



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Foundation awards \$300,000 in girlsBEST Fund grants

(August 18, Minneapolis) – The Women’s Foundation of Minnesota has awarded \$300,000 in grants for a second year of funding to 21 nonprofit organizations through its girlsBEST (girls Building Economic Success Together) Fund. The grant period is August 1, 2014 to July 31, 2015. Multi-year grants will be renewed for up to three years, based on an annual grant review and approval of progress towards goals.

Established in 2001, the girlsBEST Fund awards multi-year grants to programs that build the future economic success of Minnesota’s girls. Priority is given to programs that include outreach to underserved, underrepresented populations of girls around the state. Grantees are funded in one of four program tracks: Academic; Entrepreneurial; Employment Development & High-Paying/High-Skill Careers; and Public Education & Advocacy.

#### Grantees:

**Bagosendaan** (Mahnomen) | **\$13,500**— To use Talking Circles, mentoring and horseback riding to develop and promote self-confidence, independent thinking, and initiative, the ability to function in a group, life skills and lifelong friends to help youth become successful adults.

**Casa de Esperanza** (St. Paul) | **\$18,000**— To support young Latinas in developing and strengthening their leadership capacity to lead and engage with other youth by preparing young Latinas to provide peer education strategies and lead community action projects and social change activities they have self-identified as being critical issues important to their own well-being, that of their peers, families and communities through its Peer Leaders program.

**Casa Guadalupe Multicultural Communities** (Cold Spring) | **\$14,000**— To develop awareness of self-identity, self-esteem, healthy body image, and healthy lifestyle choices through educational and interactive workshops, mentorships, field trips, and civic engagement to build economic readiness and prepare for lifelong success through its La Potencia Latina: Academic and Career Empowerment (PLACE) program.

**Dakota Wicohan** (Morton) | **\$16,000**— To build the leadership capacity of young Native American women/adolescent girls in the Redwood Falls-Lower Sioux Community area, through culturally relevant mentoring with an academic and community focus and preserve Dakota as a living language and transmit Dakota lifeways to future generations through its peer leadership project.

**Girl Scouts of MN & WI River Valleys** (Rochester) | **\$13,500**— To develop girls’ leadership in healthy relations and self-esteem, college and career readiness, leadership development and service learning, financial

literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) through its Girl Scouts ConnectZ after-school program.

**Girl Scouts of MN & WI River Valleys** (Worthington) | **\$13,500**— To provide additional academic support, mentorship, and enrichment opportunities for middle and high school students through its Girl Scouts ConnectZ after-school program.

**Hmong American Partnership** (St. Paul) | **\$16,000**— To provide girls with the opportunity to connect with a professional adult Hmong woman and develop a mentor/mentee relationship including academic support, internships and group and one-on-one mentoring through its Hmong Girls Career Program.

**Lake Superior School District** (Two Harbors) | **\$15,000**— To offer a semester of all-girl industrial technology programming at Two Harbors High School, partner in the development of a Mesabi Range Community & Technical College Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Camp specific to the North Shore, and partner with Northeast Minnesota's Office of Jobs and Training's Career EdVenture program for eMentoring, job-shadowing and bringing CEOs into the classroom specific to this program.

**Life-Work Planning Center** (St. James, Madelia) | **\$13,500**— To empower young Latinas in a gender and culturally specific bilingual program and foster emotional and economic self-sufficiency through one-to-one meetings, weekly after-school workshops, college site visits, and referrals and coordination with other service providers through its Project Succeed.

**Men as Peacemakers** (Duluth) | **\$16,000**— To identify at-risk girls and provide the support needed to graduate from high school, including tutoring, mentoring and connection to post-secondary institutions through its Girls Restorative Program in partnership with Denfeld High School.

**Minnesota African Women's Association** (Brooklyn Park) | **\$18,000**— To provide culturally specific after-school and summer programming for Pan African girls, ages 14-18, in Northern Hennepin County through its African Girls Initiative for Leadership and Empowerment Program.

**Minnesota Urban Debate League** (Minneapolis, St. Paul) | **\$13,500**— To empower girl debaters to become engaged learners, critical thinkers, and active citizens, and provide girl debaters the skills to graduate on time from high school, attend college, and develop leadership skills to ensure their long-term economic and social success.

**New Horizons Crisis Center** (Redwood Falls) | **\$13,500**— To give girls knowledge and tools and to have an outlet to address the issues they face with mentors and peers, in order to help them make more positive, informed choices in their present and future relationships through its peer learning Girls Relationship Program.

**Peacemaker Resources** (Warroad) | **\$13,500**— To emphasize developing the self as the first step in leadership and programming to empower and equip young women to have positive relationships with self, others, and community through its summer Girls Lead program.

**Pillsbury United Communities - Brian Coyle Community Center** (Minneapolis) | **\$13,500**— To support the Sisterhood of the Traveling Scarf, a youth developed and operated entrepreneurial venture managed by the girls group of the Coyle Center’s youth program.

**Project FINE** (Winona) | **\$13,500**— To work with immigrant and refugee girls to help them discover their identity and strengths and create a roadmap to pursue their dreams through its Girls Reaching Above and Beyond (GRAB) program.

**SURGE!** (Mankato) | **\$10,000**— To empower at-risk girls in junior and senior high school and help participants understand their own ability to control their future through their strengths, positive thinking, goal-setting, and planning.

**WE WIN Institute** (Minneapolis) | **\$15,000**— To develop positive peer relationships necessary to support each other towards becoming capable, responsible, and determined women through its Women of Distinction program for African-American girls.

**Western Community Action, Inc.** (Marshall) | **\$13,500**— To encouraging 9th-12th grade girls from low-income families in rural Cottonwood and Jackson Counties to pursue post-secondary education through academic success and mentoring through its Generation Next II: Building Young Women of Excellence program.

**Willmar Public Schools, Independent School District 327 - Willmar Community Education & Recreation** (Willmar) | **\$13,500**— To support East African immigrant middle and high school girls to stay in school and pursue college and future career goals including applying for jobs and learning about careers, connecting to American culture, the Willmar area and resources, and increasing understanding across the community through its Girl Talk program.

**Women’s Initiative for Self Empowerment** (St. Paul) | **\$13,500**— To builds girls’ financial and economic capacity through programs that help them stay in school and pursue college and future career goals through its Girls Getting Ahead in Leadership program.

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### About the Women’s Foundation of Minnesota

The Women’s Foundation of Minnesota is a statewide community foundation that invests in social change to achieve equality for all women and girls in Minnesota. The Foundation funds innovative social change programs, advocates public policy, publishes annual research on the status of Minnesota’s women and girls, and builds women’s philanthropy. It is the oldest statewide women’s foundation in the country. More at [www.wfmn.org](http://www.wfmn.org), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#).



Special thanks to the Walmart Foundation for its generous support of the girlsBEST Fund.