

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wege Foundation awards nonprofit of the year  
multi year capacity building grant

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. - June 1, 2020 - Affinity Mentoring, a nonprofit that provides one-on-one mentoring relationships for students at Burton Elementary, Burton Middle School, Southwest Community Campus and Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center, today announced that the Wege Foundation has awarded Affinity \$50,000 each year over the next three years to support its operations, program capacity, and equity initiatives.

"With the support of a mentor, students have better attendance in school, more academic growth and more positive relationships with their teacher(s) and parent(s)" said Cassandra Kiger, Affinity Mentoring executive director. "Every day, students stop in our Mentor Centers to ask whether they will be matched with a mentor this year. With Wege's support, we'll be able to tell more of them yes."

Affinity will add a new cohort of approximately 70 mentor matches this year, while also supporting the implementation of the newly devised sustainability plan and strengthening diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives training for volunteers and staff.

"The students that Affinity Mentoring works with are the diverse, creative, innovative individuals who will be the CEO's, investors, executive directors, business owners, donors, entrepreneurs, politicians and community members that we need in a matter of a decade or two; we need more organizations, like the Wege Foundation, to invest in them now." says Cassandra. "Being a part of this 'village' means helping today's youth live into the community members and diverse, equitable economy that we want to see in our community in the coming decades."

"The Wege Foundation is committed to ensuring that under-resourced students receive support to enhance their skills and achieve academic success. We are pleased to support Affinity Mentoring to help them address the academic needs of Grand Rapids students." said Mark Van Putten, Wege Foundation president and CEO.

This is the second multi year grant Affinity has received from the Wege Foundation. Affinity is developing a robust fund development plan that includes grants, individual donations, corporate sponsorships, special events, and in-kind donations to ensure a diverse and sustainable growth plan.

The Grand Rapids Chamber named Affinity Mentoring the 2019 Non-profit of the Year at its 10th annual EPIC Awards. Applications to become a mentor are open for Fall, apply at [affinitymentoring.org/mentors/](https://affinitymentoring.org/mentors/).

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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. Affinity believes that high quality, long-term mentoring relationships are a key avenue through which youth can achieve their full potential and break the cycle of poverty. Our vision is that every student has a caring adult mentor to help improve 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/>.