



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grants offered to narrow ‘Opportunity Gap’

Funds will support groups serving low-income Twin Ports children, families

DULUTH—The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation today announced the opening of the first round of grants designed to address the “Opportunity Gap” in the Twin Ports by improving parenting, education and community resources for low-income children and families.

The grants, available to nonprofit groups, are designed to address vast differences in opportunities available to low-income and well-off children and families in Duluth and Superior. They are part of a \$1.5 million, three-year program of research and grant work that the Community Foundation is leading, inspired by growing awareness of the issue nationwide and highlighted in the best-selling book, “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis,” by Dr. Robert D. Putnam of Harvard University.

The grant offering comes after three months of research in “listening sessions” across the Twin Ports by the Community Foundation and its Opportunity Gap Convening Committee of civic, business, public sector and non-profit leaders. The sessions included meetings with parents, teens and service providers that deal directly with Opportunity Gap issues in Duluth and Superior.

“Our findings included solutions as simple but as powerful as the need for more children to have caring adults in their lives who nurture and believe in their futures,” said Holly C. Sampson, President of the Community Foundation. “Too many young people growing up in poverty have limited opportunities. They need to have caring people in their lives who can introduce them to and provide ladders to success.”

Other findings from the listening sessions included the need for:

- More support for early childhood education and development, including programs for parents
- Matching low-income families with advocates who can help the families better navigate support networks
- Restoring a stronger sense of community that encourages more individuals, organizations and businesses to see children and families in need as “our kids” and “our neighbors” and to offer assistance

“One of the most important findings in our listening sessions was that the families and individuals need to be involved in shaping that assistance,” said James Zastrow, Chair of the Opportunity Gap Convening Committee. “For the work of these new grants to be successful, these individuals and community supporters emphasized that it has to be ‘for us, by us and with us.’ As we offer the first round of grants, this will be an important characteristic we’ll look for in applications.”

Grants from the new Opportunity Gap Initiative Fund will be awarded in the range of \$100,000 to \$300,000, and possibly, higher, depending on the suggested program or scope of work and with the possibility of funding over several years. Examples of possible grant work include:

- Creation or enhancement of neighborhood-based centers for families, possibly within existing schools, community centers
- Improved engagement of families and children through mentoring based on shared interests, participation in community events and efforts to connect local organizations and businesses
- New efforts to connect families with advocates who help them access services that improve economic security and health

To be eligible to apply for funding, an organization must be a nonprofit under Section 501(c)(3) or an organization under Section 170(c)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code. Nonprofits also must be located in or be able to provide services in Duluth, Superior or both. **Applicants should first submit a letter of intent through dsacommunityfoundation.com no later than 5 p.m. April 4. Based on the letter, an organization may be encouraged to submit a full grant proposal by the deadline of 5 p.m. May 2. For more information, go to dsacommunityfoundation.com.**

The Community Foundation will offer a workshop to provide more information about the grants and to encourage collaboration among potential grant recipients from 3 to 4:45 p.m. March 14 in the Zeitgeist Arts Building, 222 E. Superior St., Duluth. For more information or to register, go to dsacommunityfoundation.com or email grantsinfo@dsacommunityfoundation.com.

ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION:

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation encourages private giving for the public good. The Community Foundation is a permanent community endowment, built by gifts from hundreds of individuals and organizations. Guided by a volunteer Board of Trustees, the Community 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 currently holds 360 different 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:

Rob Karwath | North Coast Communications
218-343-9418 | rob@northcoastcommunications.com