



NEWS RELEASE

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Robins Foundation Awards FIVE Innovation Grants Totaling \$1.2 Million

RICHMOND, Va., Dec. 8, 2016 – ChildSavers has been named the winner of the third annual Lora M. and E. Claiborne Robins, Sr. Community Innovation Grant by the Robins Foundation for a visionary project designed to help students and teachers in Richmond’s East End schools overcome the impact of childhood trauma.

The \$500,000 grant has been awarded to a collaboration conceived and spearheaded by ChildSavers, Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN) and Richmond Public Schools (RPS) called the *Richmond Public Schools Resiliency Partnership*.

The partnership was developed by ChildSavers after an emergency plea from RPS superintendent Dr. Dana Bedden this summer for help in dealing with the increase and impacts of violence experienced by children, and the deepening effect on children’s school achievement and performance. The project has several components, each of which will influence the lives of nearly 4,500 students in Richmond’s East End through resiliency training and other critical social skills. The grant will support the same training for all school employees and allow in-school clinicians to provide support services to students on site.

“Research tells us that the impact of childhood trauma – whether it be from a single violent episode or years of living in hardship – severely inhibits a child’s growth and wellbeing,” said Juliet Shield-Taylor, Robins Foundation Board Vice President and chair of the selection committee. “This project nurtures children’s innate resiliency, by helping them heal and teaching skills for overcoming the profound consequences of trauma. It is exactly the kind of

collaboration and innovation that has been a hallmark of the Community Innovation Grant, and we are thrilled to help make it possible.”

The partnership and its pilot program will roll out at Martin Luther King Middle School, and expand to the seven schools that feed Armstrong High school. If successful, the program will serve as a model for other schools and districts.

Based in Richmond, ChildSavers provides clinical treatment and education and training services related to the mental wellbeing of children. Greater Richmond SCAN leads Richmond’s Trauma Informed Community Network.

“Too many children in our community experience and witness continuous trauma. The long-term impact of this exposure results in adverse life outcomes -- disruptive behaviors, poor academic performance, incarceration and abuse to self and others,” said L. Robert Bolling, CEO of ChildSavers. “ChildSavers is grateful to the Robins Foundation for its belief that all children deserve the opportunities and access to thrive. We look forward to leveraging the Community Innovation Grant to launch the Richmond Public Schools Resiliency project in early 2017. We begin this project by asking the question ‘what has happened to this child?’ rather than ‘what is wrong with this child?’ This framework helps to create an environment where traumatized children flourish. We thank the Robins Foundation for being a partner on the road to resilience for our children.”

Runner-up Grantee

The Robins board also recognized the MCV Foundation with a grant of \$250,000 as the runner-up. Working with the Richmond Police Department, the *RVA Alternative Pathways Model* proposed a collective impact, multi-agency and organization partnership to reach at-risk youth before they enter the juvenile justice system or need MCV’s trauma health care. The *RVA Alternative Pathways Model* is a coalition of service providers who will develop, monitor and measure an extensive referral system to prevent youth violence.

This is the third year for the Community Innovation Grant, which was created to inspire innovative solutions and catalytic change to community challenges and issues. The Foundation

has received more than 100 applications from nonprofit organizations throughout Greater Richmond. In total five organizations were awarded innovation funding yesterday, catalyzing what the Robins Foundation hopes to be a wave of transformative outcomes for children and families in the coming years. United Methodist Family Services, 50CAN and Virginia Local Initiative Support Corporation each received \$160,000. “The quality of the Top 5 proposals required our response,” said Shield-Taylor. “The Foundation could not deny the impact each of the initiatives would have on the future of the Richmond community. With the efforts proposed by each, the children win and the transformation begins.”

For more information about the Robins Foundation, including other grant categories and deadlines, please visit the foundation’s website at www.RobinsFDN.org or the foundation’s Facebook page.

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