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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LEADING PROVIDERS OF PROGRAMMING FOR AT-RISK YOUTH
COLLABORATE TO OFFER ENHANCED TRANSITION SERVICES**

Organizations to provide intensive mentoring and support services to high-performing, at-risk youth from non-traditional care environments.

Philadelphia, PA – White Williams Scholars and the Zoeza Institute announce that they have formed a partnership to provide scholastic and professional services. The alliance brings together White Williams Scholars' focus on student support and college readiness services with the Zoeza Institute's intensive mentoring and career transition programming. White Williams Scholars rewards students in Philadelphia high schools for their good grades by providing monthly stipends that can be applied to any number of school-related needs. They also provide educational enrichment and college preparation for these students – all aimed at helping them find greater success in the future. The Zoeza Institute applies a research-based, trademarked intervention model that enables at-risk youth from non-traditional care living environments (foster care, group home, residential treatment centers, etc) to successfully transition to productive careers and independent living. The intervention model and related programs/services focus on needs assessment research, customized planning, supplemental activities, and cultural and professional immersion experiences. Together, the organizations offer a longitudinal approach that leads students from high school to higher learning and professional careers.

Amy Holdsman, Executive Director of White Williams Scholars, is excited about the partnership's ability to enhance collective capacity: "This partnership will allow us to more effectively offer our population of youth enhanced services. In the end, the kids will receive greater benefits and a longer-term commitment." Phillip Cuffey, Executive Director of the Zoeza Institute, agreed by stating, "The synergy created by this alliance will allow us to more effectively reach a segment of the population that is particularly challenging. By drawing on the resources of both organizations, we are better equipped to do it."

"This new relationship will enhance our ability to keep our student's grades up, prepare them for college, and support them to successful careers," noted Karen Campbell, Program Director for White Williams Scholars.

Dr. Jason Wingard, President and Chairman of the Zoeza Institute, discussed the long-term benefits of the collaboration: “In keeping with the missions of both organizations, our new partnership will not only provide intensive support services and opportunities for the target population, but it will also serve as a platform for measuring outcomes that can be used for refining program offerings and scaling services to wider populations of youth.”

Industry Perspective:

“This partnership represents a significant development in the mentoring arena for at-risk youth from an often neglected population”, noted Ernest Jones, President and CEO of the Philadelphia Workforce Development Corporation. “In order to help troubled youth effectively transition to productive careers, early intervention is imperative. White Williams Scholars and the Zoeza Institute are ideally positioned to address this challenge.”

Dr. Roberta Iversen, Associate Professor in the School of Social Policy and Practice at the University of Pennsylvania states: “Students from low income backgrounds are disproportionately disadvantaged from a social, educational, and economic standpoint. White Williams Scholars is long-established leader in addressing this issue. Further, students from non-traditional care settings have an even greater burden. The Zoeza Institute provides comprehensive mentoring services to address this area of need. So, the partnership provides a much needed alliance that serves the holistic needs of a very unique population of at-risk youth.”

About White Williams Scholars and Zoeza Institute:

The mission of White-Williams Scholars is to inspire and support high achieving Philadelphia public high school students of limited financial means to fulfill their potential. The organization serves more than 1,400 students each year in most public high schools in the city. It supplies monthly stipends of \$50 to \$75 in return for Scholars maintaining A's and B's in their classes. Scholars use their stipends to pay for meals, school supplies and activities, college test and application fees, and other needs. For more information, please visit www.wwscholars.org.

The Zoeza Institute is a non-profit development resource center whose mission is to facilitate the successful transition of at-risk youth into productive careers and independent living by using a customized, research-based educational intervention model to 1) establish long-term, high-touch, sustainable mentor relationships; 2) incorporate “strength-based” supplemental education instruction; 3) improve social acumen and confidence; 4) provide vocation-specific skills through training, development and apprenticeships; and 5) provide ongoing access to a comprehensive resource portal that offers professional network and information services. For more information, please visit www.zoeza.org.

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