

CONNECTING KIDS AND COMMUNITY

PROGRAMMING TO SUPPORT THE
REGION'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH



IT STARTED WITH ONE SIMPLE IDEA:

to do more to actively improve the well-being of children and youth in northeastern Minnesota. In 1990, we began researching ways to work with communities to make our rural region a more nurturing place for children to live, learn, and grow. And, the KIDS PLUS Program was created.

Through that research, the Northland Foundation developed and honed a five-step process for mobilizing communities to focus resources on children, from birth to adulthood. The KIDS PLUS organizing model has since been implemented dozens of times in the seven-county region. It also provided the framework for two statewide initiatives, which have given rise to 90 Greater Minnesota coalitions.

KIDS PLUS has been widely recognized for innovation, advocacy, and impact. More importantly, we never stop listening to community stakeholders. The KIDS PLUS family of programs continues to evolve in response to the voices and needs of the people we serve.



The KIDS PLUS program is funded entirely through the support of foundations, businesses, civic organizations, and individual donors. Their generosity empowers KIDS PLUS to make a positive impact on children, youth, families, and communities.

The KIDS PLUS Program's three overarching areas of focus are 1) giving the best possible start in life to young children birth to 3rd grade, 2) supporting the healthy development of youth ages 10 to 18, and 3) helping adults – parents, grandparents, educators, child care providers, and others who serve children and youth – to access leading-edge information and promising practices. KIDS PLUS promotes:

- Youth leadership, volunteerism, and philanthropy.
- Early childhood development and the PreK - Grade 3 continuum.
- Increasing access and availability of quality child care.
- Intergenerational programs connecting youth with adults age 50+.
- Training and information-sharing.
- Ongoing technical and funding support for local efforts.

The Northland Foundation's Grant Program complements KIDS PLUS, awarding approximately 70 percent of grant funding each year to serve children, youth, and families.

KIDS PLUS COMMUNITIES AND REGIONAL ALLIANCE

Technical assistance and support to help the communities in the region to creatively meet the needs of local children and youth and connect them with caring adults.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

An interactive, nine-month leadership and service learning program for ninth graders to develop confidence, hone teamwork and communication skills, and gain leadership experience with the support of adult mentors.

YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY

A regional grantmaking board of 8th-12th grade students and adult mentors who review grant proposals and make real funding decisions, learning firsthand about the art of giving and the value of community service.

AGE TO AGE: BRINGING GENERATIONS TOGETHER

A community-based intergenerational program that links youth and older adults to develop friendships, mutual understanding, and locally driven projects to benefit all ages.

MINNESOTA EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE

A statewide collaboration of the Northland Foundation and the five other Minnesota Initiative Foundations to improve early care and education, and strengthen the PreK-Grade 3 continuum, so that all children can have a healthy life of learning, achieving, and succeeding.

THRIVE INITIATIVE

A program focused on the healthy social and emotional development of children birth to age five to increase knowledge and access to services, and advocate for the mental health needs of young children and their families.

PARENT AWARE PATHWAYS

A regional initiative to help increase the number of licensed Parent Aware-rated child care providers serving families in the seven-county region in order to enhance quality of care and school readiness.

EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS

Administering state Early Learning Scholarships for income-qualifying families in northeastern Minnesota to help them with the cost of Parent Aware-rated child care and early education settings for their young children.

KIDS PLUS INSTITUTE

A vehicle to deliver meetings, training sessions, and public presentations focused on child and youth development topics featuring experts to share their insights with a regional audience.



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“Connecting children and youth with caring adults”



BUILDING RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Northland Foundation, along with the 26 KIDS PLUS Communities, 12 Early Childhood Coalitions, a Thrive Action Team, and 18 AGE to age sites has leveraged resources totaling over \$50 million to benefit children and youth.

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Thousands of youth each year hone their leadership experience and give back to their schools and communities, with the support of KIDS PLUS programs.

STRENGTHENING LOCAL CAPACITY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

More than 50,000 young people and 25,000 adults throughout the region have worked together to identify specific local needs and design grassroots activities and programs to meet those needs.

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO BUILD FRIENDSHIPS WITH OLDER ADULTS

Through initiatives such as AGE to age and Reading Pals, people of all ages are bridging the generations to learn from each other, build community, and drive change together.

ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS TO SUSTAIN CHILDREN AND YOUTH PROGRAMMING

The Northland Foundation and our regional networks of community coalitions have developed public and private partnerships at the local, state, and national levels to promote the long-term sustainability of this work.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Northland Foundation invests in people and communities to support a thriving Northeast Minnesota.

VALUES

Integrity. Be solid partners — ethical, reliable, and transparent. Keep the mission and values at the forefront. Walk the talk.

Respect. Listen with an open mind. Honor different cultures, traditions, and beliefs. Practice kindness.

Empowerment. Trust communities to know their own challenges and strengths; self-determination is a key to long-term success. Encourage that all voices be heard and all gifts valued. Meet people where they are.

Inclusiveness. Challenge ourselves, and others, to acknowledge privilege in all its forms. Be intentional to break down barriers and bring people together. Treat everyone equitably.



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