

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Steelcase Foundation Awards Affinity Mentoring \$75,000 Expansion Grant

April 16, 2019

GRAND RAPIDS, MI - Affinity Mentoring is pleased to announce it has received a \$75,000 multiyear (\$25,000 per year for 3 years) capacity building grant from the Steelcase Foundation. These funds will support current mentoring relationships and serve as seed money to open a 4th site at Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center (ECC) in Fall 2019.

"Schools, teachers, parents, and students from all over our community have been asking for Affinity Mentoring to be available in other schools," says Laura Ward, Executive Director of Affinity Mentoring. "We've been working hard to build the capacity needed to expand the program. We're thrilled to be able to add another site where students can receive additional academic, social emotional support and encouragement to reach their full potential."

Since 2001 the mentoring program has matched over 1,500 students. However, there is a need for more. Affinity is building a multiyear expansion plan to serve more schools, like the 7 schools on the waiting list.

Julie Ridenour, President of the Steelcase Foundation says, "The Steelcase Foundation is honored to support Affinity Mentoring in its measured response to its program expansion. The growing number of requests from families for the mentoring services of Affinity is evidence of the quality of the work done by Affinity's leadership and volunteers in three of the highest needs Kent County schools. The Steelcase Foundation is appreciative of Affinity's willingness to base its work on best available research, rigorous analysis, and growing dedication to improving student literacy achievement."

Kevin Polston, Superintendent of Godfrey-Lee Public Schools says, "Godfrey-Lee Public Schools believes in the impact mentoring can have on a child's education and their overall wellbeing. One of our core values is community, the belief that it takes a village to raise a child. We are honored to begin a partnership with Affinity Mentoring to provide mentoring services at the Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center to bring out the brilliance in each child."

In the upcoming year, Affinity will match up to 40 students at the ECC. The team is in the process of developing a robust fund development plan that includes grants, individual donations, corporate sponsorships, special events, and in-kind donations to ensure sustainability.

Become a mentor, apply at: <https://affinitymentoring.org/mentors/>.
Sponsor a Mentor Match, donate at: <https://affinitymentoring.org/sponsor/>

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About Affinity Mentoring

Affinity Mentoring is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to interrupting the cycle of poverty through mentoring relationships that help improve students' academics, social-emotional skills, and self-esteem. We partner with organizations, schools, corporations, and individuals to provide high quality, culturally responsive mentoring to school-age children. For more information, visit <https://affinitymentoring.org/>.