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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ABC of NC Autism Clinic Receives \$1.5 Million Grant from the SECU Foundation

WINSTON-SALEM, NC (December 20, 2017) – ABC of NC, the Triad’s only comprehensive autism services provider, announced today that it received a \$1.5 million grant from the member-funded State Employee Credit Union (SECU) Foundation. The funds support the construction of the SECU Autism Clinic at ABC of NC, a 26,000 square foot facility which will house diagnostic, therapeutic, and behavioral services for hundreds of children with autism in the Piedmont Triad. The organization plans to complete construction of the new facility by August 2018.

“SECU members are proud to assist ABC of NC Foundation in their mission of providing high-quality programs and services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder,” said Cynthia Jolly, SECU Foundation Board Chair. “With the generous support of our 2.2 million members statewide, including 341,000 members in the thirteen counties primarily served by the non-profit, the SECU Autism Clinic at ABC of NC will address the critical need for greater resources for those living with autism and their families.”

ABC of NC’s [Hello World](#) capital campaign, which has raised more than \$6.1 million toward its \$6.5 million goal, supports the construction of the SECU Autism Clinic at ABC of NC, along with construction of a 3,500 square foot activities building and improvements to an existing school building. The expansion means shorter wait times for diagnosis, expanded availability of interventions for all ages, and greater access to transition service for teens and young adults on the spectrum. With this expansion, ABC of NC, which currently serves 350 children annually and employs 60 people, is expected to more than double its capacity and staff size within two years.

“We are grateful to the State Employees’ Credit Union members for making this expansion possible,” said Selene Johnson, ABC of NC executive director. “In recent years, our community has seen a sharp increase in demand for autism programming, fueled by a rise in prevalence – now one in 58 children in North Carolina – and more readily accessible funding for autism services through private insurance and Medicaid. Unfortunately, service accessibility has tragically lagged behind, leaving North Carolina families without access to critical autism therapies. The SECU Autism Clinic at ABC of NC helps meet this demand.”

“The SECU Autism Clinic at ABC of NC will provide shorter wait times for diagnostic assessments; more equitable access to evidence-based autism therapies; and the addition of adolescent and young adult services,” said Felice Brenner, ABC of NC board chair. “Thanks to the generosity of SECU members, we will be able to provide hope and a brighter future for individuals with autism in our state, whether they are beginning their journey or transitioning to adulthood.”

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Photo Caption: Michael Clements, Forsyth County SECU Foundation Board Member, presents a \$1.5 million grant to ABC of NC staff and board members at their area December board advisory meeting. (L-R) Richard Brenner, ABC of NC, Board President; Felice Brenner, ABC of NC, Board Chair; Selene Johnson, ABC of NC, Executive Director; Angela Pesenti, ANC of NC, Director of Finance; Dr. Kelly O'Laughlin, ABC of NC, Psychologist; Kevin Mack, Senior Vice-President, SECU, Winston-Salem Silas Creek Parkway Branch; John Roberts, Senior Vice-President, SECU Winston-Salem-Stratford Road Branch; Michael Clements, SECU Foundation, Board Member; Stephanie Reitz, ABC of NC, Board Member; Casey Raymer, ABC of NC, Director of Development.

About ABC of NC and the ABC of NC Foundation --- Founded in 2002, [ABC of NC](#) is a nonprofit center dedicated to providing high-quality, evidence-based diagnostic, therapeutic, and educational services to people with autism spectrum disorder; ensuring service accessibility to individuals from any economic background; offering support and hope to families; and advocating for inclusion and acceptance. The vision of ABC of NC is that all people living with autism spectrum disorder reach their full potential in a world where they are valued, accepted, and included. As the only center of its kind in NC, ABC of NC annually serves more than 350 children and families from 18 North Carolina counties. In 2014, ABC of NC formed the ABC of NC Foundation. The Foundation supports the mission and programs of ABC of NC and holds and manages all endowment funds and other assets for ABC of NC. The Foundation operates separately, but in accordance with its bylaws, has some board members in common with ABC of NC.

About SECU and the SECU Foundation

A not-for-profit financial cooperative owned by its members, SECU has been providing employees of the State of North Carolina and their families with consumer financial services for 80 years. The Credit Union also offers a diversified line of financial advisory services including retirement and education planning, tax preparation, insurance, trust and estate planning services, and investments through its partners and affiliated entities. SECU serves 2.2 million members through 261 branch offices, nearly 1,100 ATMs, 24/7 Member Services via phone and a website, www.ncsecu.org. The SECU Foundation, a 501c (3) charitable organization funded solely by the contributions of SECU members, promotes local community development in North Carolina primarily through high impact projects in the areas of housing, education, healthcare and human services. Since 2004, SECU Foundation has made a collective financial commitment of more than \$130 million for initiatives to benefit North Carolinians statewide.

About Autism --- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD/autism) is a general term for a group of complex disorders of brain development. Autism is characterized in varying degrees, including difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication deficits, and repetitive behaviors. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence of autism has risen to one in every 68 births in the United States and is almost five times more common among boys (one in 42) than among girls (one in 189). Prevalence rates are even higher in North Carolina with an estimated one in 58 children, and one in 35 boys, receiving the diagnosis. Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic boundaries, and can affect any family, and any child.

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