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Communities Foundation of Texas Awards More Than \$1.3 Million in Grants to Improve Middle School Education in North Texas

CFT Expands its Innovative Program for 'At-Risk' Students and Teacher Training

DALLAS – February 17, 2014 -- Communities Foundation of Texas (CFT) made more than \$1.3 million in grants in 2013 to improve education and increase the pool of quality teachers and staff working with at-risk middle school students across North Texas.

"At-risk" students are those who are far more likely to experience academic difficulties, leave home, commit crimes or abuse alcohol or other drugs. CFT's innovative At-Risk Middle School Youth program has awarded eight grants this year to impact long-term student outcomes.

"More than 75,000 North Texas students, or 48 percent of the middle school population, are considered at-risk, and it's essential we find new ways to help them succeed so they can graduate high school college- and career-ready," said Brent Christopher, President and CEO of CFT.

Education is a top priority for CFT, which devotes more than one-third of its annual grants to improving education, from the W.W. Caruth Jr. Foundation at CFT to community impact programs such as the At Risk Middle School Youth grants. Since 2012, CFT has made more than \$3 million in grants through its At Risk program.

This year's At-Risk Middle School Youth grantees are:

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS CENTER FOR BRAINHEALTH (CBH) – \$250,000 to support the creation of a SMART Community at Thomas A. Edison Middle Learning Center in West Dallas. The SMART (Strategic Memory Advanced Reasoning Training) Community will serve as a model for improving teacher practices and enhancing student achievement.

UPLIFT EDUCATION – \$250,000 to create a High School Readiness Program for Uplift's middle school students, including targeted professional development for teachers. The program will help students move from basic skills to more in-depth content and critical thinking.

BIG THOUGHT -- \$225,000 to continue the Teaching Artistry Fellowship professional development course for Big Thought's Thriving Minds after school and summer instructors to improve how lessons are

presented, applied and evaluated across 38 DISD campuses. The fellowship is designed to increase student engagement, which leads to improved academic success.

TEACHING TRUST – \$190,000 to fund the Executive Education Institute for Teams program for DISD middle school principals and their leadership teams at Long, Stockard, Greiner, Walker and Browne middle schools. The program helps principals and their teams improve the culture of learning, teacher effectiveness and student achievement.

PLANO ISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION -- \$136,490 for intensive professional development for sixth grade teachers in Plano's high-need Frankford, Otto and Wilson Middle Schools. Teachers are trained in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) program.

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION – \$126,142 to enhance programs for up to 50 DISD middle school teachers, with a specific focus on math and science teachers. NAPE's curriculum is based on the highly successful gender equity STEM program developed by the Women of Texas Instruments.

KIPP DFW and **BIG THOUGHT** – \$89,928 to develop a Partnership for Integrated Learning, which supports in-school arts integration and after-school creative learning enrichment not currently offered at KIPP Truth Academy. Big Thought will guide teaching artists and community instructors to create customized curricula in partnership with teachers at KIPP.

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS and **NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR PARTNERSHIPS IN EQUITY EDUCATION FOUNDATION** -- \$74,812 to provide gender equity training to pre-service teachers through the UTeach Dallas program. UTeach recruits students from UTD's pool of undergraduate STEM majors to consider a career teaching in middle and high school math and science classrooms.

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About Communities Foundation of Texas

As the largest community foundation in Texas and one of the largest in the nation, Communities Foundation of Texas works with families, companies and nonprofits to strengthen our community through a variety of charitable funds and strategic grantmaking initiatives. CFT is committed to serving and understanding donor needs, expertly handling complex gifts, wisely managing charitable funds, and leveraging its community knowledge to increase charitable impact. The foundation professionally manages more than 900 charitable funds and has awarded more than \$1.3 billion in grants since its founding in 1953. www.cftexas.org