



1001 Highway 7, Suite 243
Hopkins, MN 55305
952-988-4097
www.HopkinsEducationFoundation.org

August 24, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, please contact Jennifer St. Clair, Executive Director at 952-988-4097

Foundation's Mission Continues During Pandemic

Hopkins Education Foundation (HEF) reached \$3 Million in grants to Hopkins Public Schools this spring with its \$50,000 COVID Relief donation to the school district. HEF's mission "to enrich the lives of all Hopkins Public School students" continues unabated; in direct response to the pandemic, HEF is extending grant-implementation deadlines as needed and temporarily expanding grant guidelines. The project-based learning (PBL) HEF recently funded will commence when students fully return safely to their classrooms. Many of HEF's investments in recent years have been in student wellness and social emotional learning (SEL) strategies, including the most recent all-district initiatives: ***Pathways to a Healthy Future*** and ***Student Wellness=Student Success***. SEL is more important than ever during this challenging time and will continue to be implemented as much as possible, and in some cases, virtually. The following are just a few examples of HEF's donors' dollars hard at work.

HEF's **Awesome Fund** for student clubs has awarded \$1,000 to *Bigs Tutoring*, an inspiring group of Hopkins High School upperclassmen and alumni providing tutoring via video. This grant is the equivalent of 67 hours of tutoring, which will allow *Bigs* to offer free and reduced-price services to any student who needs it while providing a stipend to tutors. When school went to distance-learning last spring, *Bigs* was created by students to provide resources for their younger counterparts struggling with the transition and/or with the curriculum: from coloring the letter of the week with kindergarteners to discussing college options and future plans with current high schoolers. This summer, many of the *Bigs* found their planned internships and jobs cancelled, and instead offered fun learning opportunities such as Mad Science Club, to support summer learning. *Bigs* are ready to continue during the school year.

Dani is the new four-legged faculty member at Hopkins West Junior High. A HEF grant of \$4,000 funded Dani's two years of service dog training through PawPADS, a non-profit in Lakeville, MN, as well as the handler training of two WJH staff members. Dani will support student learning activities, sensory processing, and social and emotional wellness, and will become a familiar friendly face to students.

Hopkins teachers and administrators have been working very hard to create a whole new learning environment for student success. To support their ongoing efforts, HEF is sponsoring presentations at the August 24th 'back-to-school' staff meeting. Dr. Raj Sethuraju, PhD., Professor at Metropolitan State,

speaks to creating a restorative culture in which all can thrive. Dr. Ann Gearity, PhD, LICSW, Faculty University of Minnesota, addresses both student and staff needs through *Supporting Mental Wellness During a Dual Pandemic*.

HEF fundraising efforts will continue in spite of the pandemic. Although HEF has cancelled its annual September Rock-n-Royal Block Party in the interest of community safety, the Foundation is busy planning virtual events throughout the coming year, including an innovative Royal Bash in February. To learn more about the Foundation, visit HopkinsEducationFoundation.org

Photos included

###

About the Hopkins Education Foundation

Hopkins Education Foundation (HEF) has awarded more than \$2.7 Million, through 435+ grants, to enhance education in the Hopkins Public Schools. The non-profit Foundation, independent from Hopkins Public Schools, is dedicated to providing resources to engage, innovate and energize students, staff and curriculum. It is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

The Foundation is supported entirely through community contributions, including:

- parents and other community members
- corporate contributions
- fundraising events and projects
- gifts of stock, cash and securities
- a beneficiary of wills and estates

Each year, grant applications from teachers, staff - and even student clubs - are rigorously reviewed by HEF's Board. Funds are allocated to individual schools, to pilot projects, and to broad initiatives incorporated across all schools.

About Hopkins Public Schools

Hopkins Public Schools is an award-winning school district with a K-12 population of about 6,800 students, serving the city of Hopkins, most of Minnetonka, about half of Golden Valley, and portions of Eden Prairie, Edina, Plymouth, and St. Louis Park. It has six elementary schools, one magnet Chinese immersion school (XinXing Academy), two junior highs and one high school.