



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

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OPPORTUNITY
RISING *our promise to all our kids*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Duluthians invited to ‘Opportunity Rising’ dinner Citywide event will launch public campaign to narrow Opportunity Gap

DULUTH—Hundreds of Duluth residents, officials, educators, nonprofit providers and others are expected to attend a citywide dinner Oct. 25 celebrating the launch of a new public awareness campaign to narrow the Opportunity Gap.

“Opportunity Rising: Our Promise to All Our Kids” is the theme of the event, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Lincoln Park Middle School, 3215 W. Third St., sponsored by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.

Participants will share a meal of soup and bread. Speakers then will unveil the new public awareness campaign about narrowing the Opportunity Gap, the often vast differences in life opportunities available to rich and poor children and families in Duluth. Community members also will be asked to sign a pledge supporting work to improve opportunities for all children and families.

In Duluth, 3,346 children, or 21.5 percent, live in poverty, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. That percentage is higher than the Minnesota average, 12.2 percent, and the national average, 18 percent.

“We believe we have the power in our hands to make a difference for all children and families in Duluth,” said Holly C. Sampson, president of the Community Foundation. “We also know that when we do, we improve the lives for everyone living here.”

She added: “Part of our campaign will be demonstrating how we all rise as a community when individuals within our community rise. Another aspect will be helping Duluthians discover how they can make a difference today in the lives of children and families by volunteering, mentoring, donating and offering their neighbors simple but important opportunities, such as a ride or work, to the store or home from after-school activities. We’re starting by inviting Duluthians from all walks of life to come together for dinner and a conversation about how we can support all of our kids.”

The Community Foundation plans to unveil a new website for the Opportunity Rising initiative, opportunityrising.org. Included on the site will be a link to the volunteer and services resource of the Head of the Lakes United Way, directing prospective volunteers to opportunities to donate their time and services specifically for Opportunity Rising work in Duluth.

Opportunity Rising is the product of more than two years of work by the Community Foundation and its partners in the Twin Ports to improve outcomes by increasing opportunities for low-income children and families. For years, scholars, civic leaders and service providers have warned that the gap between rich and poor children is widening, creating increasingly separate societies. That chasm, they say, threatens the ability of communities and the nation to solve problems, seize opportunities and achieve goals for economic growth and quality living.

In 2015, the Community Foundation invited Dr. Robert D. Putnam of Harvard University to the Twin Ports to give the keynote address at the organization's Annual Celebration. Putnam is the author of "Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis," a New York Times best-selling book examining the Opportunity Gap. Putnam and a team of scholars conducted research in cities nationwide, including Duluth, showing the gap widening.

In 2016, the Community Foundation awarded \$1.5 million to nine nonprofit groups and the Duluth Public Schools for groundbreaking work to help children and families in poverty and to narrow the Opportunity Gap. The projects, still underway, are connecting children and families to services including education, transportation, mentoring and employment. Many of the grants are for innovative efforts that may serve as national models for improving lives of children and families.

To RSVP for the Oct. 25 Opportunity Rising event at Lincoln Park Middle School, or to arrange free transportation to it, please call 218-726-0232 or email info@dsacommunityfoundation.com. The Community Foundation also is planning an Opportunity Rising event in Superior to launch a similar campaign tied to the website and the public education and awareness campaign. More information about the Superior event will be provided later this year.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation encourages private giving for the public good. The foundation is a permanent community endowment, built by gifts from hundreds of individuals and organizations. Guided by a volunteer Board of Trustees, the foundation makes grants to nonprofits and to individuals for scholarships and provides leadership on important initiatives in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Since its inception in 1983, it has distributed more than \$50 million and holds 396 funds. Learn more at dsacommunityfoundation.com.

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