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Seven Organizations Win 2017 Bush Prize for Community Innovation

(SAINT PAUL, Minn., Nov. 14, 2017) — The Bush Foundation today awarded the 2017 Bush Prize for Community Innovation to seven organizations with a track record of making great ideas happen.

Now in its fifth year, the Bush Prize celebrates organizations that are extraordinary not only in what they do but in how they do it. As models of true problem solving, they work inclusively, in partnership with others, to make their communities better for all.

The Bush Prize is awarded annually in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geography.

The 2017 Bush Prize winners are:

Minnesota

Appetite for Change, *Minneapolis* (\$470,981)
Hmong American Farmers Association, *Saint Paul* (\$247,425)
Latino Economic Development Center, *Saint Paul* (\$500,000)
Northfield Healthy Community Initiative, *Northfield* (\$200,064)

North Dakota

Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for Homeless Persons, *Fargo* (\$68,762)
Vision West ND/Dunn County, *Dickinson* (\$500,000)

South Dakota

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation, *Pine Ridge* (\$500,000)

“The Bush Prize recognizes organizations that are creative, fierce and dogged in the way they work and in what they accomplish,” said Bush President Jennifer Ford Reedy. “As models for problem solving, they consistently pick a path of innovation that drives profound results for their communities.”

Bush Prize winners receive a package that includes promotional support and materials, and an unrestricted grant equal to 25 percent of the organization's prior fiscal year budget, up to \$500,000.

The Foundation received 127 applications for the 2017 Bush Prize. Three panels of community members chose the winners from their respective states.

“The 2017 winners are unstoppable forces who show up every day determined to create collective solutions for their communities,” said Mandy Ellerton, Community Innovation Director. “They push through challenges and hardship for causes they care about, stirring up and inspiring much-needed change in the places they call home.”

Learn more about the Bush Prize for Community Innovation, including winners from previous years, at BushFoundation.org/CommunityInnovation.

About the Bush Foundation

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them. The Foundation was established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, and today works in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geographic area. More information is available at BushFoundation.org.

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About the 2017 Bush Prize Winners

Appetite for Change

The community-led, community-based Appetite for Change (AFC) is on a mission to build health, wealth and social change in North Minneapolis, using food as its tool. Born out of listening sessions with African-American youth and adults, AFC seeks to develop the area— named one of the fifth largest food deserts in the country—into a thriving, culturally-based, community-driven food center.

AFC motivates individuals to build racial, economic and health equity through a pioneering combination of community cooking workshops, job training programs for youth, a cooperative commercial kitchen and business incubator for more than 50 food entrepreneurs, and a restaurant that serves healthy, global food and provides jobs and a neighborhood gathering space. AFC also aggregates affordable produce grown by youth interns and sells it to area stores and restaurants.

AFC's advocacy has led to policy changes to expand the geography for food trucks, relax market garden restrictions, expand lease terms for urban farms and enforce government benefit standards to include fresh fruits and vegetables in local stores. As a result of its ambitious vision and leadership, AFC serves as a model for communities around the country that are eager to address food justice.

Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for Homeless Persons

Fargo-Moorhead Coalition for Homeless Persons (FM Coalition) bridges myriad geo-political borders to find permanent solutions to homelessness. This remarkable coalition convenes nearly 70 partners across city, county and state lines, and multiple sectors to address systemic contributors to homelessness,

including racism, poverty and service gaps. By intentionally and continuously identifying areas of need, the group drives collaborative solutions and improvements across systems of health, human services, education, employment and business.

The FM Coalition worked with local and regional partners to implement a groundbreaking “housing first” model that places people experiencing homelessness in permanent housing before addressing other needs. With regional partners, the coalition developed a multi-state model to fix fragmented services that present barriers for clients. This powerful new model provides coordinated entry, common eligibility determination, shared assessment of individual or family needs, prioritization based on vulnerability and advanced data sharing.

The breakthrough work of the FM Coalition has inspired and informed numerous communities from Colorado to Utah to transform services for the homeless.

Hmong American Farmers Association

Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA) creates intergenerational wealth for Hmong farmers, who represent 50% of vendors in Twin Cities metropolitan area farmers markets. Founded and led by Hmong farmers, HAFA stands out as a grassroots organizer, thought leader and agitator for fairness and equity in urban agricultural practices. HAFA’s unique whole food model helps farmers access land, new markets, capital and credit, and provides vital business training and research to improve farm practices.

HAFA’s innovative food hub aggregates and sells farmers’ produce to educational institutions, health organizations and co-ops in the greater Twin Cities area. The organization also lobbied the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to create microloan programs for immigrant farmers and partners with community organizations to make sure Hmong farmers have the required business plans and financial documents necessary to access the loans.

Experimental yet solutions-oriented, HAFA understands that farming is a way of life for Hmong people, not just a way to make money. Cultural values, including working collaboratively, form the foundation for all the organization does to ensure economic justice for Hmong farmers.

Latino Economic Development Center

Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) embraces entrepreneurship as a driving force for social and economic equity for the Latinx community. A pioneer in building prosperity and capacity within ethnic communities, LEDC provides a holistic combination of support for businesses and entrepreneurs. More than 1,000 people have graduated from LEDC’s small business training classes, with a third going on to open businesses of their own.

LEDC leaders developed their unique approach with Mercado Central, a thriving marketplace of 45 businesses in south Minneapolis. Today, collaborative business ventures, frequently organized as cooperatives, distinguish LEDC’s business model. LEDC recently helped organize several rural farm incubator and farmer-owned marketing cooperatives. LEDC also co-developed a community-owned, cooperative grocery store and commercial incubator kitchen in North Minneapolis, and, with Dayton’s Bluff Community Council, established the East Side Enterprise Center, an economic development hub that serves a multicultural array of individuals and entrepreneurs.

LEDC’s successes serve as an inspiration and model for organizations throughout the region and nation that seek economic opportunity for underrepresented communities.

Northfield Healthy Community Initiative

Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) tackles the disparities youth face in the community with unapologetic ambition and thoughtful risk-taking. By design, HCI is a convener and organizer, operating under the guiding principle “never do anything alone.” HCI identifies needs and opportunities, pulls partners together to create solutions that support and empower young people, and evaluates results to ensure continual improvement.

HCI employs multiple partners to provide individual coaching, academic assistance, college access, leadership development and career exploration to low-income and Latinx youth. As a result of its efforts,

the graduation rates for Latinx youth in Northfield climbed from 27% in 2005 to 83% in 2015; graduation rates for low-income youth rose from 38% to 87%. Other HCI innovations include a program to prevent opioid addiction in young people through appropriate disposal of prescription medication, adopted by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency as a recommended community approach.

HCI listens to the community through several intentional methods, including an initiative to place high school students on city, school district and nonprofit boards, as well as a monthly meeting of members of immigrant and refugee populations to develop inclusive solutions to issues that impact their neighborhoods.

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation

Thunder Valley Community Development Corporation (TVCDC) believes that the genius from within its community can find solutions to the issues facing Pine Ridge Reservation—and that the solutions must be as big as the historical challenges they face. These guiding principles fuel a comprehensive, grassroots approach that empowers youth and families to improve the health, culture and environment for the 30,000 Oglala Lakota who make Pine Ridge their home.

TVCDC works side by side with the community to build hope and confidence through creating an ecosystem of opportunity. Over the past 10 years, the organization has engaged more than 20 local partners and hundreds of community members to develop a groundbreaking, sustainable plan that articulates systemic solutions and deliberate action on key regional issues. Through these ongoing collaborations, TVCDC created a homeownership program to stimulate asset building, economic development and community wealth. The organization is currently constructing of a 34-acre community with energy efficient and affordable homes, business incubator spaces, sustainable food production, and a healthy and supportive environment for youth, families and the elderly.

TVCDC grounds its work in Lakota values. Its bold efforts to preserve the Lakota language and instill traditional cultural and spiritual practices in youth is building the next generation of capable leaders for this visionary, cutting-edge organization.

Vision West ND/Dunn County

Vision West ND (VWND) gets things done. This unprecedented consortium is the largest collaborative in the state's history, with a membership of 19 counties, state and federal agencies, energy industry representatives, Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations, regional planning councils, universities, and the Three Affiliated Tribes of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation. Launched with the strong support of Dunn County to address growth challenges related to the region's burgeoning energy sector, VWND brings communities together to develop sustainable, community-based solutions to regional issues.

In its first three years of operations, VWND successfully completed a sustainability plan that identified child care, housing, emergency services, transportation and water as the region's key issues. The organization's creative approaches produced a significant increase in availability of child care and a measurable difference in housing options. VWND's cost-effective regional concept soon will address gaps in emergency medical services. Its plan to use a ferry to connect the Three Affiliated Tribes, who are separated on the north and south sides of Lake Sakakawea, is in the exploration and development phase.

As Western North Dakota faces a slowdown in the energy sector and a drop in agricultural prices, VWND is bringing its trademark flexibility and trusted relationships to bear on new challenges.

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