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**CONTACT:**

Denise Mayotte, Executive Director  
dmayotte@sheltering-arms.org  
612-871-9210

**Sheltering Arms Foundation announces 2019-20 slate of grantees, awards \$423,000 to 37 Minnesota nonprofits serving children**

MINNEAPOLIS, September, 2019 — The Sheltering Arms Foundation today announced its 2019-20 financial support of 37 nonprofit organizations that are working hard to deliver high-quality programming to our state's most vulnerable children. Sheltering Arms will invest \$423,000 in innovative direct service programs in early childhood and out-of-school-time youth development, as well as statewide advocacy campaigns designed to improve Minnesota's policies that impact children and their families.

"This year Sheltering Arms is excited to see a growing number of Minnesota's nonprofits working to bring the critical voice of parents into advocacy and putting an emphasis on equipping parents to be at the legislature, advocating for their own families and children," said Denise Mayotte, executive director of the Sheltering Arms Foundation. "Parents have the most in-depth understanding of the needs of their families, and legislators are most interested in hearing directly from them about their children, so this is an extremely important and effective strategy."

One program doing exactly this is **People Serving People** Minnesota's largest family-focused homeless shelter, located in Minneapolis. Building on the work of its guest advisory council, parent engagement program, and voter engagement team, People Serving People is working to build power with its families to change systems and get families who have experienced homelessness access to seats at decision-making tables.

"We are working to center families' experiences, because they can identify what really works for families in their situation better than we can," said Rinal Ray, associate executive director of People Serving People. "Often policy is built from top down with legislators deciding what families need, and we see the impacts of that, with opportunity gaps remaining quite wide and homelessness rates among African American and Native American families remaining quite high. So we are working for a different approach. We are working with those directly impacted by family homelessness out—imagining a circle with our families at the center—helping our families use their strength and build power with them, and helping get their voices and stories at the table with the people who are making policy. The Sheltering Arms grant is our first opportunity to more formally dive into power-building around advocacy and early education. It launches us into a future of transformation, racial equity, and authentically conveying the stories of families experiencing homelessness."

In north Minneapolis, the **Phyllis Wheatley Community Center** (PWCC) is working to bring parent voices from two of the poorest zip codes in the state to that legislative decision-making table. After a MinneMinds listening session sought their input on early childhood policy, parents at PWCC's child development center requested more such opportunities.

(more)

“Parents always know what the issues are, what their families need, and now we are helping train them in advocacy so they know how to articulate their stories in a way to get the lawmakers to listen,” said Gertrude Matemba-Mutasa, executive director of the Phyllis Wheatley Community Center. “Parents who have participated in these opportunities have said they felt they were part of a huge deal, because their voices were going to be heard instead of being filtered by someone else. We have noticed a difference in impact when parents speak up—it’s more credible when they share their experiences and perspectives. We are so grateful to Sheltering Arms for believing in us and investing in our vision. We believe this approach is an inclusive, grassroots approach that ensures we’re addressing what really are the issues and not just what we think are the issues, because it’s coming directly from our parents and families.”

In St. Paul, the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood (fiscal agent by the **Wilder Foundation**) is an education collaborative of families, schools and the community in the Rondo, Frogtown and Summit-University neighborhoods coming together to address tough issues that influence a child’s academic outcomes, including multi-generational poverty and the education opportunity gap. Sheltering Arms is supporting SPPN’s work to build the participation of parents in advocacy through the SPPN Parent Council and the Voices and Choices coalition and bring their voices to the legislature.

“What I love about my work as a parent advocate and organizer is witnessing myself and other parents stepping into our power and demanding a seat at tables where public decision are being made about us and our children,” said Erica Valliant, SPPN Parent Council leader. “I value people’s ability to realize that they have the power and capacity to shape their own future. I value my ability to model for my children and other children in my community an understanding that we have always possessed the power to shape our reality and that the work we must do is to learn how we want to use that power. In my work, I have come to understand that change is inevitable, but justice is not. I value my work to help people understand that complacency and comfort does not equate to equity and justice.”

“I have been honored to witness how the Parent Council has created meaningful pathways for parents in their schools and neighborhoods to turn their ideas into action, discover how their actions influence change, and produce knowledge that enhances the ability of other parents to participate in shaping new realities for our children,” said mk nguyen, program associate for the Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood.

In Sheltering Arms’ early childhood funding category, 20 grantees received a total of \$230,500. In the youth development funding category, 17 programs received a total of \$192,500 in grants. This year’s funding includes \$60,000 in advocacy/public policy grants, continuing the foundation’s work to improve systems and policies that affect Minnesota’s children. Areas served by the 37 Sheltering Arms grantees include Duluth, McGregor, Minneapolis, Minnetonka, Northfield, Plymouth, Richfield, Red Wing, St. Paul, and Winona.

The 37 grantees supported by Sheltering Arms in 2019-2020 are:

- Bloom Early Learning (Plymouth)—\$5,000 grant (early childhood)
- Centro Guadalupano (south Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Children’s Theatre Company (south Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- ComMUSICation (St. Paul)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Fred Wells Tennis & Education Center (St. Paul)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Friendship Academy of the Arts (Minneapolis)—\$5,000 grant (youth development)
- Haven Housing (north Minneapolis)—\$12,500 grant (early childhood)
- Hispanic Outreach of Goodhue County (Red Wing, serves Goodhue County)—\$15,000 grant (youth development)
- Hospitality House Youth Development (Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Interfaith Action of Greater St. Paul (St. Paul)—\$15,000 grant (youth development)
- Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (based in Minneapolis, serves statewide)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy in early childhood)

- Joyce Preschool (south Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- Keystone Community Services (St. Paul)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- La Red Latina de Educacion Temprana (Richfield)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- Liberty Community Church (north Minneapolis)—\$12,500 grant (youth development)
- Lifetrack (based in St. Paul, serves Ramsey County)—\$15,000 grant (advocacy in early childhood)
- Lincoln Park Children & Families Collaborative (Duluth)—\$15,000 grant (early childhood)
- Lower Sioux Indian Community (Redwood County)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- Mid-Continent Oceanographic Institute (St. Paul)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (Northfield)—\$15,000 grant (youth development)
- Northland Foundation (based in Duluth, serves northeastern Minnesota)—\$15,000 grant (early childhood)
- Northside Achievement Zone (north Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- People Serving People (Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy in early childhood)
- Phyllis Wheatley Community Center (north Minneapolis)—\$13,000 grant (early childhood)
- Plymouth Christian Youth Center (north Minneapolis)—\$12,000 grant (youth development)
- Project FINE (based in Winona, serves Winona and surrounding area)—\$15,000 grant (youth development)
- Project for Pride in Living (based in Minneapolis, serves inner-city neighborhoods of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and first-ring suburbs)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- ServeMinnesota (based in Minneapolis, serves statewide)—\$15,000 grant (early childhood)
- Something Cool, Inc. (based in McGregor, serves McGregor and surrounding communities in northeastern Minnesota's Aiken County, including the Mille Lacs reservation)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Southside Family Nurturing Center (south Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- St. David's Center for Child & Family Development (based in Minnetonka, serves the Twin Cities metro area)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- Think Small (Based in St. Paul, serves statewide)—\$15,000 grant (advocacy in early childhood)
- Urban Strategies (based in St. Louis, MO, serving the Heritage Park affordable housing in near north Minneapolis)—\$10,000 grant (youth development)
- Washburn Center for Children (based in Minneapolis, serves Twin Cities metro area)—\$10,000 grant (early childhood)
- Wilder Foundation (based in St. Paul, serves the east metro)—\$10,000 grant (advocacy in early childhood)
- YWCA of Duluth (Duluth)—\$15,000 grant (early childhood)
- YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities (based in Minneapolis, serves Twin Cities metro area)—\$13,000 grant (youth development)

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For information about each grantee and what they are using the Sheltering Arms' grant funds to do this year, a fact sheet of the annotated list of 2019-2020 grantees is available.

#### **About the Sheltering Arms Foundation**

The mission of the Sheltering Arms Foundation is to invest in the lives of children and help them reach their full potential. Based in Minneapolis, the foundation funds nonprofit organizations and supports policies that benefit Minnesota children and their families who have the least access to resources. Since its inception as a grantmaking foundation in 1983, the foundation has provided more than 1,200 grants totaling over \$16 million. The next deadline for grant applications is in January 2020, with grant applications from Episcopal congregations due on April 1, 2020. For information about submitting a grant request, volunteering, or donating to the foundation, visit <https://sheltering-arms.org/> or call 612-871-9210 (toll-free: 866-871-9210).