



Renewing Lives, Transforming Communities



PRESS RELEASE

Media Contact:

Marcy Bursac, Connections to Success
3000 Little Hills Expressway, Ste. 102
St. Charles, MO 63301
Cell: 314-803-3334
mbursac@connectionstosuccess.org
www.connectionstosuccess.org

NON-PROFITS UNITE TO BREAK THE CYCLE OF POVERTY AND INCARCERATION

By joining forces, Ava's Grace Scholarship Foundation and Connections to Success look to expand impact and reach

ST. LOUIS – June 1, 2016 – Today, [Ava's Grace Scholarship Foundation](#) announced it has united with [Connections to Success](#) to expand its holistic program providing hope, resources and a plan in making an impact for the next generation. With aligned missions and shared values, Connections to Success and Ava's Grace will bring additional education resources to families through the Connections to Success evidence-based model for improving children's futures.

Since 2010, Ava's Grace has worked to break the cycle of poverty by awarding scholarships to children of incarcerated parents, which is a natural fit with the Connections to Success holistic model that empowers parents to become economically independent by addressing their social and economic needs in relation to home, work and community.

"After six years of hard work, we realized that by collaborating with others, we could have much greater impact," said Stephanie Regagnon, founder, Ava's Grace. "This May, we are proud to celebrate the [graduation](#) of our first two scholars – McKenzie Lockett from Mizzou, and Cari Hill from William Jewell College. By joining forces with Connections to Success, we can provide a wider array of services with more depth to a community at disproportionate risk of incarceration," added Regagnon.

Founded 15 years ago, Connections to Success has focused on strengthening families through a proven model that breaks the cycle of incarceration. It offers a variety of programs that help individuals find employment and fulfil their potential, such as Dress for Success, Wheels for Success, Sweet Success, as well as mentoring and skills training. Now, with the addition of Ava's Grace, Connections to Success will be able to strengthen the whole family thorough expanded education resources for the children of the families it serves.

"Together, Connections to Success and Ava's Grace will create a culture that encourages and empowers young people to strive for knowledge. This combination supports the importance of education in the

home and broader community,” said Kathy Lambert, Connections to Success chief executive officer and co-founder.

As part of Connections to Success, Ava’s Grace will be able to expand its footprint into Kansas and Illinois, two states where Connections to Success already operates.

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ABOUT AVA’S GRACE SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

Founded in 2010 by Stephanie Regagnon, Ava’s Grace Scholarship Foundation is one-of-a-kind organization benefitting children who have experienced parental incarceration. Its mission is to break the cycle of incarceration through the gift of education, specifically through awarding scholarships for higher education and a robust mentoring program. For more information, visit www.avasgrace.org

ABOUT CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS

Connections to Success was founded 15 years ago and today has locations in North St. Louis, St. Charles, and Kansas City. The organization identifies clients who are committed to change and supports them with hope, resources, and a plan to overcome barriers to employment. Since 2000, over 3,600 adults have been empowered on a path to economic independence, building a promising future for generations to come. For more information, visit connectionstosuccess.org.