

NEWS RELEASE

North Minneapolis Tapped for \$28M Promise Neighborhood Investment

Hopes Rise as NAZ's Work to End Poverty Gains Steam

MINNEAPOLIS, Monday, December 19, 2011—North Minneapolis' Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) is a winner of the Department of Education's prestigious Promise Neighborhood Implementation grant. The U.S. Department of Education announced five national winners at 11 a.m. today from Elizabeth Hall International Elementary School in North Minneapolis. The school is one of several partners who make up NAZ, a collaborative organization that works to prepare North Minneapolis children to graduate from high school ready for college.

"North Minneapolis is a renewed community today," said NAZ CEO, Sondra Samuels. "The Promise Neighborhood program and NAZ share the same vision—that all children and youth deserve access to great schools and strong systems of family and community support that will prepare them for college and a career starting at birth."

NAZ is dedicated to the success of children and families in North Minneapolis. It supports families, promotes academic achievement and creates a culture of success.

NAZ is positioned to coordinate the North Minneapolis service-delivery system and is refocusing the mission of every partner organization to drive toward a single, shared goal. The NAZ mission is based on the expectation that successful families will support successful children. The NAZ collaborative includes schools and service providers, who have worked together to create a "cradle to career" pathway for children, while supporting their families with wrap-around services. NAZ began in 2010 as a pilot.

The Promise Neighborhood Implementation funding for NAZ is \$28 million over 5 years. NAZ currently operates with an annual budget of just over \$1 million, provided through the support of individual donors, foundations and corporations.

The grant will be used to build NAZ infrastructure. For example, NAZ will increase the number of engagement team "family coaches" from six to 40. Family coaches are from the North Minneapolis community and are trained neighbor-leaders who work one on one with families to build a culture of achievement within their homes.

"The Promise Neighborhood funding will allow us to immediately scale up our services to reach many more families," Samuels said. "It sets in motion our ability to grow from our current 150 pilot families to our five-year goal of reaching 1,200 families with 3,000 children – all successfully on a path to college. We hold the belief that all of our families are going to succeed. This isn't the end of our journey, but just the beginning," she said.

About NAZ

NAZ is a collaboration of service providers and schools who work with children and families in a geographic area, or “Zone” of North Minneapolis to build a culture of achievement so that all youth graduate college-ready. NAZ focuses on a geographic target area that is an 18 by 13 block square that is most impacted by crime, violence and poverty on Minneapolis’ Northside. The Zone is estimated to be home to more than 5,500 children. A variety of challenging family factors are experienced by these children—including physical and behavioral health, stability and safety of housing, and economic and financial well-being.

The purpose of NAZ is to end multigenerational poverty by significantly improving achievement outcomes for all children and youth in the Zone. To achieve this bold goal, NAZ has developed a comprehensive, multi-level change strategy that uses a “high-touch” approach to engage families and children, coordinate services and supports, and build the culture of achievement one family at a time.

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