



News

For Immediate Release

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George Family Foundation transitions Catalyst Initiative to The Minneapolis Foundation to spark growth

MINNEAPOLIS (Aug. 9, 2017) — Pursuing plans to scale up an innovative community wellness program, the George Family Foundation (GFF) will transfer its Catalyst Initiative to The Minneapolis Foundation. Since 2015, Catalyst has provided community-based training opportunities and seed grants to support culturally grounded integrative health and healing (IHH) practices throughout the Twin Cities. Effective January 1, 2018, the Catalyst Initiative will become a Field of Interest Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation.

This marks the first collaboration between the George Family Foundation, a private family foundation, and The Minneapolis Foundation, a community foundation. “We are grateful that The Minneapolis Foundation has enthusiastically agreed to be the future home for Catalyst,” said Penny George, board chair of the George Family Foundation. “We look forward to the continued development of Catalyst’s groundbreaking work in expanding the use of integrative health and healing practices to improve health and wellbeing in our state.”

As a three-year, \$3.3 million initiative conceived of and developed by the George Family Foundation, Catalyst grew out of the work that Penny George has been doing for more than two decades to transform health care through IHH approaches and practices. Since its inception, Catalyst has provided 49 training opportunities and 60 seed grants to small nonprofit organizations that are piloting new approaches to health and healing, from addressing trauma among female veterans to advancing mind-body medicine in Indian Country.

“Our goal with Catalyst was to harness the power of the human spirit and innate wisdom of individuals about their health and wellbeing so that self-care is viewed as the foundation of primary care,” said Gayle Ober, president of the George Family Foundation. “We believe that communities and individuals thrive when, in addition to having excellent medical care, they’re able to tap into a range of holistic practices that promote healthy lifestyles.”

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This new partnership enables The Minneapolis Foundation to expand its knowledge base in an increasingly critical area — community health. “This is an opportunity for The Minneapolis Foundation to deepen our understanding of community health and expand the resources and expertise that we offer our donors, many of whom care deeply about improving our community’s health and wellness,” said Jean Adams, chief operating officer at The Minneapolis Foundation. Once transitioned, Catalyst will be able to bring in outside funding, something it could not effectively do as an initiative of a private family foundation. “We are excited to help Catalyst take its important work to scale,” Adams said.

In addition to community-based training opportunities and seed grants, Catalyst has held group convenings, advanced the concept of IHH through communications efforts and sought to inform policymakers and community leaders about self-care practices.

Under terms of the agreement, the George Family Foundation will continue to provide operating and some programmatic support as The Minneapolis Foundation provides strategy and development support to help Catalyst grow and expand its work.

Suzanne Koepplinger, Catalyst’s director since its inception, will join The Minneapolis Foundation’s staff on January 1, 2018. In addition, the George Family Foundation’s Ober will serve in an advisory capacity as a member of the Catalyst Advisory Cabinet.

“As we’ve delved more deeply into this work, we’ve discovered that healing from trauma from within various communities has represented our most important and compelling lesson,” said Koepplinger. “We are confident that, under The Minneapolis Foundation’s umbrella, Catalyst will continue to thrive and grow in its mission to support community-based approaches to integrative health and healing.”

About the George Family Foundation

Founded by Penny and Bill George in 1994, the George Family Foundation supports programs, organizations and initiatives that transform lives. The \$62 million private family foundation has an annual grantmaking budget of more than \$3.8 million. Areas of foundation interest include integrative health and healing, authentic leadership, spirituality and mindfulness, community, environment and youth development. For more information, visit the [George Family Foundation](#) website.

About The Minneapolis Foundation

For more than 100 years, The Minneapolis Foundation has connected people, resources, and ideas to improve lives in Minnesota and beyond. The Foundation manages more than \$750 million in assets, providing customized and tax-smart giving solutions that result in the average annual distribution of more than \$50 million in grants. The Foundation brings people together to unite behind common goals and spark positive change in our community. For more information, visit [The Minneapolis Foundation's](#) website.

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