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St. Mary’s Center Awarded Cummings Grant
Dorchester, MA nonprofit receives Cummings Foundation Grant

Dorchester, MA, August 27, 2020 – St. Mary’s Center for Women and Children (St. Mary’s Center) is one of 130 local nonprofits to receive grants of $100,000 to $500,000 each through Cummings Foundations $20 million Grant Program.

For over 27 years, St. Mary’s Center has been a leader in providing a holistic and “one-stop-shop” array of life-changing programs and services for homeless women and their families. Located in Dorchester, where the highest concentration of homeless families within the City of Boston (47%) live, St. Mary’s Center supports more than 500 children and families through emergency shelter, employment training as well as educational, clinical, and preventive services.

Alexis Steel, Chief Operating Officer of St. Mary’s Center for Women and Children, expressed gratitude for the Cummings grant. “The Cummings Foundation’s support to the families in our care means a great deal. Thanks to your generosity, we continue our work to support the courageous efforts of women and their families as they take large and small steps towards a solid future with hope. We are meeting the needs of our larger community by developing new virtual opportunities for engagement with our education and workforce development teams. Much needed pathways have been created to engender recovery and sustainability for the most vulnerable in our community. Please know how much I, and the entire St. Mary’s Center community, appreciate your investment in the work we do to break intergenerational poverty and homelessness and create positive futures for the women and families we serve.”

With these critical funds, St. Mary’s is positioned to ensure a full healing from the impacts of COVID-19. This grant will help St. Mary’s Center to further develop, implement, and enhance the three critical components of the pandemic response: emergency response, recovery, and stabilization. The Cummings Grant enables St. Mary’s to provide needed food assistance, quarantine isolation units on campus, dedicated home workspaces, and access to technology for education.

The Cummings $20 Million Grant Program supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and primarily serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties. Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the area where it owns commercial buildings, all of which are managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. Founded in 1970 by Bill Cummings, the Woburn-based commercial real estate firm leases and manages 10 million square feet of debt-free space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.
“We have been impressed, but not surprised, by the myriad ways in which these 130 grant winners are serving their communities, despite the challenges presented by COVID-19,” said Joel Swets, Cummings Foundation’s executive director. “Their ability to adapt and work with their constituents in new and meaningful ways has an enormous impact in the communities where our colleagues and leasing clients live and work.”

Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than $280 million to greater Boston nonprofits. Social distancing requirements will prevent Foundation and grant winner representatives from convening for a reception at TradeCenter 128 in Woburn, as planned, to celebrate the $20 million infusion into greater Boston’s nonprofit sector. Instead, Cummings Foundation expects hundreds of individuals to gather virtually for a modified celebration in mid-June.

The Cummings $20 Million Grant Program resulted from a merger of the Foundation’s two flagship grant programs, $100K for 100 and Sustaining Grants.

The Foundation and its volunteers first identified 130 organizations to receive grants of at least $100,000 each. Among the winners are first-time recipients as well as nonprofits that have previously received Cummings Foundation grants. A limited number of this latter group of repeat recipients will be invited to make in-person presentations in the fall, when public health related circumstances allow, proposing that their grants be elevated to long-term awards. Thirty such requests will be granted in the form of 10-year awards ranging from $200,000 to $500,000 each. This year’s diverse group of grant recipients represents a wide variety of causes, including homelessness prevention, affordable housing, education, violence prevention, and food insecurity. The nonprofits are spread across 40 different cities and towns, and most will receive their grants over two to five years.


About St. Mary’s Center
St. Mary’s Center for Women and Children offers seven innovative, family-centered programs for women and children who have experienced trauma and are living in poverty. Placing families at the center of our efforts, St. Mary’s Center works in partnership with women, many of them young mothers, to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and achieve lasting, powerful change. For more information, visit http://stmaryscenterma.org/.

About Cummings Foundation
Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities in Marlborough and Woburn, and Veterinary School at Tufts, LLC in North Grafton. Additional information is available at www.CummingsFoundation.org.
K.G., Participant in St. Mary’s Home, Margaret’s House, GRLZradio.org, and Women’s Learning Center

Workforce Development participants in the Mary Meade-Kay Bacon Computer Lab at the Center
Marisa Centeio, Women's Learning Center Graduate