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## Media Release

### **Pulse of CCSD – Child Development teacher brightens everyone’s day**

#### Angel Oak Elementary School

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Superintendent of Schools

**Karolyn Belcher**  
Chief Academic Officer

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Associate Superintendent of  
Elementary School Learning

**Judith Condon**  
Principal

**Charleston, SC** – Ivey Andersen knew early on in life that she wanted to be a teacher. She was an eager learner and enjoyed the social aspects of school. Andersen credits her early childhood teachers for instilling the joy of learning.

Andersen is working her way through the final steps needed to receive her teaching certificate while simultaneously serving as a child development teacher assistant at Angel Oak Elementary School (AOE).

The Greenville native started her college education in the Upstate and relocated to Charleston, transferring to Trident Technical College and then College of Charleston (CofC). She enrolled in the CofC Elementary Education Program and juggled classes while holding down a full time food and beverage position.

“I was so lucky to be able to do my student teaching at Orange Grove elementary School under the guidance of Erin Wilson,” said Andersen. “I knew then I was doing exactly what I wanted to be doing. I loved the elementary aged children, the curriculum and the kids. It’s always been about the kids for me.”

Andersen and her husband were soon blessed with a baby girl and she chose to take some time off from teaching to be a full time mom.

“I wanted to get my bearings as a mom and be there for my daughter in every way,” said Andersen. “My passion for teaching never waned, though. I slowly eased back into the classroom by agreeing to substitute here and there.”

This continued for a couple of years and the Andersen family was soon blessed with a baby boy. Again, she chose to take her career more slowly than she had planned and raise her babies.

“I tend to care more than the average person and I just love these students,” said Andersen. “I continued to be a substitute because I just love and respect these kids and my colleagues. Additionally, substituting allowed me to try out the different grade levels to determine what would be the right fit for me.”

Andersen eventually became an unofficial member of the Angel Oak team and after substituting in the child development (CD) class, found her calling.

"I saw how much the childhood development teachers were responsible for as far as building the base to a child's learning," said Andersen. "I wanted to be a part of that."

As luck would have it, a teacher's assistant position became open and Angel Oak Principal Judith Condon knew that Andersen would be perfect for the job.

"The kids adore her," said Condon. "She is always positive, kind and helpful under any circumstance. I often hear her checking in with people asking them if they need anything or if she can assist them in completing tasks, all of which are outside of her own job expectations. She just makes everyone's day brighter each day."

Andersen works with Kimberly Killebrew.

"Even though I am just an assistant, Kimberly makes me feel like it is my classroom, too," said Andersen. "She is so good about treating it like a partnership. She has also been my biggest cheerleader in pushing me to complete my certification requirements so that I can have a classroom to call my own."

Andersen's theatrical personality, one that is purposefully over the top when it comes to making learning fun, mixes perfectly with Killebrew, who likes to improvise and look for teachable moments.

"It's fun being in her classroom," said Andersen. "It is always an adventure, to say the least. Being in a classroom and being at school is all so new to children this age so you have to keep it fun, fresh, and exciting."

Andersen explained that CD classes give students the advantage of learning numbers, shapes, and colors at a young age. She said some of the four year olds know these things already and some do not so there are activity centers for every learner so that they will be properly prepared for kindergarten.

"We have a good group this year," said Andersen. "I just love to watch them. They are still such babies but they are growing so fast and learning so much like sharing and social skills, walking down the hallway properly and how to eat with good manners. We expose them to a wide range of things."

Andersen sees herself staying at Angel Oak the rest of her career. She calls Johns Island home and her heart is with the students there.

"I love all grades and could teach any grade," added Andersen. "With this age, you meet them when they're young and they're in your school for the rest of their elementary education so they remember you. They wave to you and hug you in

the hall. That makes me feel good and tells me that I am right where I am supposed to be."

Andersen has a deep, profound love for children and understands that they all come from diverse backgrounds, circumstances, and environments.

"They each have their own story to tell," said Andersen. "Many don't tell their story so I have empathy for what they might be dealing with at home. I understand that outside of these walls some children are faced with a whole other world that might not be as loving and safe."

Andersen said that belief is in sync with Principal Condon's ideals of putting the students first by addressing their basic needs for love and attention.

Maslow Before Bloom is a school-wide philosophy encouraged by Condon. It is the idea that educators should meet students' basic needs for safety and belonging before turning to challenging academic tasks is one that guides the work of many schools.

"A child can't worry about studying for a math test if they don't even know where they are going to sleep that night," explained Andersen. "That kind of thinking comes from the top, from Mrs. Condon, and it trickles down to the entire staff. We're all here for so much more. We've instilled in the students that if they have a problem they can come to any adult in this building and we will help solve it."

Anderson describes the Angel Oak team as a solid group that leans on each other.

"I couldn't be happier here," said Andersen. "I love everyone here and appreciate the constant support. We all work together to boost the school and the community of John's Island."

Angel Oak is truly a community school for Johns Island, Andersen explained. She and her husband Einar are proud to send their children Evan and Ethan there.

"I love Johns Island," said Andersen. "Roots run deep on this island. There is a large Hispanic population here and because I married a Mexican man. I can speak conversational Spanish. I am better able to help our local families and the students here. I am so honored to be able to go that extra mile when needed."

Andersen is not just a teacher's assistant, she is an educator, an advocate, and an encourager.

"I am so in love with my job and what I do," said Andersen. "I enjoy it. I'm fortunate. I am so happy to be doing what I'm doing."

According to Killebrew, "What can I do to help?" is Andersen's favorite line.

"She asks this daily," said Killebrew. "Not just to me but everyone. I sold Andersen the job. Actually, everyone here at AOE recruited her! I am just the lucky one that gets to see her smile, genuine love and compassion for learning, teaching and most of all the children! She is smart and is always looking for ideas and different approaches to address a need or support."

"She is definitely deserving of the Pulse of CCSD honor," added Condon. "Ms. Andersen truly puts students at the heart of her work and inspires others to do the same."

"When I first came on board with Mrs. Killebrew, I knew it was going to be busy, fast, and exciting," said Andersen. "She told me it would be 'go, go go' and that I needed to 'buckle up, baby' – so I did and here we are."

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.