



ROBINS, KAPLAN, MILLER & CIRESI

FOUNDATION
FOR
CHILDREN

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016



The Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation for Children has awarded nearly \$20 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.



With help from the RKMC Foundation, Cristo Rey Jesuit High School prepares its students for college success.

In its most recent grantmaking cycle, the RKMC Foundation for Children awarded more than \$1.3 million in grants for 2016. The 14 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 education 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



Focus Area:

Expanding great schools

All children deserve an excellent education. That's a guiding value of the RKMC Foundation for Children, which is committed to ensuring that every Minnesota student attends a high-performing school.

Minnesota has some of the nation's starkest educational opportunity gaps. Our state has struggled for years to make sure that all students—regardless of their race or family income—are prepared for college, careers, and life. Yet some Minnesota schools are showing remarkable success at closing these gaps. The RKMC Foundation for Children is committed to expanding and replicating their work.

Here's a snapshot of two schools the Foundation is investing in this year:

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School

Cristo Rey Jesuit High School reached an important milestone last year. Four years after graduating its inaugural class of seniors, Cristo Rey celebrated last summer when, for the first time, the school's alumni began earning bachelor's degrees.

It was a rewarding moment for the Twin Cities school, which has been dedicated from day one to preparing low-income students for college. Cristo Rey, which opened in the fall of 2007 and serves a predominantly Latino and African American student population, issued diplomas to its first class of seniors in 2011. Four years later, a third of those students had earned 2- or 4-year degrees. That's an astounding achievement when you consider that, nationwide, an estimated 8% to 12% of Latino and African American students earn college degrees within six years of graduating from high school. Cristo Rey forecasts that half of the Class of 2011 will have their college degrees by June 2016.

Cristo Rey has continued its impressive track record for high school graduation and college enrollment. This past spring, 100% of the school's graduating seniors were accepted to

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Focus Area: Expanding great schools



college: the 66 members of the Class of 2015 applied to 98 colleges in 27 states and two foreign countries, garnering 229 acceptance letters. Just as significant, those students were awarded \$1.37 million in scholarships for their first year of college. The Class of 2016 is on track for similar success: With commencement still weeks away, 97% of this year's seniors have already been accepted to college.

Cristo Rey is part of a national network of 30 schools that originated on the South Side of Chicago in 1996. The school, located in the Phillips neighborhood of South Minneapolis, is expanding, with enrollment projected to climb to 440 students next year.

One ingredient in Cristo Rey's success is its Corporate Work Study Program. All students at Cristo Rey work five days a month in an entry-level job to gain work skills and cover more than half of their tuition costs. School leaders initially designed the work study program as a way to help finance tuition, but they quickly discovered that students were also gaining valuable skills and experience. For their part, the companies that hire Cristo Rey students benefit from well-trained, cost-effective workers who are eager to learn.

The RKMC Foundation is proud to support this high-performing school with a grant of \$50,000 as it continues to use rigorous coursework, research-based teaching strategies, and support services to prepare students for college success.

Mastery School

Mastery School is a member of the Harvest Network of Schools, a group of high-performing charter schools in north Minneapolis. As part of Harvest's expansion plans, the Mastery School will move its K-4 program to a new campus this fall at 40th Av. N and Thomas Av. N. By 2025, the Harvest network aims to serve 3,800 students.

Started in 2012 in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools, Mastery School offers single-gender classroom education, with about 250 students enrolled this year.

Mastery School's academic model incorporates a high-expectations culture with a rigorous curriculum under the guidance of highly-qualified, effective teachers and principals. Mastery School also has a longer school day and school year, with students spending 35% more time in school than at other Minnesota public schools.

Support from the RKMC Foundation for Children, including a grant of \$100,000 for 2016, has helped Mastery grow into a robust school that changes lives and positions children for a bright future.

“ Minnesota needs schools and educational programs that prepare *all* students for college and careers, regardless of their race, family income, or neighborhood. ”

- Michael V. Ciresi
Foundation Board Chair

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