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Women's Foundation of Minnesota Awards \$166,000 in girlsBEST Fund Grants

(Nov. 1, Minneapolis) —The Women's Foundation of Minnesota announced today that it has awarded \$166,000 in grants to 14 nonprofit groups through its girlsBEST (girls Building Economic Success Together) Fund. The girlsBEST Fund awards grants to programs that build the future economic success of Minnesota's girls and includes critical outreach to underserved, underrepresented populations of girls around the state. The grant period is one year.

For each grantee, this new award is the second consecutive year of girlsBEST funding. To ensure grantees' long-term sustainability and fundraising capacity, \$3,000 of their award is a matching grant, requiring grantees to raise an additional \$3,000 in order to receive their full award.

2008 girlsBEST Fund Grantees:

Boys & Girls Club of the Leech Lake Area | \$12,500 (Cass Lake), to support the SMART Girls program to provide girls' leadership and entrepreneurial skills training through opening and running a thrift store in downtown Cass Lake.

Centro, Inc. | \$15,000 (Minneapolis), to support the Nican Tlaca Dance Academy, the Twin Cities' first girl-to-girl Latino Dance academy. In this second year of the program, the girlsBEST girls are apprentice instructors at Centro and are ready to transition from their apprenticeship in dance instruction to hands-on teaching. Girls will expand their own entrepreneurial and leadership skills, in launching this business.

Courage Center | \$5,000 (Statewide), planning grant to create a girl-focused program track within the Courage Youth Leadership Academy. The Academy helps teens (13-17) determine strengths and interests, develop employability skills, apply what they have learned to service projects in the community, and create pathways to post-secondary education.

Division of Indian Work | \$12,000 (Statewide), to support the "Live It" Youth Advisory Council, bringing together American Indian girls (ages 14-18) from statewide reservations and the Twin Cities to participate in awareness and leadership training; co-facilitate presentations of the "Live It" Teen Pregnancy Prevention curricula; and develop and implement other advocacy and activism activities around teen pregnancy prevention.

Family Pathways | \$12,500 (Chisago Lakes, Sandstone, Onamia), to support the DREAM (Determined Responsible Educated Achieving Motivated Girls) Girls program to increase girls' economic readiness through focus on future planning, leadership skills, community involvement, and academic success.

Girls in Action (J. Cameron & Assoc.) | \$10,000 (Robbinsdale), to work weekly with girls (grades 9-12) around a structured curriculum and interactive process with four core components – personal power, leadership, service-learning, and career coaching – to decrease violence among high school girls and increase their academic engagement. Positive female role models, mentors, community leaders and career coaches work directly with the girls. At the end of the program year, a Service Learning Day will convene program participants to advocate for the economic and social well-being of their communities.

Girl Scout Council of Greater Minneapolis | \$15,000 (Minneapolis), to support program work with African American girls across the Twin Cities, focusing on financial literacy training, leadership skills development, post-secondary educational options and financial aid, and African American cultural heritage. Participants visit local colleges and universities, and historic black colleges. The girls also participate in a Peace Steppers group to address and increase the visibility of social justice issues within the community.

KFAI, Fresh Air, Inc. (Minneapolis) | \$7,000, to support Youth News Initiative: Girls of Color Voicing Their Choice, creating the next generation of diverse female leadership in public broadcasting through training and mentoring.

Laura Jeffrey Academy | \$10,000 (Twin Cities), to support diverse, tuition-free charter school for girls (grades 5-8) that emphasizes science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and offers pre-engineering program, Gateway to Technology; nearly half of girls are low-income and from underrepresented and underserved communities.

Liberian Women's Initiatives of Minnesota | \$12,500 (Brooklyn Park), to support the College-Bound Mentoring Program, pairing junior and senior high school Liberian girls with professional Liberian women to mentor, guide, support and encourage college enrollment, while maintaining cultural values. Program components include general tutoring to enhance academic preparation for college; leadership skills development; assistance with college applications and financial aid information; and general financial literacy.

Pearl Crisis Center | \$15,000 (Milaca), to support the TADA (Teens Against Dating Abuse) program, educating teens in the Milaca area about teen dating violence. Girl-led and girl-driven, TADA will develop a county-wide community campaign advocating for decreased violence against women and the value of building healthy relationships. It will also focus on how domestic violence impedes a woman's ability to succeed and achieve economic stability.

WINDOW | \$12,000 (Hinckley), to support the Open Window program, providing a safe, empowering environment for young women (ages 10-18) to explore the issue of domestic violence and its short- and long-term effects on individual economic well-being. Through 12-week educational programs that include group work and experiential learning, girls learn about financial management, job seeking and retention, relationships, and advocacy.

YouthCARE | \$12,500 (Minneapolis), to support the Young Women's Mentoring Program, which provides training and support for young women from low-income communities to become mentors and activity leaders for young girls in the program. Young women participants (ages 14-18) learn employment, leadership, and self-sufficiency skills to provide girls (ages 7-13) with consistent support, caring and guidance.

YWCA Duluth | \$15,000 (Duluth), to support the Girl Power! program, providing experiential economic empowerment programming for underserved girls in Duluth, ages 9-15. Participants learn about career exploration, money management, financial goal setting, the relationship between money and gender, employment readiness, youth philanthropy, and post-secondary educational options and opportunities.

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About the Women's Foundation of Minnesota

The Women's Foundation of Minnesota is a community foundation that grows equality for women and girls in Minnesota by funding innovative social change programs, building women's philanthropy, conducting and reporting research, and educating the public about the successes and challenges of Minnesota's women and girls. Founded in 1983, it is the oldest statewide women's foundation in the country. More information can be found at www.wfmn.org.