Nonprofit organizations that help abused children, survivors of domestic violence and families seeking to better their lives were honored September 12 with the Touchstone Award by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.

The award recognizes outstanding and thought-leading work reflecting the Community Foundation’s ideals of generosity, inclusiveness and civic engagement. All of the winners and nominees received grants of varying size from the Community Foundation during 2014 to execute projects that helped improve individuals’ lives and the overall region.

A capacity crowd of more than 360 guests, including donors, nonprofit providers and local officials, attended the ceremony at the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. This was the 22nd annual presentation of the Touchstone Award, one of the longest-running nonprofit honors in the region.

“The Touchstone Award recognizes the best of the best of nonprofit work in our region,” said Community Foundation President Holly C. Sampson. “These are projects that people in communities know and believe in their hearts will make a difference. They just need the resources to make it happen. With the help of our donors, we are able to work with them to bring out

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Winners of the 2016 Touchstone Award were recognized by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. The winners joined foundation President Holly C. Sampson in displaying their awards. Pictured are, from left: Lee Stuart, Executive Director of CHUM; Tara Golden, Executive Director of North Shore Horizons; Sampson; and Beth Olson, Executive Director of First Witness Child Advocacy Center.

““The Touchstone Award recognizes the best of the best of nonprofit work in our region.”

Holly C. Sampson,
Community Foundation President
President’s Letter

Seeing our world through the ‘Opportunity Gap lens’

We’re seeing the world through a new lens at the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation.

Two years ago, we decided to focus on narrowing the Opportunity Gap—the difference between opportunities available to rich and poor children and families in the Twin Ports.

Our work was motivated by Dr. Robert D. Putnam of Harvard University, the author of the best-selling book, “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis.” We’ve been longtime supporters of Dr. Putnam, notably his concept of bridging social capital, or encouraging people to interact across lines of difference.

Connecting people across all spectrums and helping them help elevate their lives together is what the Community Foundation is about. So when Dr. Putnam presented new research showing a widening Opportunity Gap in communities and our nation, we got involved.

We brought him to town to speak. We studied the issue locally. We provided $1.5 million in grants to help narrow the gap here. All of that has been amazing—and amazingly hard work. But is it enough?

The answer, I submit, is no. And that’s where the new outlook at the Community Foundation comes in. We have raised awareness and started work here to narrow the gap. But we also have concluded that we must work to narrow the gap at all levels and through all programs at the Community Foundation.

For example, we’re known for the many generous college scholarships offered annually to deserving students in our region. But many of those programs are based on academic achievement. While that is admirable, we also must recognize that we are largely helping only one line of the famous “scissors graphs” that Dr. Putnam uses to illustrate the Opportunity Gap. Those graphs have a rising line representing improving opportunities for upper-class children alongside a falling line representing sinking outcomes for many children in poverty.

That’s why it’s important to develop new tools, such as the Sandbulte Family Higher Education Endowment, designed specifically to spur local colleges and universities to develop new approaches for narrowing the Opportunity Gap. You can read more about this innovative new fund on Page 3.

It’s also why we need to begin conversations with all of our grant recipients and partners to discuss how more of our work can narrow the gap. In addition, we plan to review our grant-making and scholarships with what we are increasingly describing as our “Opportunity Gap lens.”

It’s a recognition that if this work truly is a priority, it must show up in more of what we do. That’s how we will truly make a difference. So that’s how we’re seeing the world—and our work—at the Community Foundation.

—Holly C. Sampson

About Us

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation encourages private giving for the public good. We are a permanent community endowment, built with gifts from thousands of individuals and organizations.

Guided by a volunteer Board of Trustees, we make grants to nonprofit organizations and to individuals for scholarships and provide leadership on important community initiatives in Northeastern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin.

Since our inception in 1983, we have distributed more than $49 million, and we currently hold more than 370 different funds, each with its own charitable purpose.

Regional affiliates of the Community Foundation are: the Two Harbors Area Fund (created in 1998), the Apostle Islands Area Community Fund (created in 2000), the Cook County Community Fund (created in 2003), the Hermantown Community Fund (created in 2005), the Evleth Area Community Foundation (created in 2008) and the Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund (created in 2011).

Contact Us

Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
Zeitgeist Center for Arts and Community
222 E. Superior St., Suite 302
Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-726-0232
info@dsacommunityfoundation.com
Twin Ports couple joins the cause

Sandbultes establish endowment fund aimed to address Opportunity Gap

Like most Twin Ports residents, Arend “Sandy” and Verna Sandbulte hadn’t heard much about the Opportunity Gap before 2015.

But since the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation made the work of narrowing the gap between well-off and low-income children a priority, the Sandbultes have taken up the charge.

The Duluth couple has created the Sandbulte Family Higher Education Endowment Fund to perpetually offer incentives to the University of Minnesota Duluth, the College of St. Scholastica and Lake Superior College to develop programs narrowing the Opportunity Gap.

“What exactly that will be, we don’t know,” said Sandy Sandbulte, the retired CEO and Chairman of ALLETE Inc., the parent company of Minnesota Power. “We want to challenge the schools to develop ideas and programs.”

Added Verna Sandbulte: “We want higher education to be a part of addressing this issue.”

This spring, the donor-advised fund will ask representatives from the three schools for proposals.

“The funds, in and of themselves, will only go so far,” Sandy Sandbulte said. “We want the schools to come up with something long-term and meaningful to address the gap. In our minds, that will be the perfect fit.”

Foundation offers many avenues for interested donors

As 2016 draws to a close and 2017 begins, we can help donors achieve impact and financial goals for their charitable giving.

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation works with donors to discover their charitable interests in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. We then help donors make those plans reality through a current gift, a bequest or another method. Donors’ charitable intentions are our prime concern. Giving options include cash, real estate, IRA distributions and stock of publicly traded or closely held companies.

We ensure our donors’ legacies. One of our specialties is providing permanent charitable capital for our region through endowments, the principal of which will never be spent. This ensures that the Community Foundation’s charitable resources will be available in perpetuity and that our donor’s legacies will be honored.

Our job is to work with our community partners to determine the needs and opportunities for giving in our region. We know where charitable dollars will have the greatest impact and how to put them to work effectively.

For more information about giving options and strategies, please contact Mark Danielson, Development Officer, 218-726-0232 or mdanielson@dsacommunityfoundation.com.
Awards, from page 1

the best of project work that exemplifies generosity, inclusiveness and civic engagement.”

Winners and runners-up in the three Touchstone categories were:

• **Generosity:** Churches United in Ministry won the Touchstone Award for creating fun, educational and family-centered programming and activities for the 60 children living in Duluth’s Steve O’Neil apartments. The innovative apartments help lift families out of poverty and, in some cases, have provided the first permanent housing they have known.

• The runner-up was the Minnesota Land Trust for supporting two new outdoor recreation user groups, for paddlers and climbers, while working with the City of Duluth to create more opportunities for outdoor recreation.

• **Civic Engagement:** The Touchstone Award winner was North Shore Horizons of Two Harbors for expanding support services provided to survivors of domestic and sexual violence, including with new housing opportunities connected to counseling and other assistance.

• Two runners up were honored for Civic Engagement work. Local Initiatives Support Corporation used a grant to increase its staff in ways that allowed it to expand its community-building work in Duluth neighborhoods. Also, Cable Community Garden expanded the garden where it grows free food for all community members and added educational programs.

• **Inclusiveness:** First Witness Child Advocacy Center won the Touchstone Award. The nonprofit used a grant to further develop its advocacy training model to support abused children and their families. It then shared that model through training with other communities nationwide.

• There were two runners-up for Inclusiveness. The University of Minnesota Duluth’s Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center used a grant to share more information with the public about how the center fosters connections to nature through education, research and recreation. Also, Superior Interaction, a theater group made up largely of University of Wisconsin-Superior students, created performances about controversial but real subjects that college students experience.

“The work of all our finalists has created change, strengthened communities and realized dreams throughout our region,” Sampson said. “We have been pleased to support them and are proud of their work. They are examples of what the Community Foundation is all about.”

Each Touchstone winner received an additional grant of $2,500 to help further the organization’s work. Winners and finalists were chosen from among more than 160 grants provided to nonprofit organizations from the Community Foundation in 2014.

Lee Stuart, Executive Director of CHUM, center, shares an embrace with Duluth Mayor Emily Larson after the organization won the Touchstone Award for Generosity for its work at the Steve O’Neil Apartments in Duluth. Tom Wheeler, right, of the Touchstone Award Selection Committee, presented the award.
Grants help fund disaster relief

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation has made initial grants for disaster relief in Ashland and Bayfield Counties, hit by flooding and high winds during storms in July.

The Salvation Army received $5,000 to repair and rebuild homes damaged by the July 11 and 21 storms. Assistance included vouchers for: mold-abatement kits, building materials, appliances and furnaces.

The American Red Cross received a $5,000 grant to help cover costs including: opening shelters and feeding sites, mental health services and emergency communications.

“We are pleased to provide this support to two agencies that stepped up for our region as soon as we needed a helping hand,” said Dr. Eric Grutzner, Chair of the Apostle Islands Area Community Fund, one of two Community Foundation affiliates that directed aid.

Karen Crowell, Chair of the partnering Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund, said: “We want to support their work and their ongoing efforts in our counties.”

Ashland and Bayfield Counties were hit hard by flooding and high winds during storms on July 11 and 21. The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation has raised more than $76,000 for disaster relief through its two area affiliate funds.

In all, the 2016 National Disaster Immediate Response Fund has raised more than $76,000.

“It’s a testament to how our community steps up when help is needed,” said Meghan Dennison, Affiliate Officer for the Community Foundation based in Bayfield.

Don’t miss these grant application deadlines

Deadlines are approaching for applications seeking grants from funds of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. Go to dsa-communityfoundation.com/grants to learn more about or to apply.

February 1 application deadline, with funds available in April:
- Anishinabe Fund
- Central Mesabi Human Services Fund
- Duluth Legacy Endowment Fund
- Global Awareness Fund
- Silver Bay Charitable Fund
- Jane S. Smith Memorial Fund
- Wirtanen Family Fund

March 1 application deadline, with funds available in May:
- Animal Assisted Therapy Fund
- Apostle Islands Area Community Fund
- Apostle Islands Area Human Rights Fund
- Biodiversity Fund
- Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund
- Cook County Community Fund
- Duluth Public Schools Endowment Fund
- Grutzner Madeline Island Fund
- Hermantown Community Fund
- LaBounty Family Fund
- Michael Madeline Island Fund
- Red Cliff/Miskwaabikaang Fund
- Alexandra Smith Fund in Support of Native American Treaty Rights
- Two Harbors Area Fund
- West Wind Fund
Say hello to...

The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation recently welcomed two new employees, Elizabeth Henderson and Michelle Morris. Here is information about them. The next time you are in the Community Foundation’s offices, please say hello to them!

**Name:** Elizabeth Henderson  
**Title:** Executive Assistant  
**About me:** I have a background in insurance benefits consulting, administration and sales. I graduated from the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota, and later received a Master’s Degree in Business Administration while living in different places around the world with my husband, who served as an active-duty aviation officer in the U.S. Army. I enjoy running, hiking and volunteering for various community organizations.  
**What I love about my work:** Making a positive impact and helping improve the lives of others in the community where I was born and raised.

**Name:** Michelle Morris  
**Title:** Director of Community Philanthropy  
**About me:** My areas of professional focus have been social determinants of health, health equity and social justice. I have a Bachelor’s Degree from the University of Minnesota’s Twin Cities campus. My individualized major involved studies in race, class and gender, as well as in public health and life sciences. I also earned my Master of Public Health Degree from Columbia University in New York. Outside of work, I love sailing, snowboarding and reading.  
**What I love about my work:** Having the opportunity to collaborate with people to positively impact our communities.

Our next editions  
Look for an electronic edition of The Touchstone this winter and the next print edition in the spring.