



## **BALLMER GRANT GIVES NORTHSIDE ACHIEVEMENT ZONE KEY BUILDING BLOCK FOR NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

MINNEAPOLIS | June 28, 2017 — Ballmer Group – the philanthropic organization founded by former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer and his wife Connie – has committed to a five-year, \$10 million grant to the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). The grant is a major boost to NAZ’s transition toward a long-term, sustainable private-public partnership with individual contributors, community and corporate foundations, the state of Minnesota, and other public entities. Ballmer Group is widely recognized for its leadership in identifying and supporting innovative solutions to ending intergenerational poverty.

The gift comes at a critical time. NAZ received a federal Promise Neighborhood grant in 2011, but that grant has now expired. With community leader and NAZ board member Patty Murphy as its chairperson, NAZ is in the quiet phase of an investment campaign that seeks to raise a total of \$35 million to replace the Promise Neighborhood grant through leadership support from the community and beyond, enabling NAZ to continue and scale its vital, demonstrably successful work.

“Ballmer Group’s grant should inspire and challenge all Twin Cities business and civic leaders to lean in and work together in support of NAZ,” General Mills CEO Ken Powell said. “Our community and our future workforce depend upon it. NAZ is working to reshape outcomes with game-changing results,” Powell noted.

Powell and Target CEO Brian Cornell serve as vice chairs of NAZ’s investment campaign.

“We’re proud to support the inspiring work of NAZ and its partners to ensure children and families are prepared for the workforce and motivated to reach their full potential,” said Cornell. “Investments in our community’s future, like the generous gift from Ballmer Group, are essential to ensuring the economic health of Minnesota.”

“Minnesota has a long history of building innovative solutions to critical challenges through private-public partnerships. Ballmer Group’s grant, the leadership role of our corporate and philanthropic community, and the contributions of individual Minnesotans should give all Minnesotans great confidence that NAZ’s work is being held to rigorous standards, that our resources are being used efficiently, and that every dollar invested will be leveraged many times over,” noted NAZ President and CEO Sondra Samuels.

For example, NAZ will use a portion of the investment to launch a 3-year early-learning scholarship fund of \$1 million a year for low-income NAZ families. “Getting our children ready for kindergarten is crucial to their future success. And early learning intervention is about so much more,” said Samuels. “We’re investing in the building blocks of a child’s life, including brain development, the ability to self regulate, social-emotional growth, and word acquisition.”

In addition to early learning scholarships, over the next three to five years, campaign investments will fund education pipeline support, Family Coaches, parenting education classes, and whole family support in the areas of housing, health, and careers. Although 30 percent of NAZ funding will continue to directly support the work of its partner organizations, this does not represent their partners’ full budgets. Full funding of NAZ collaborative partners is still necessary to ensure that the needs of Northside families and children are met in a holistic and sustainable way.



“Ballmer Group’s grant allows us to build on our momentum, getting real results for families and children and eradicating the opportunity gaps in education, housing, health, and income. But we’ve just only begun,” Samuels said. “We’ve spent the last five years proving the model, innovating, and learning from what didn’t work as much as what did. We’re ready, as a community, to bring those results to scale.”

**About NAZ**

NAZ is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and a collaboration of 40+ organizations and schools dedicated to closing the academic achievement gap. Together they are working with over 1,000 North Minneapolis families with 2,300 children as they lift themselves out of multigenerational poverty, using education and whole family support as levers. The collaborative approach drives more effective use of public and private resources, which further supports a net cost savings to society. In addition to the Minnesota Business Partnership’s Minnesota’s Future award, NAZ was awarded the 2015 Best Nonprofit Award by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

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