**ECMHSP celebrates Black History Month with the**

**Inaugural Trailblazer Service & Leadership Award.**

• Eleven African American Trailblazers receive the recognition.

**February 28, 2023.-** East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (ECMHSP), a non-profit organization that serves some three thousand children of farmworkers across ten states, celebrates Black History Month through its Inaugural Trailblazer Service & Leadership Award Ceremony.

Maria C. Garza, Chief Executive Officer of East Coast Migrant Head Start Project, recognized eleven African American staff members and leaders for their dedication, leadership, and excellence in supporting the education of migrant farmworker children & families in the United States.

“Black History Month was created to acknowledge and honor the contributions of Black people to the United States, from the time to slavery to today. We are pleased to recognize the service and leadership of eleven African American trailblazers in our organization. You are doing the most important job, that is the education of our children. Especially the education of underprivileged children”, said Maria C. Garza, CEO of ECMHSP and quoted Nelson Mandela: “The educations is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

The Trailblazer Service & Leadership Award ceremony took place on February 24 in Raleigh, North Carolina. The awardees were:

1.-Akeya Barret, Senior Transportation Manager. Akeya has been with ECMHSP for 17 years. She is in Wilson, NC.

2.-Anteasha Farrell, Nutrition Manager. Anteasha has been with ECMHSP for 7 years. She is in Raleigh, NC.

3.-Consuellis Hawkins-Crudup, Director of Early Learning. Consuellis has been with ECMHSP for 21 years. She is in Raleigh, NC.

4.-Dana Rogers, Head Start Administrator Region 1: SC. Dana has been with ECMHSP for 11 years. She is in South Carolina.

5.-Dolores Stubbs, Director of Quality Assurance. Dolores has been with ECMHSP for 1 year. She is in Washington, DC.

6.-Francesca Bradshaw, Senior Procurement Manager. Francesca has been with ECMHSP for 15 years. She is in Raleigh, NC.

7.-Latonya Harrison, Senior Grants Manager. Latonya has been with ECMHSP for 9 years. She is in Raleigh, NC.

8.-Loretta Jones, Head Start Administrator, Region 2: FL. Loretta has been with ECMHSP for 17 years. She is in Florida.

The awardees confessed that they are proudly Trailblazers and expressed their satisfaction at receiving this recognition for the first time in their careers. Also reaffirmed their commitment to continue serving and promoting the next generations of African Americans in the United States.

During this Black History Month Celebration, ECMHSP lifted Ana Julia Cooper, an extraordinary trailblazer from North Carolina who was born in slavery in 1858 but was the 4th black woman to earn a doctoral degree in history from the University of Paris-Sorbonne. Cooper as a visionary black feminist leader, intellectual and advocate for education. She believed that educated African American women were necessary to uplift the black race and the entire human race. “The cause of freedom is not the cause of a race or a sect, a party or class – it is the cause of humankind, the very bright of humanity”.

**East Coast Migrant Head Start Project (ECMHSP) is a non-profit organization since 1974. Currently, ECMHSP serves approximately three thousand children of farmworkers in forty two direct educational campuses and six delegates in ten states of the country, providing high-quality, holistic early childhood education services for children and families in a nurturing and culturally sensitive environment, and serving and advocating for children and families in their other areas of need.**

ECMHSP Media Contact: Berenice Malagon, Director of Communications, bmalagon@ecmhsp.org or (984) 275 7577.