



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Foundation kicks off 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with \$1.5 million in grants**

*Grants awarded by the Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation for Children  
will support 21 local organizations in 2018*

Minneapolis, Minn. – On the brink of its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018, the Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi (RKMC) Foundation for Children has awarded \$1,520,000 in funding to improve the lives and education of Minnesota students. The Foundation today announced grants to 21 Minnesota schools, advocacy groups, and education-focused nonprofits for work in the coming year.

“These schools and organizations are doing exceptional work to ensure that all students – not just some – get the excellent education they deserve,” said Michael V. Ciresi, Board Chair of the RKMC Foundation for Children. “We’re excited to transition into the Foundation’s 20<sup>th</sup> year by helping them take their work to the next level.”

The grants are targeted to:

- Expand **high-performing schools** and school networks
- Increase **parent demand** for schools that provide excellent educational outcomes for all students
- Create a **sense of urgency** to close the gap in outcomes between students of color and white students in Minneapolis-St. Paul

Twin Cities Academy, a public charter school on the east side of St. Paul, is one of the organizations to receive a grant. The academy, which serves about 600 students in grades 6 through 12, was recognized by the state as a Reward school for the sixth time in a row last school year. Reward schools have higher percentages of students from low-income families and demonstrate exceptional student outcomes and success in closing achievement gaps. The school will use its grant to develop an equity framework touching every facet of its work, from its curriculum to behavior policies to family engagement.

Twin Cities Academy sought the RKMC Foundation for Children’s support because they believe it’s important to continuously innovate to close gaps and equitably serve low-income students and students of color, said school executive director Betsy Lueth. They also realize that lasting change will take a sustained effort involving everyone on campus – board, faculty, parents, and students. “The system itself needs to change to make sure our school is culturally and racially relevant to all the students who walk through our doors,” Lueth said.

The complete list of grant recipients is as follows:

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Ascension Catholic School	\$100,000
Children’s Theatre Company	\$50,000
Close Gaps By 5	\$75,000
Cristo Rey Jesuit High School	\$50,000
Ed Allies	\$100,000
Friendship Academy of the Arts	\$50,000
Mastery School (Harvest Network of Schools)	\$100,000
Hiawatha Academies	\$125,000
Hope Academy	\$25,000
Joyce Preschool	\$25,000
KIPP Minnesota	\$25,000
MN Comeback / Great Minnesota Schools	\$100,000
Northside Achievement Zone	\$120,000
Prodeo Academy	\$50,000
Risen Christ Catholic School	\$50,000
Saint Mary’s Mission School	\$50,000
Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood	\$75,000
Summit Academy OIC	\$100,000
Think Small	\$75,000
Twin Cities Academy	\$50,000
Way to Grow	\$125,000

The RKMC Foundation for Children, a private foundation that partners closely with The Minneapolis Foundation, was established in 1998 with a \$30 million commitment from the law firm of Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi. That initial gift was a result of fees earned from the \$6.6 billion settlement of the Minnesota tobacco lawsuit. Since then, the RKMC Foundation has made more than \$23 million in grants, including the awards announced today. More than 80 percent of that total has gone to education-related causes, with most of the remainder dedicated to public health and social justice.

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***The Robins, Kaplan, Miller & Ciresi Foundation for Children*** 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. Learn more at <https://rkmcfoundationforchildren.org>.