



DULUTH SUPERIOR AREA
**COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

Private giving for the public good.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Community Foundation commits major resources to narrow ‘Opportunity Gap’

Groundbreaking grants to help Twin Ports children, families

Nine nonprofit groups and one government agency have together been awarded \$1.5 million for groundbreaking work to help children and families in poverty and to narrow the “Opportunity Gap” in the Twin Ports, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation announced today.

The projects will connect children and families to services including early childhood education, transportation, mentoring, employment and support services. Many of the grants are for innovative efforts. One will help families navigate the support system so they understand how to access assistance that already exists. Another seeks to build stronger connections between parents of school-age children by bringing teachers into the children’s homes to meet their entire families.

The 10 grants were awarded from among dozens of applications submitted earlier this year after the Community Foundation launched its Opportunity Gap Initiative and formed an Opportunity Gap Convening Committee that investigated how to make meaningful change.

The Opportunity Gap refers to vast differences in opportunities available to poor and rich children nationwide. Scholars and civic leaders warn that the gap is widening, creating separate and divided societies. That gap, they say, threatens the ability of communities and the nation to solve problems, seize opportunities and achieve goals for education and economic growth.

“The Opportunity Gap is affecting our nation and our entire community in the Twin Ports,” said Community Foundation President Holly C. Sampson. “With these grants, we hope to make an important difference in the lives of children and families locally as well as develop models that can be expanded and replicated to make meaningful change elsewhere.”

Narrowing the awards to the final 10 was difficult because of so many high-quality proposals, said James Zastrow, who chaired the Opportunity Gap Convening Committee.

“We appreciate all of the interest in working to narrow the Opportunity Gap in the Twin Ports,” he said. “When we have 23 percent of children in Duluth and 31 percent in Superior living in poverty, we know we can do better. We are confident that the grant recipients will achieve our goals and work to ensure that these efforts are for, by and with those they are helping.”

The grant recipients are:

- **Churches United in Ministry**, \$295,000 for therapeutic early childhood and parenting programs for families at Duluth’s Steve O’Neil Apartments
- **Community Action Duluth**, \$100,000 to provide transportation so children and families can take advantage of after-school and other programs that they otherwise might miss
- **Duluth Area Family YMCA**, \$150,000 to expand mentoring to and strengthening the quality of mentoring for children ages 5 to 17
- **Duluth Public Schools**, \$50,000 for the parent-teacher home visits project
- **Family Forum Inc.**, \$167,020 to provide parent coaches to children who attend Head Start early childhood education in Superior
- **First Witness Child Advocacy Resource Center (formerly First Witness Child Abuse Resource Center), CASDA and All Nations Indigenous Center**, \$295,000 to provide community advocates and navigators for families of abused children living in poverty
- **Men as Peacemakers**, \$160,000 to bring violence prevention and leadership programs to create equity for teenage girls and pre-teen boys
- **Myers-Wilkins Community School Collaborative**, \$100,000 to expand the full-service community school program that provides activities and support for children and families for Myers-Wilkins and Lincoln Park Middle Schools
- **SOAR Career Services**, \$174,800 to provide education and employment options through a partnership focused on homeless youths ages 15 to 21 not in school and not working
- **Superior African-American Heritage Community**, \$8,500 for a cultural heritage program

The \$1.5 million for the Opportunity Gap Initiative projects was provided from the Margaret A. Cargill Foundation of Eden Prairie, Minnesota and from Community Foundation resources.

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 individuals for scholarships and provides leadership on important community initiatives in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Since its inception in 1983, it has distributed more than \$47 million and holds 370 funds, each with its own charitable purpose. Regional affiliates fund are: the Two Harbors Area Fund (created in 1998), the Apostle Islands Area Community Fund, the Cook County Community Fund, the Hermantown Community Fund, the Eveleth Area Community Foundation and the Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund.

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES:

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