(GRAND MARAIS, MN – July 13, 2020) – The Cook County Community Foundation (CCCF) announced its 2020 grant recipients today with more than $20,000 in funds being distributed to Cook County non-profit organizations for various community service initiatives. Grants are awarded through a competitive grant application process and recipients were determined as most impactful in the Cook County community by the Advisory Board of the Directors of CCCF.

The 2020 grants awarded by the Cook County Community Foundation include:

**The Cook County Council on Aging** plans to improve their Healthy Nutrition Program that provides nutritious meals to those in need and provides daily checks on our community’s most vulnerable, home-bound residents. The granted funds of $3,000 will be used to replace old, worn-out equipment and purchase local, nutritious food.

**The Grand Marais Playhouse** will use their $4,000 grant to start an afterschool theater program for Grand Marais area youth. The program, which will take place at the Arrowhead Center for the Arts, will engage youth in performance and technical theater training through collaborative projects and ensemble learning. These training techniques create a positive creative environment and help address bullying issues.

**The Gunflint Trail Historical Society** will receive a $2,000 grant to be used to develop activities and programming based upon Anishinaabe (Lake Superior Chippewa, Ojibwe) history and culture in partnership with the 1854 Treaty Authority. The programs, which will take place at the Chik-Wauk Museum and Nature Center, will incorporate Anishinaabe culture and history into the “stories” told at Chik-Wauk. They will include presentations, discussions, and hands-on activities for youth and adults.

The $4500 grant to **Cook County ISD166** will allow students who would otherwise not be able to attend to participate in an Advanced Connection to the Arts program. The program includes a trip to the culturally rich city of Chicago. The trip will focus on musical and visual arts and will include attendance at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, a Broadway Musical and/or the Blue Man Group. Visual arts will include trips to Millennium Park and the Art Institute of Chicago.
The North Shore Collaborative will receive $751 to help fund Learning Opportunities Through Stories (LOTS), a summer literacy program that focuses on families with children from birth to age 5. The program is led by local early childhood teachers to provide parents with the essential knowledge and skills to promote early reading. The program has 6 weekly family sessions with activities that focus on a featured book that the children get to keep after the sessions have concluded.

The Schroeder Area Historical Society received a $4,000 grant to be used to expand their program services. Activities will include developing enhanced collaborative online learning, obtaining an outdoor information kiosk and obtaining additional indoor brochure racks. These activities will help promote local businesses and recreational activities, reflect community branding and allow visitors access to on-line and kiosk information 365 days a year; 24 hours per day.

The Duluth Area YMCA will receive a $4,000 grant to be used to increase STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) activities in afterschool, day camp and early learning activities. Training will be provided for staff to develop age-appropriate activities. STEAM activities encourage innovation, problem solving and critical thinking skills with early exposure helping to inspire youth to pursue career paths in these important fields.

In addition to the CCCF grants, The Frank G. DiMaio Fund also awarded a $2,579 grant to The Violence Prevention Center to present LUNAFEST 2020: Films By and About Women. This event creates a safe space for all women to share their stories and encourages community dialogue around injustices women face. It also highlights and celebrates women’s resilience and strengths. When individuals become aware of these injustices in our community, there is a greater possibility of system change.

“We’re pleased to be able to provide financial support to all of these deserving programs which will enrich our community and region,” said Leah Ekstrom, Chair of the Cook County Community Fund Advisory Board, “We thank these organizations and all that submitted grant requests for their dedication to improving Cook County.”

The Cook County Community Fund, created in 2003, is a regional affiliate of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, which makes grants to nonprofits and to individuals for scholarships and also provides leadership on important initiatives in northeast Minnesota and northwest Wisconsin. Since its start in 1983, the Community Foundation has distributed more than $53 million and holds more than 400 funds. Learn more at dsacommunityfoundation.com.

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