



Northland Foundation and 12 AGE to age sites launch innovative programming in northeast Minnesota with AmeriCorps Seniors Demonstration grant funding

(November 29, 2022)

Engaging older adults with children and youth is a winning combination. Twelve AGE to age communities have launched innovative programming that will tap the skills and experience of 500 older adult volunteers to support children and youth in tutoring, out-of-school time, and summer enrichment activities. Examples of activities include reading programs, homework help, art clubs, sewing projects, fitness activities, holiday gatherings, and much more.

“AGE to age sites are in a perfect position to use this new federal funding to build on their existing programs and continue to reduce social isolation across generations.” Tony Sertich, President.

The new grant is made possible by the historic **\$1 billion investment in AmeriCorps through the American Rescue Plan Act** of 2021 to provide immediate relief from the pandemic, with a specific focus on support for underserved and disproportionately impacted communities.

AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers stay healthy and active through service, improving their own lives as they improve the lives of others. A growing body of research affirms the numerous mental and physical health benefits of volunteering, including lower mortality rates, decreased rates of depression, and increased strength and energy.

“The covid 19 pandemic has caused separation from school and community and contributed to learning loss and increased the need for social-emotional supports for students. We are excited about ramping up our programming to ensure students get the help they need with the support of caring older adult volunteers so they can thrive in and out of school,” stated Cheryl Meld, AGE to age coordinator in McGregor.

Anyone in the following areas aged 55+ interested in becoming an AGE to age/AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer is encouraged to contact the local program coordinator:

Aitkin - Lara Parkin lparkin@isd1.org 218-927-7736

Barnum - Roxy Olsen-Hurst rolsen@isd91.org 218-389-0108

Bigfork - Sandra LeBlanc-Boland sleblanc-boland@bigforkvalley.org 218-743-4home356

Chisholm - Cristina Myers - myers_cristina@yahoo.com 218-966-3788

Cloquet - Erin Bates - ebates@isd94.org 218-879-1261

East Range - Rachel Doherty - rdoherty@isd2711.org - 218-229-5318

(contd.)

Ely - Julie Hignell - julie@elycommunityresource.org - 218-365-5254

McGregor - Cheryl Meld - cmeld@isd4.org - 218-768-5139

Moose Lake - Vicki Radzak - vicki.radzak@isd97.org 218-485-4435 X 1602

North Shore Area - Colleen Wallin - cwallin@gmail.com 218-226-3418

Proctor/Hermantown - Drew Jensen - djensen@isd700.org - 218-626-6029

Two Harbors - Bruce Remme - bremme@isd381.org - 834-8201 X 8227

The AGE to age program was originally created by the Northland Foundation in 2008. Since then, the program has provided new opportunities to bring generations together in participating communities across the region. AGE to age has received numerous state and national awards including being recognized as a Program of Distinction by the Washington D.C.-based Generations United.

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