



For Immediate Release

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### **Greater Lowell Health Alliance Awards \$150,000 in Community Health Grants**

The Greater Lowell Health Alliance of Community Health Network Area 10 has awarded 10 grants totaling \$150,000 to community based organizations working to meet the public health needs of the region.

The grants were announced by Executive Director Kerrie D'Entremont at the GLHA's annual meeting Friday, Oct. 20, at Greater Lowell Technical High School. In addition to the grants, the GLHA also introduced its 2017 Community Health Improvement Plan.

The grant funds are part of approximately \$5 million being allocated to the GLHA by Lowell General Hospital through the hospital's Determination of Needs process for its 2014 campus expansion. This process, facilitated through the state Department of Public Health, ensures that hospitals are providing a measurable community benefit to the communities they serve.

"As an organization solely dedicated to improving the quality of health in the communities we serve, we are pleased to get critically needed funds into the hands of the front-line organizations that make such a difference in our community health," said Kerrie D'Entremont, GLHA Executive Director.

The GLHA works closely with healthcare providers, business leaders, educators, and civic and community leaders, with a common goal to help the Greater Lowell community identify and address its health and wellness priorities.

Each year, grants are awarded based on public health priorities identified in the 2016 Greater Lowell Health Needs Assessment, with priority given to projects that serve low-income, vulnerable and/or at-risk groups. Needs being address this year are access to healthy food, mental health, substance abuse and prevention, physical activity and social determinants of health. The grant winners are:

#### **Priority: Access to Healthy Food**

**Mill City Grows, "Food Access & Education Programs" (\$15,000)** - The vision of this project is to create a solid pipeline of outreach to low-income residents along with education about healthy eating, and to culminate in access to affordable, health foods through incentives and Mobile Markets.

**UMass Lowell, "Dietary Quality, Food Access and Food Safety among Cambodian Adults At Risk for Type 2 Diabetes" (\$11,500)** - The overall purpose of this project is to build on the 2016 Community Health Assessment to target type 2 diabetes and access to healthy and safe foods.

**Merrimack Valley Food Bank, "Community Market" (\$5,000)** - Their Community Market Program serves residents of four Lowell Housing Authority properties, offering them to supplement their food with fresh produce, at no cost, while providing residents with information about HIP (Healthy Incentives Program).

#### **Priority: Mental Health**

**Mental Health Association of Greater Lowell, "Behavioral Health Access Counselor" (\$25,000)** - A collaboration with Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA) and Lowell House, they aim to improve access to mental health services and ultimately improve mental health and quality of life for the Greater Lowell Cambodian community.

**Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell, "Youth Mental Health Services" (\$15,000)** - This project will integrate a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) into the Boys & Girls Club staff as Youth Support Service Coordinator.

**Family Services of the Merrimack Valley, “Samaritans of the Merrimack Valley” (\$10,000)** - FSMV proposes to provide an array of suicide prevention trainings to individuals and organizations throughout the Greater Lowell area aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of “gatekeepers” to identify and intervene with individuals who may be at risk.

**Priority: Substance Use and Prevention**

**Lowell House, Inc., “Breaking the Cycle of Incarceration & Addiction through Recovery Coaching” (\$25,000)** - A collaboration with three entities within the Criminal Justice System, aiming to initiate a recovery coaching designed to divert people with Substance Use Disorder away from jails and prisons and assist them in attaining and sustaining their recovery from substances in the community.

**Lowell Transitional Living Center, “LTLC Recovery Coach Initiative” (\$25,000)** - LTLC proposes to integrate a recovery coaching program into its 90 bed emergency shelter program.

**Priority: Physical Activity**

**Habitat for Humanity, “Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative: Building Healthy Places” (\$5,000)** - Habitat’s goal is to build a children’s park and create green space, on Franklin St. in the Acre.

**Priority: Social Determinants of Health**

**History UnErased, “On the Front Lines: Equipping Teachers to Improve the Educational and Wellness Outcome of LGBTQ Youth” (\$13,500)** - The Front Lines Project (TFL) is targeted to improve the wellness and academic outcomes of approximately 4,000 Lowell Public Schools’ nine middle schools by working directly with their teachers. These front line educators will be prepared to create classrooms that are inclusive of LGBTQ topics, thereby disrupting the environment that leads to poor health and educational outcomes for this vulnerable population.

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To learn more about the Greater Lowell Health Alliance, visit [www.greatlowellhealthalliance.org](http://www.greatlowellhealthalliance.org).