More than 300 donors, supporters, community leaders, nonprofit partners and others attended the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation’s 2017 Annual Celebration. A highlight was a panel discussion among individuals making progress in their lives and helping others overcome the “Opportunity Gap.”

Foundation’s work is making a difference

All around the Twin Ports you can see Opportunity Rising.

That was the theme of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation’s Annual Celebration. More than 300 donors, community leaders, nonprofit partners and others celebrated good work by the foundation, its donors and its supporters, with a focus on narrowing the Opportunity Gap, the vast differences in opportunities available to children and families living in poverty.

The highlight was a discussion among individuals making progress in their lives and helping others overcome the “Opportunity Gap.”

Please see Rising, Page 4
President’s Letter

Three paths to improving lives in the Northland and beyond

Big picture. Community focus. That’s a great way to look at three major projects underway at the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. All three tackle issues of national and even global significance. But all three have started by improving lives of people who call the Northland home.

Start with our Opportunity Gap Initiative to reduce differences in opportunities available to children because of economic status. We have made 10 initial grants for change-making work on issues including education, transportation, job skills and mentoring.

Already, we are seeing a difference in those touched by these grants. We are beginning to understand how we can see Opportunity Rising for more families and children, here and elsewhere. We also know that this will remain a long-term commitment.

Second, our Philanthropic Preparedness, Resiliency and Emergency Partnership, or PPREP, is increasing our ability to respond to natural and other disasters by preparing now. We have taken huge steps by knitting together disaster-response agencies and resources, including philanthropy. We have learned from five years of recovery that these partnerships make a difference.

Finally, take a look at how we’re talking and interacting as a nation. It’s clear we need a greater level of civility. For 14 years, we have been making progress locally and beyond with Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project. Next year will mark the 15th anniversary of this program. We hope you will join us in properly celebrating the incredible civic engagement that has come from Speak Your Peace.

These three programs have tremendous power to improve lives. We have started by doing exactly that close to home. Thank you for your support. It makes possible work that is both big-picture and community-focused.

—Holly C. Sampson

Look for The Touchstone in print and online

Watch for two more editions of The Touchstone newsletter in coming months.

In the fall, we will publish our electronic edition, which will be sent to recipients by email and also available on our website, dsacommunityfoundation.com.

Then before the year is up, we will publish another print edition. Hard copies will be mailed to recipients. The print edition also is available on our website.

Do you have thoughts about The Touchstone, including suggestions for format or story ideas? We’d love to hear from you. Please email your comments to info@dsacommunityfoundation.com or call 218-726-0232.

Your input about our coverage in The Touchstone is important and greatly appreciated.

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 $50 million, and we currently hold more than 390 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 Eveleth Area Community Foundation (created in 2008) and the Chequamegon Bay Area Community Fund (created in 2011).

Contact Us

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Civility important now more than ever

“How much do people want to encourage responsible communication in all settings?”

A lot, if strong attendance at two training sessions on Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project offers any proof. Dozens of local residents turned out to the “Soup & Civility” events at Duluth’s Denfeld High School and Lincoln Park Middle School. The City of Duluth and the Duluth News Tribune co-sponsored the events, providing food for participants. The Duluth Public Schools provided the space free of charge.

Participants watched videos about the costs of incivility and the benefits of modeling civil behavior, especially in difficult times. They then broke into smaller groups and tested techniques that a group of volunteer instructors crafted based on Speak Your Peace, developed by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation in 2003.

This fall, the Speak Your Peace team is working with Duluth police to develop a program for officers. They also have other “Soup & Civility” events planned and will appear at all candidate debates leading up to the November local elections.

For more information or to participate, please call 218-726-0232 or email info@dsacommunityfoundation.com.

Duluth Mayor Emily Larson, third from left, was among dozens of local residents who turned out for “Soup & Civility” workshops on Speak Your Peace: The Civility Project earlier this year. Anita Stech, far right, was one of the volunteer community organizers.

Foundation can help with year-end giving options

It’s hard to think of 2017 already drawing to a close. But the end of the calendar year will be upon us sooner than we expect. That always is an appropriate time for the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation to help donors achieve impact and financial goals for their charitable giving.

We work with donors to discover their charitable interests in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. We then help donors make their plans reality through a current gift, will planning or another method. Donors’ charitable intentions are our prime concern. Giving options are many and flexible, including cash, real estate, IRA distributions and stock.

We specialize in providing permanent charitable capital for our region through endowments. This ensures that charitable resources will be available in perpetuity. It also means that our donors’ legacies will always be honored.

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

Experience Opportunity Rising. Part of the talk focused on reporting progress—for individuals and the broader community—through the $1.5 million in grant work by nine nonprofits and one government agency assisting families and children. The Community Foundation awarded those grants nearly a year ago.

Also at the event, attendees were asked to post on a wall sticky notes describing what they have done in the past year to help narrow the Opportunity Gap. Attendees at last year’s event were asked to pledge their engagement. This year’s exercise demonstrated efforts already taking place as well as new initiatives that attendees committed to undertaking in the coming year.

But the work of Opportunity Rising is just beginning. Efforts recently underway or that will start in coming months include:

• Development and launch of a public outreach and awareness campaign explaining the Opportunity Gap as well as how local residents can get involved to ensure Opportunity Rising. The Community Foundation also plans to report on progress being made by the 10 initial grant recipients.

• Funding for new grant initiatives, directly linked to and informed by the past two years of Opportunity Gap work. One example is a recent grant to Life House, a nonprofit in downtown Duluth assisting homeless youths. Funds will go to help formerly homeless young people develop business skills as well as start a new candle-making business as part of the project called “Legitimate Hustle.”

• Sharing successes of local Opportunity Rising work as well as learning through others as part of the Community Foundation Opportunity Network (CFON). This is a national leadership and action network committed to narrowing the Opportunity Gap. The Community Foundation is honored to be part of this group, which was motivated by the work of Harvard University’s Dr. Robert Putnam, author of “Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis.”

The Community Foundation took up the Opportunity Gap charge after its 2015 Annual Celebration, where Dr. Putnam was the keynote speaker. He urged the Twin Ports to get involved and take a leadership role on the issue, noting that solutions to social problems have often come from mid-sized communities in the Upper Midwest.

“One of the success factors Dr. Putnam found in his research was how the addition of just one more caring individual in the life of a young person can dramatically change for the better that young person’s life,” Community Foundation President Holly C. Sampson told attendees at the Annual Celebration. “We all can make amazing differences in the lives of others when we step forward to create opportunities. That is how, as a community, we will truly see Opportunity Rising.”

As part of the “Opportunity Rising” discussion, attendees wrote commitments for actions they would take in the next year to help narrow the “Opportunity Gap.”

“Opportunity Rising” panelists were, from left: Vickie Meyers, who participates in a program providing transportation assistance; Michael Kelly, who received scholarships to St. John’s University; Amanda Imes, a Mentor Duluth volunteer; and moderator David Kropid, a Community Foundation Board of Trustees member.
Deadlines are approaching for applications seeking grants from funds of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation. Preliminary letters of intent to apply are also required and typically are due two weeks before the grant deadline. Go to dsacommunityfoundation.com/grants to learn more, to submit a letter of intent or to apply for a grant.

October 1 application deadline, with funds available in January:
- Business Leaders Fund
- Community Opportunity Fund
- Community Parks and Recreation Program Fund
- Douglas County Disaster & Welfare Fund
- Fair Chance Fund
- C.E. Fuller, Jr. and M.K. Fuller Fund
- Fund for the Environment
- Hermantown Community Fund
- Levin-Goldfine Twin Ports Jewish Community Fund
- Morgan Fund
- Second Chance Fund
- Superior Douglas County Arts Fund
- Dale Heimbach Wheeler Fund
- Young Leaders Fund

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
- Lupa Animal Wellness Fund
- Wirtanen Family Fund

Don’t miss these grant application deadlines
The Touchstone

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Find the Duluth Superior Area
Community Foundation on
Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

Say hello to...

One new employee and two new members of the
Board of Trustees have joined the Duluth Superior
Area Community Foundation.

Jane Aleckson has been named financial assistant. She works with
Financial Officer John Foschi
to handle all financial matters,
from accounting to paying bills
to recording charitable donations.
Aleckson has worked as a contract bookkeeper for 12 years. She also
is a professional musician when
she is not keeping finances in tune.

Suzanne Blank and Teresa O’Toole were named to
the Board of Trustees. Blank is an attorney with the

Till, Salzer & Blank Law Firm in Superior. O’Toole is
chief legal officer of Essentia Health in Duluth. They
replace Marlene David and former Board President
Claudia Scott Welty, whose terms expired and who
were recognized at the May Annual Celebration.