



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Private giving for the public good.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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‘Opportunity Gap’ is focus of event

Causes, solutions discussed at Community Foundation Annual Celebration

DULUTH—A panel discussion and pledges of action from the community to address the “Opportunity Gap” were among the highlights of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation’s 2016 Annual Celebration.

More than 300 donors, supporters, community leaders, nonprofit partners, and others joined the foundation at the event in the Harborside Ballroom of the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. The event is the annual meeting where the organization assesses efforts in the past year and also announces new members and officers of the Board of Trustees. For much of the past year, the foundation has focused on addressing the Opportunity Gap, the vast differences available to low-income and well-off children and families locally and nationwide.

The theme of this year’s event was, “We Can Do Better By Embracing All of Our Kids.” A highlight was a panel discussion sharing findings from the foundation’s Opportunity Gap Convening Committee. The committee has spent six months assessing the issue to help the foundation craft guidelines for grants to address the gap.

“We have gone into our community, with the help of individuals and organizations working in our community,” said James Zastrow, Chair of the Convening Committee. “We have had a chance to talk to those who are affected by the Opportunity Gap every day. Mothers. Fathers. Sons. Daughters. Social service organizations. Our schools and our health officials. All of us on the Convening Committee have come away changed—profoundly and forever changed.”

Joining Zastrow in the panel discussion were:

- Xavier Bell, Director of Community Engagement at Community Action Duluth, one of several social service agencies that provided insight to the Convening Committee.
- Shannon RedBrook, a resident of Duluth and mother who shared her family’s story.
- Janna Stevens, the Superintendent of the School District of Superior and a Convening Committee member, who discussed how the Opportunity Gap affects education.
- Tim Stratioti, Director of the Boys & Girls Club of the Northland’s Superior Branch. He connected the Convening Committee to young people, who shared their stories.

The foundation is reviewing grant applications that will be funded with some of the \$1.5 million it received from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation to address the Opportunity Gap locally.

“We are currently reviewing a number of ambitious, innovative and encouraging proposals that would begin to address the Opportunity Gap in the Twin Ports,” said foundation President Holly C. Sampson. “We will have more about our grantmaking to announce this summer. But we could not have come this far this quickly without everyone’s work and help to understand.”

The foundation took up the Opportunity Gap charge after last year’s Annual Celebration, where Harvard University Professor Dr. Robert D. Putnam was the keynote speaker. Putnam is one of the nation’s experts on the Opportunity Gap. His best-selling book, “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis,” addressed the issue. Some of the book’s research was conducted in the Twin Ports.

As part of the Annual Celebration, audience members were asked to reflect on efforts they could make, as individuals and through groups, to address the Opportunity Gap locally, then post their ideas on a wall.

In addition to the Opportunity Gap work, the foundation announced Zastrow as the new Chair of the Board of Trustees, succeeding Claudia Scott Welty. It also welcomed three new Board members: Daniel Lew, the St. Louis County Public Defender; Nels Ojard, CEO of Krech Ojard & Associates; and Robin Washington, a Duluth-based journalist.

Sponsors of the Annual Celebration were: the Sieh Yung Group of Merrill Lynch (premier sponsor); the Duluth News Tribune; US Bank; Hanft Fride, A Professional Organization; The Jamar Company; Krech Ojard & Associates; Republic Bank; Superior Water, Light & Power; Wells Fargo—The Private Bank; Wheeler Associates; and WIPFLi.

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 nonprofit organizations and to individuals for scholarships and provides leadership on important community initiatives in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Since its inception in 1983, the organization has distributed more than \$47 million and holds 370 funds, each with its own charitable purpose. Learn more at dsacommunityfoundation.com.

Regional affiliates of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation include: the Two Harbors Area Fund (created in 1998), the Apostle Islands Area Community Fund (created in 2000), the Cook County Community Fund (created in 2003), the Hermantown Community Fund (created in 2005), the Eveleth Area Community Foundation (created in 2008) and the Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund (created in 2011).

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES:

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