



CONTACT:

Theresa Roediger

941-365-7716

Theresa.Roediger@fortycarrots.com

For Immediate Release

Investing in families with parenting education and early learning at Lakewood Ranch Library

(Sarasota – March 18, 2025) – With the opening of the new Lakewood Ranch Library, Forty Carrots Family Center had an opportunity to expand its Partners In Play® (PIP) programming. In June 2024, Forty Carrots welcomed families for parenting education and early learning thanks to generous grants from Lakewood Ranch Community Foundation and Weichel Family Fund of Manatee Community Foundation.

With two months of programming remaining in its inaugural year, PIP at Lakewood Ranch Library served 310 unduplicated clients, through 27 PIP groups, reaching new families from every corner of the community, all at no cost to participants.

PIP is designed to provide developmentally appropriate play activities for children, creating a language-rich environment that supports early literacy development, stimulates cognitive growth, and encourages positive social interactions at Lakewood Ranch Library. PIP groups play a vital role in teaching parents to become their child’s first teacher, equipping them with essential tools to promote early literacy which positively benefits cognitive development, enhances language skills, and prepares children for future academic success.

“At the heart of PIP programming, the caregiver/child relationship is strengthened, and caregivers are empowered to provide safe, stable environments for their children to grow into their full potential within their families and further into academic and life success,” said CEO of Forty Carrots Michelle Kapreilian.

PIP groups at Lakewood Ranch Library return on Friday, March 28 at 12:15 PM, once again welcoming any parent, grandparent, or caregiver with a child aged from babies to five years old.

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About Forty Carrots Family Center

Since 1993, **Forty Carrots Family Center** has served families in Sarasota & Manatee counties, ensuring good beginnings that last a lifetime for children through its expertise in Parenting Education, Mental Health Services, and Early Childhood Education. Rated 4-Stars by Charity Navigator, Forty Carrots serves families from all walks of life, with 96 percent of families receiving services free of charge. Visit www.fortycarrots.org for more information.

About Lakewood Ranch Community Foundation

The vision of the Lakewood Ranch Community Foundation is to use the power of giving to serve our

community. Founded in 2000, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our communities by responding to the needs, granting funds, and building lasting relationships.

About Manatee Community Foundation (MCF): Manatee Community Foundation (MCF) is a charitable organization founded in 1998. MCF partners with our citizens to **strengthen and enhance our community through philanthropy, education, and service – now and forever**. MCF is the bridge between generous donors, business leaders, our government, and nonprofit partners, who work together so that everyone can thrive because **together, we can do greater things**. MCF has invested over \$62 million dollars in the areas of health and human services, education, arts and culture, the environment, and animal welfare and is **committed to its diversity, equity, inclusion and access work**. As the only community foundation in Manatee serving the entire county and beyond, **MCF is your partner in philanthropy**, a trusted steward of charitable legacies and the guide for current giving through donor advised funds and beyond. See more information about Manatee Community Foundation at www.manateecf.org.

Images attached

