resource for academic programs on campus including Nursing, R.N. and Early Childhood Education, Pre K-4. With this gift, BC3 will double the size of the current CCLC facility. The Commonwealth awarded BC3 a capital grant to match the funds for the CCLC expansion.

According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, the availability of top rated, affordable, and flexible childcare services is a key factor in sustaining student educational success. Nationally, 26% of college students have dependent children and 45% of those students attend a public 2-year institution.

The CCLC is a Keystone Star 4 Facility, the highest licensing rating given by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Since 2011, the CCLC has been occupying a temporary space after a tree fell on the Armstrong Lodge where the program was held previously.

Last October, BC3 dedicated an outdoor nature classroom named Green Garden Park by the CCLC children. Located behind the CCLC facility, Green Garden Park was partially funded by

the Alcoa Foundation and earned national certification in the spring as a Nature Explore Classroom from Dimensions Educational Research Foundation and the Arbor Day Foundation.

“I’m thrilled with the possibilities this gift affords the center. The new space and redesign means that we will be able to add elements that enhance the learning and safety of the CCLC. With the recently completed Green Garden Park, our center will be the premier center in the region,” said Judy Zuzack, Director of the CCLC. “We are looking forward to working with Mr. Wise on the development of this project.”

As part of the CCLC expansion, the walkway between two of the original classroom buildings will be enclosed to provide additional space.

“What is truly remarkable about this gift is that the buildings that will be joined for the new childcare center were constructed as temporary buildings when the college opening in 1965,” said Bob Hunter. “Here we are 50 years later with a successful community college and a gift that will forever recognize the support of the Wise family for BC3.”

Mr. Wise’s father, the late John L. Wise, Jr., was a leading advocate of establishing a community college in Butler and served on the original BC3 Board of Trustees.

The College will name the new CCLC in honor of Amy.