



Governor Mark Dayton proclaims March 20, 2018, as Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative Day

Northland Foundation's 12 early childhood coalitions in northeastern Minnesota celebrate 15 years of Early Childhood Initiative driving change locally, regionally, and statewide

(March 19, 2018)

The Northland Foundation is pleased to announce that Governor Mark Dayton is proclaiming **Tuesday, March 20, 2018 as Minnesota Initiative Foundations' Early Childhood Day**. The Proclamation honors 15 years of collaboration between the Northland Foundation and the five other Minnesota Initiative Foundations, along with community members and funding partners, to provide young children in Greater Minnesota with the best possible start toward a life of learning, achieving, and succeeding.

The *Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative: a campaign for our youngest children* was launched in 2003 by the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations, in partnership with the McKnight Foundation. Its grassroots organizing approach was based on the Northland Foundation's KIDS PLUS Program community planning model. The six Foundations implemented this model in their respective rural regions to engage local citizens in coalitions, focusing energy and resources on the needs of young children birth to age 8. More than 90 early childhood coalitions have been established in Greater Minnesota communities, 12 of those by the Northland Foundation in northeastern Minnesota: Carlton County, Hermantown/Proctor, Aitkin County, Itasca Area, Koochiching County, Mesabi East School District, Quad Cities Area, Hibbing, Two Harbors, Silver Bay, Cook County, and Ely.

"The nurturing that babies and young children receive in the early years is critical to their healthy development, and the people in our region have put forth tremendous effort to help families and communities care for their youngest members," said Lynn Haglin, Vice President/KIDS PLUS Director at the Northland Foundation. "We are proud of what has been accomplished and the strong networks built locally, regionally, and statewide on behalf of young children."

Governor Dayton's Proclamation reads as follows:

Whereas: In 2003, six Minnesota Initiative Foundations established the Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative to promote high-quality early care and education for young children in Greater Minnesota; and

Whereas: Investment in our youngest children helps build bright futures for children and families, and creates significant economic benefits for Minnesota communities; and

Whereas: All children must enter school ready to succeed, and the best interest of our children must be a priority for leaders and policymakers; and

Whereas: The Minnesota Initiative Foundations have established a network of over 90 community coalitions engaging diverse stakeholders to champion high-quality early care and education, encourage leaders to create solutions to local needs, and present a unified voice to influence early childhood policy; and

Whereas: With the support of funding and community partners during the past 15 years, the Minnesota Initiative Foundations jointly raised \$15.8 million, and leveraged millions of dollars more for their respective rural regions to advance early care and education strategies throughout Greater Minnesota; and

Whereas: Tens of thousands of children in Minnesota have been given strong starts to learning, achieving, and succeeding due to the contributions and shared vision of the six Minnesota Initiative Foundations, funders, volunteers, community partners, and donors statewide; and

Whereas: The six Minnesota Initiative Foundations serving Greater Minnesota will continue to utilize diverse early care and education strategies to ensure that young children and their families remain at the forefront of community and legislative conversation and action.

Now, therefore, I, Mark Dayton, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim Tuesday, March 20, 2018, as: Minnesota Early Childhood Initiative Day.

###