



CONTACT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 30, 2019

Primary: **Chau Vuong**, SVCF

650.450.5426, cvuong@siliconvalleycf.org

Silicon Valley Community Foundation Launches Campaign for Greater Investments in Santa Clara County's Youngest Residents

The "Choose Children" campaign will engage candidates running for the county's District 3 Supervisor seat on the needs of babies, toddlers, preschoolers and their families

MOUNTAIN VIEW, California, December 30, 2019 – Silicon Valley Community Foundation today launched *Choose Children Santa Clara County*, a campaign dedicated to ensuring that the next Santa Clara County Supervisor from District 3 is a champion for young children.

The *Choose Children* campaign will engage and educate candidates for the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors in District 3 on the need to make early childhood care and education more accessible, affordable and of higher quality. The campaign will conduct local voter surveys, host candidate forums and provide a clear set of policy priorities on how the next District 3 supervisor can make young children a top priority for the county.

Despite the overwhelming evidence proving the importance of investing in children's early years, Santa Clara County still fails to provide children and their families the support and care they need. The Local Planning Council of Santa Clara County, which assesses local child care needs, estimates that countywide:

- There is only enough space in established childcare programs to care for 19% of the county's babies and toddlers
- Families with more than one child under the age of 6 can expect to spend at least 30% of their income on child care – a family's second highest expense after housing
- Less than 8% of the more than \$158 million annually spent on services for young children comes from local county tax dollars, compared to 39% from the state and 52% from the federal government, according to the Santa Clara County Children's Budget

Jolene Smith, executive director of First 5 Santa Clara County, further noted the urgency of securing greater investments for the county's children.



"The 2020 election could be a defining moment for our county's youngest residents," Smith said. "A wide range of research demonstrates the importance and impact of high-quality early childhood programs on the first five years of life – when a child's brain develops at its fastest rate. Building a strong foundation during a child's earliest years is essential to the health and well-being of our community."

Kyra Kazantzis, CEO of the Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits, reiterated the importance of public investments in the earliest years of life.

"Silicon Valley is California's hub of innovation, but we are falling behind social innovation as other communities such as San Francisco and Alameda County are investing in children sooner," said Kazantzis. "The net result is low-income families are forced to access nonprofit and government resources to meet basic needs because finding and paying for childcare is out of reach for most. We hope the next Supervisor understands this lived reality and addresses it."

Dr. Mary Ann Dewan, superintendent of the Santa Clara County Office of Education added, "Our county's shortage of high-quality early learning environments has a ripple effect on the education system and the Silicon Valley workforce. This issue dramatically impacts both employer and employee, parent and non-parent, and is a critical extension of the affordability crisis. We look forward to working with all of our county leaders to address these critical shortages."

Silicon Valley Community Foundation first implemented the *Choose Children* campaign model during the 2018 gubernatorial election to engage candidates on state-wide policies and programs benefitting young children. The campaign sparked critical conversations during the race, and successfully placed children's needs at the forefront of candidates' agendas. Silicon Valley Community Foundation hopes that replicating this campaign model at the county level will urge supervisor candidates to follow suit.

"We commend Supervisor Cortese on his years of dedicated service and advocacy on behalf of Santa Clara County's children and families," said Nicole Taylor, CEO and president of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, referring to Dave Cortese, who has held the District 3 seat since 2008. "*Choose Children* will continue Supervisor Cortese's legacy by ensuring that his successor is just as much a champion for high-quality early childhood programs and services, which are an essential part of providing local children with a strong foundation for their futures."

Choose Children is currently conducting voter surveys on the electorate's support of early childhood issues in Santa Clara County and will release the results in February 2020.



##

About Choose Children Santa Clara County

Choose Children is a nonpartisan campaign launched by Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Center for Early Learning in 2016 to engage California's then-candidates for governor on issues affecting the state's babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Choose Children has shifted its focus to a local campaign committed to ensuring the next Santa Clara County Supervisor from District 3 is a champion for young children who makes early childhood care and education more accessible, affordable, and of higher quality for all children. The initiative is also led by Silicon Valley Community Foundation's Center for Early Learning in partnership with community, business, philanthropic, and educational leaders throughout the county. Learn more at www.choosechildren.org.

About Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Silicon Valley Community Foundation advances innovative philanthropic solutions to challenging problems. We engage donors and corporations from Silicon Valley, across the country and around the globe to make our region and world better for all. Our passion for helping people and organizations achieve their philanthropic dreams has created a global philanthropic enterprise committed to the belief that possibilities start here. Learn more at siliconvalleycf.org.