COMMUNITY FOUNDATION BOULDER COUNTY

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MEDIA RELEASE

15 Forever Fund tackles availability and access to youth mental health services

Annual youth-driven program grants $19K to Boulder County nonprofits

Boulder (April 6, 2018) – 15 Forever – a youth-driven grantmaking program of the Community Foundation Boulder County – seeks to address the needs and concerns of Boulder County youth from a peer perspective. This year, the fund's Youth Advisory Committee awarded $19K in grants to seven Boulder County nonprofits working to improve availability and access to mental health services for youth.

"We really put an emphasis on equity this year, and considered youth issues, including mental health in our community, through that lens," says Benjamin Martinez, Grants and Programs Assistant, of this year's 15 Forever grantmaking process. "Our definition of equity begins with the idea that not everyone is starting at the same place in terms of barriers and advantages.

"I think the students really grasped this concept and did an excellent job throughout the process of making grant decisions." Indeed, 15 Forever participants reviewed a number of proposals totaling more than $28K. Along the way, participating youth learned about peer issues countywide, how grantmaking works, and – together – reached informed decisions about how to help address barriers to mental health services for young people.

Continues Martinez, "We started with a community needs assessment, referring to the foundation's TRENDS Report, as a guide. From there, participating students narrowed their focus to a particular issue they felt to be most pressing:

"Mental health services for youth emerged as a highly unmet need in our community."

In response, grants were made to these new 15 Forever grantees:

- **Attention Homes, Inc.** ($2,500)

Runaway and Homeless Youth Mental Health and Substance Abuse Project: providing life-changing resources to youth in crisis, including expanding a comprehensive substance abuse and mental health program.

- **Autism Society of Boulder County** ($3K)

Providing a therapeutic support group for non-gender-conforming youth with disabilities.

- **Boulder Pride dba Out Boulder County** ($1K)

Equine-Assisted Therapy for LGBTQ Youth: supporting the mental health and well-being of participating youth by offering a safe, sober avenue to develop and deepen self-awareness and response techniques.

- **"I Have a Dream" Foundation of Boulder County** ($2,500)

Mental Health for Dreamers: providing culturally-relevant support and programs to Boulder County's low-income youth and their families by hiring mental health professionals to serve our youth directly in both one-on-one sessions and group classes.

- **Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence** ($2,500)

Mental Health Services for Children & Youth Impacted by Violence: providing mental health services to children and youth in Boulder County who have been impacted by violence in their families.

- **Second Wind Fund of Boulder County** ($3K)

Removing financial and social barriers to treatment for youth at risk of suicide by providing funded counseling services to youth in our community.

- **TEENS, Inc.** ($4,500)

Therapeutic Services for Chinook West Students: providing quality therapeutic services for Chinook West students who are at risk for dropping out of school, and helping them build life and leadership skills, stay in school, and go on to college.

Since 2006, the 15 Forever program – a permanent fund of the Community Foundation – has advanced civic engagement and leadership among Boulder County youth. For more information about the fund, as well as other programs and initiatives of the Community Foundation Boulder County, please visit commfound.org.

Community Foundation Boulder County

For 27 years, the Community Foundation Boulder County has been a community catalyst, responding to immediate needs and anticipating future challenges. Through informed decision-making, we inspire ideas, ignite action and mobilize resources to improve the quality of life for all. Advancing inclusivity and providing leadership and on key issues, the foundation collaborates with community-minded individuals and organizations that want to make a difference, accomplishing more together than we do alone. Since its founding in 1991, the foundation has granted more than $83M to nonprofits focused on health and human services, education, civic engagement, arts and culture, and animals and the environment. *commfound.org/news-media*

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