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**Maryland Early Childhood Education Leader Earns National Recognition**  
*Ocran-Jackson selected by Child Care Exchange Magazine as Emerging Leader*

Portland, Ore. (May 15, 2015) – KinderCare Learning Centers, the nation’s leading private provider of early childhood education and care, announced today that Laurel resident Abena Ocran-Jackson has been named an Exceptional Emerging Leader by *Childcare Exchange Magazine* as part of their Most Powerful Emerging Leaders Search. Ocran-Jackson is the director of teacher preparation and oversees all aspects of teacher training for Knowledge Universe’s 24,000 teachers.

KinderCare® Learning Centers, along with parent company Knowledge Universe, CCLC®, and Champions® Before- and After-School Programs educate more than 169,000 children at 1,500 locations and 450 programs around the country.

More than 191 applications were submitted for *Childcare Exchange Magazine*’s Most Powerful Emerging Leaders Search. Of those, only 48 candidates were identified as exceptional leaders.

“Abena articulates and demonstrates the importance of education as a pathway toward well-being and a successful life,” said Linda Hassan Anderson, Knowledge Universe vice president of education. “With this as a core value, she advocates for educational excellence and equity, including issues of diversity, which are essential for all educational leaders working with 21<sup>st</sup> century learners and those who teach and work with them.”

Ocran-Jackson has more than 20 years in early childhood education. Originally from Gaithersburg, she began her career as a teacher at a Maryland child care center. From there she went on to a successful 16-year career with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). While at NAEYC she worked on the national accreditation program for early childhood education centers. Ocran-Jackson joined KinderCare in August 2014 as the director of teacher preparation, overseeing all aspects of teacher training for the company’s 24,000 teachers.

“I am pleased, honored, and humbled to be chosen as an Emerging Leader in the field of early childhood education,” said Ocran-Jackson. “Throughout my career I have always been fortunate to surround myself with individuals who were honest with me and, more importantly, pushed me out of my comfort zone. I am pleased to have a supervisor and mentor who continues to do that and even more pleased to be a part of Knowledge Universe and to provide a vision for ongoing teacher professional development.”

**About Knowledge Universe® – United States**

Knowledge Universe – United States believes that the power of education changes lives. Every day more than 169,000 children take their first steps, learn to read and prepare for school through our early childhood and school-age programs. The Knowledge Universe® family of companies includes KinderCare® Learning Centers, CCLC®, Champions®, Cambridge Schools™, Knowledge Beginnings®, and The Grove School® where more than 30,000 people help children discover books, music, science, sports, cooking, and language in a nurturing and safe environment. To learn more, visit us online at <http://www.kueducation.com/us> and on [Twitter](#).

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