



150 Northeastern Minnesotans to Attend Early Childhood Summit Focused on the Economics of Early Care and Education

(May 5, 2009)

On **Wednesday, May 6**, the Northland Foundation will host the fourth annual **Regional Early Childhood Summit** at the DECC's Lake Superior Ballroom in Duluth, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. A group of 150 teachers, administrators, school superintendents, early childhood specialists and others from northeastern Minnesota school districts will attend. This year's theme is "Adding 'E' to the Equation: The Economics of Early Care and Education". The agenda is as follows.

- 10:00 a.m.** **WELCOME** – Tom Renier, President, Northland Foundation and Mary Kozak, Program Officer, Blandin Foundation
- 10:15 p.m.** • **The Economic Case for Investing in Young Children** – Rob Grunewald, Associate Economist, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
- **Ready 4 K Policy Update** – Todd Otis, President, Ready 4 K
- **Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students: A research-based proposal**
Angie Eilers, Ph.D., Research and Policy Director, Growth & Justice
- 12:00 p.m.** **LUNCH**
- 12:30 p.m.** • **Program Showcase: Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Care Outreach** – Molly Minkkinen, Ph.D., Julie Bellehumeur, Mary Lindgren
- **Superintendents' Panel Discussion** – Dave Bottem (Barnum), Aaron Fischer (Esko), Phil Johnson (Virginia) and Phil Minkkinen (Lake Superior); moderated by Lynn Haglin, Northland Foundation Vice President/KIDS PLUS Director
- **Kitchen Table Talk**
- **Team Work and Moving to Action**
- 2:30 p.m.** **CLOSING COMMENTS**

"Research has shown that investing in quality programming for young children yields a very high public rate of return," said Lynn Haglin, Northland Foundation Vice President and Director of the KIDS PLUS Program. "In these difficult economic times, it would be very short-sighted if we as a society failed to prioritize early childhood funding as a wise long-term investment."

The summit evolved out of the Northland Foundation's ongoing efforts around early childhood. The Foundation provides leadership for the *Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative*, a statewide campaign advocating for the well-being and school readiness of children age 5 and under, as well

as the *Minnesota Thrive Initiative*, now being piloted in six Minnesota communities, promoting the healthy social and emotional development of infants and toddlers.

More About Rob Grunewald

Rob Grunewald joined the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank in 1993. He holds a bachelors degree in economics and religion from St. Olaf College and is a graduate student in applied economics at the University of Minnesota. He coauthored "Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return" (January 2003). Grunewald conducts regional economic research, writes articles on economics and banking issues, and regularly speaks to business, community, and school groups. He serves on the board of directors for the Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency, the advisory board for First Children's Finance Growth Fund and as secretary for the Minnesota Economic Association.

More About Todd Otis

Todd Otis is the President of Ready 4 K. After graduating cum laude from Harvard College in 1967, he joined the Peace Corps and served in Senegal for two years. In 1970, he received a masters degree in journalism from Columbia University. He served in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1979 to 1990 and chaired the House Economic Development Committee from 1987 to 1990. He was the DFL Party chair from 1990 to 1993 and then engaged in public affairs consulting from 1995 to 2001, focusing on early childhood and environmental issues prior to joining Ready 4 K in 2001.

More About Angie Eilers

Angie Eilers is the Research and Policy Director for Growth & Justice, a Minneapolis-St. Paul based nonprofit economic think tank. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has served as an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign and Senior Research Associate at Stanford University. Eilers was named a 2008 Bush Foundation Leadership Fellow, studying a new policymaking framework that uses evidence based research and cost analysis in the decision-making process.

The Northland Foundation is a resource for people, businesses, and communities working toward prosperity through economic and social justice in Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis Counties. The Grant Program directs resources to nonprofits that address children and youth/strengthening families, poverty alleviation/self-reliance, and programming to help older adults remain vital and independent. The Business Finance Program provides loans to help grow a sustainable economy. The KIDS PLUS family of programs is focused on improving the well-being of children and youth. Visit www.northlandfdn.org for more information.



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