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For Immediate Release
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**OCCU Foundation Makes Significant Donation**

**to PeaceHealth Child Life Specialist Program**

SPRINGFIELD, Ore.- What if kids were not scared to go to the hospital? What if parents had someone to stand beside them to offer emotional support during a stressful time?

Those are the goals of PeaceHealth’s Child Life Specialist program and, with a significant donation from the OCCU Foundation, the program will be expanded to help even more children and families in the future.

OCCU Foundation has pledged to support the position for three years with a $300,000 donation. The contribution is a lead gift to PeaceHealth’s $1 million fundraising campaign.

“OCCU Foundation is in awe of the support the Child Life Specialists provide every day for children and families in our community during their time in the hospital,” said Ron Neumann, OCCU Foundation Board Chair. “We believe in the impact this team makes on a daily basis for our community. We are proud to have the opportunity to offer the lead gift to expand this vital program to pediatric surgical patients and beyond.”

PeaceHealth’s certified Child Life Specialists help infants, children, youth and families cope with the stress and uncertainty of illness, trauma and loss. The specialists provide evidence-based assistance that is both developmentally and psychologically appropriate. That assistance can include therapeutic play, preparation for procedures and education to help reduce fear, anxiety and pain. The current team of three Child Life Specialists provide aid to 1,500 pediatric patients annually.

OCCU Foundation’s gift will help PeaceHealth hire additional Child Life Specialist staff at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend.

“We are incredibly thankful to continue partnering with OCCUF and grateful for their offer to invest in the further development of our Child Life program.” said Barb Blair, Lead Child Life Specialist at RiverBend. “This generous lead gift from OCCUF will have a tremendous impact on the emotional and developmental needs of children receiving healthcare throughout our region as well as their families.”

**About OCCU Foundation:** OCCU Foundation (OCCUF) is the philanthropic arm of Oregon Community Credit Union (OCCU). Since its start, OCCUF has granted more than $1 million to help build happier and healthier communities by giving generously to projects that advance learning, improve well-being and support communities. The foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation funded by OCCU, businesses, families and individuals. OCCUF was started in 2018 to further extend the credit union’s vision to Enrich Lives. Learn more at MyOCCU.org/Foundation.

**About PeaceHealth:** PeaceHealth, based in Vancouver, Wash., is a not-for-profit Catholic health system offering care to communities in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. PeaceHealth has approximately 16,000 caregivers, a group practice with more than 900 providers and 10 medical centers serving both urban and rural communities throughout the Northwest. In 1890, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace founded what has become PeaceHealth. The Sisters shared expertise and transferred wisdom from one medical center to another, always finding the best way to serve the unmet need for healthcare in their communities. Today, PeaceHealth is the legacy of the founding Sisters and continues with a spirit of respect, stewardship, collaboration and social justice in fulfilling its Mission. Visit us online at [peacehealth.org](http://www.peacehealth.org).