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First Lady Frances Wolf Partners with Pennsylvania PBS to Deliver Encouraging Messages to Children and Caregivers

Harrisburg, PA – Today, First Lady Frances Wolf offered encouraging messages to children, parents, teachers, and caregivers through the release of a series of videos created in collaboration with Pennsylvania PBS titled *#TogetherPennsylvania*.

Videos in the series include:

- a reading of *Ruby Finds a Worry* by Tom Percival and discussion on how to deal with anxiety with Pennsylvania Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine;
- a message of encouragement to middle schoolers;
- a message of congratulations to the Class of 2020;
- a video visit between the First Lady and Daniel Tiger of *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*, the animated PBS KIDS series produced by Fred Rogers Productions, sharing ways children can be helpful to their families during the pandemic;
- ideas on how to have fun while staying at home; and
- a message of support to parents, caregivers and educators.

“To the children, parents, caregivers, and educators of Pennsylvania: I want you to know that we see you, we appreciate you, and we couldn’t get through this without you,” said First Lady Frances Wolf. “Through this partnership with Pennsylvania PBS, we hope to tap into the human side of what is happening and remind everyone that their perseverance matters. We truly are in this together, and all Pennsylvanians – from our youngest, to our oldest, and everyone in between – play such an important role in our collective well-being.”

The First Lady was joined by Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine, who reminded children that there are people like herself who work to keep them safe and discussed the importance of wearing masks.

“During these uncertain times, it is important to remember to take care of your mental health along with your physical health,” said Dr. Levine. “Some individuals may be experiencing heightened feelings of anxiety or stress, and that is okay. To help

decrease these feelings, it is important to take time for yourself away from the news, connect with friends and family and practice good self-care. Also remember, if you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis, help is available.”

#TogetherPennsylvania was designed to represent the enduring spirit of Pennsylvanians as we work side-by-side to help each other during the pandemic.

Debbie Riek, WITF’s director of education, elaborated, “Children find comfort and strength when grown-ups speak to them with calmness and care. Parents find support when a leader in the community shares that she believes that they have been doing a good job at showing how to persevere. Everyone needs reassurance right now. *#TogetherPennsylvania* acts as that essential hug we want to give our neighbor, but can’t.”

Pennsylvania PBS (PA PBS) is the collective name for the seven public media organizations throughout PA - WHYY Public Media in Philadelphia, WITF Public Media in Harrisburg, Lehigh Valley Public Media in the Greater Lehigh Valley, WPSU Public Media in State College, WQED Public Media in Pittsburgh, WQLN Public Media in Northwestern PA, and WVIA Public Media in Northeastern PA.

PA PBS’s mission is to educate, engage, and inspire the citizens of the Commonwealth through powerful partner collaborations. The *#TogetherPennsylvania* campaign truly aligns with PA PBS’s educational mission.

“It’s natural right now for children and adults to find themselves going through different emotions from day to day, or even hour to hour. Some moments are joyful. Some aren’t,” said Kate Domico, executive director, Pennsylvania PBS. “As we face what may be the most serious health crisis of our lifetimes, it is clear that the mission of Pennsylvania PBS to serve with exceptional, community-centered outreach like *#TogetherPennsylvania* takes on new significance.”

Videos that have been released for *#TogetherPennsylvania* can be found on any PA PBS station’s broadcast channel, social media platform and at learningathomepa.org.

In late March, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) announced a partnership with the PBS stations in PA to offer instructional programming to communities with limited internet access. The First Lady-Pennsylvania PBS collaboration builds on this effort by providing encouraging content for viewers who may need a reminder that they are not alone in figuring out the next steps in their education or trying to adjust to a different lifestyle.

“Pennsylvania’s PBS stations have been important partners in providing instructional programming to students during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Education Secretary Pedro A. Rivera said. “The Department of Education is proud to collaborate with PBS on this project to ensure families and educators around the state have access to valuable programs.”

PDE is committed to supporting school communities all year round by providing guidance and resources related not only to academic success, but also to the mental health and well-being of students of all ages. This includes resources related to:

- [Grief and Loss](#)
- [Promoting Positive Learning Climates](#)
- [Talking to Children About COVID-19](#)

As Pennsylvania continues to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic, state leaders are reminding residents of all ages to practice self-care, which includes nurturing their mental health and wellness and [reaching out if they need assistance](#).

The Pennsylvania Department of Health offers the following suggestion to parents and caregivers to best support children during this pandemic:

- **Make yourself available to listen and to talk.** Be sure children know they can come to you when they have questions or to express their fears.
- **Remain calm and reassuring.** Children are often trusting with adults. It is important to lead by example and remain calm to not pass fear.
- **Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.** This is an opportunity to create healthy habits. Remind children to cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow and to wash their hands frequently while singing “Happy Birthday” twice, or for 20 seconds.
- **Model self-care.** Nurture your physical and mental health and wellness by ensuring your body is getting the proper nutrients from fruits, vegetables and getting enough sleep.
- **Keep it simple while providing accurate information.** Give children information that is truthful and appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Avoid making assumptions about who might have COVID-19.
- **Pay attention to what children see or hear on television, radio, or online.** Consider reducing the amount of screen time focused on COVID-19. Too much information on one topic can lead to anxiety.
- **If you, your child, or a member of your family are sick, stay home until you are feeling better.** In addition, frequently clean commonly touched surfaces in your home such as countertops, light switches and cell phones.

Up to date information on COVID-19 health and safety precautions can be found on the [Pennsylvania Department of Health website](#).

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