



ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI

FOUNDATION
FOR
CHILDREN

NEWSLETTER

November 2014

The Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation for Children has awarded more than \$17.7 million in grants since 1999. More than three quarters of that amount has supported educational programs and organizations, with most of the remainder dedicated to social justice and public health. The Foundation serves as a catalyst for creative, innovative, and systems-changing programs to achieve long-term impact in promoting equitable education and opportunities for Minnesota's children and youth.



Grant Recipients

Hiawatha Academies

\$150,000

Mastery School (Harvest Network of Schools)

\$150,000

Parent Aware for School Readiness

\$150,000

Northside Achievement Zone

\$125,000

MinnCAN

\$125,000

Think Small

\$125,000

Educators 4 Excellence

\$100,000

Education Transformation Initiative

\$100,000

Minneapolis College Preparatory School

\$100,000

Teach For America

\$100,000

Students for Education Reform

\$50,000

Way to Grow

\$50,000

Children's Theatre Company

\$25,000

TOTAL: \$1.35 million

Foundation awards \$1.35 million in grants to high-performing schools, education programs

The RKMC Foundation for Children this month awarded \$1.35 million in grants for 2015. Grant recipients include an array of schools, education programs, and nonprofits serving Minnesota's children.

The awards reflect three key priorities:



Expanding **great schools** and school networks



Increasing **parent demand** for schools that provide excellent educational outcomes for all students



Creating a **sense of urgency** to address the extreme disparities that exist in educational outcomes between students of color and white students in the Twin Cities



Minnesota needs schools and educational programs that prepare *all* students for college and careers, regardless of their race, family income, or neighborhood. These grants are investments in organizations that are serious about making change and getting equitable results for all of our children.



- Michael Ciresi
Foundation Board Chair



Focus Area: Great Schools



Minnesota’s educational opportunity gap is a crisis that we can’t ignore. How are we failing our kids? Here’s a snapshot: Eighty percent of white fifth graders in Minneapolis Public Schools are proficient in math, compared with 25 percent of African American fifth graders. And 75 percent of white third graders are proficient in reading, compared with 23 percent of Latino third graders.

To help close the gap, the RKMC Foundation for Children invests in schools and organizations with a record of educational success, especially with students of color from low-income families. They include:

Hiawatha Academies **\$150,000**

Hiawatha Academies, a network of public charter schools in South Minneapolis, serves 860 students in grades K-8. Hiawatha schools have repeatedly made the Star Tribune’s “Beating the Odds” list of Minnesota schools where students do well on tests despite high poverty rates. During the 2013-2014 academic year, Hiawatha students grew an average of 1.3 years in reading and 1.7 years in math across the network.

Hiawatha is growing rapidly. Under pressure from parents and families, the network’s board voted this year to accelerate expansion plans in order to serve current eighth graders who wish to remain in the Hiawatha network for high school. Hiawatha Collegiate High School is now slated to open in the fall of 2015, and the Hiawatha network plans to serve more than 2,000 students by the fall of 2020. Hiawatha’s commitment to working closely with families, building a culture of high expectations, and implementing proven practices in the classroom has made it a critical local proof point for how excellent schools can be expanded, and how they ensure that all children achieve at high levels.

Teach For America **\$100,000**

Teach For America (TFA) is growing the movement of leaders who work to ensure that children growing up in poverty get an excellent education. A national organization, TFA recruits, trains, and provides career development to a diverse group of high-achieving leaders who teach for at least two years in low-income communities. In Minnesota, TFA has placed 285 teachers in public district and charter schools over the past five years, with 69 current corps members. Last school year, more than three quarters of students in classrooms led by corps members exceeded typical academic growth on the rigorous, nationally normed MAP assessment. The organization has also engaged its network of over 500 alumni living in the region and continues to recruit more alumni to Minneapolis schools. TFA’s leadership in closing the opportunity gap also extends beyond school-based positions, with alumni serving as the executive directors of MinnCAN and Educators 4 Excellence, as well as on the Minneapolis Board of Education.

Last summer, TFA and the University of Minnesota’s College of Education and Human Development launched the state’s first-ever alternative teacher certification program in partnership with the Northside Achievement Zone. Over the summer, 38 incoming corps members taught children living in the zone under the supervision of experienced educators and university faculty while completing rigorous coursework aligned with the Minnesota state standards for teacher licensure. Corps members will continue taking courses throughout the school year and be fully licensed teachers in Minnesota by the end of their two corps years, paving the way for them to keep teaching in Minnesota classrooms. TFA’s collaboration with the University of Minnesota is a powerful example of its ongoing contributions to ensuring that Minnesota has the talent and public policy necessary to close the opportunity gap.

Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation for Children Board Members

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The RKMC Foundation for Children partners closely with The Minneapolis Foundation to leverage their investment services, operating support, and community expertise.