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CitySprouts education programs awarded \$150,000 Cummings grant

Cambridge and Boston-based nonprofit receives 3 years of funding from Cummings Foundation

Cambridge, MA, May 23, 2023 – CitySprouts is one of 150 local nonprofits that will share in \$30 million through Cummings Foundation’s major annual grants program. The Cambridge and Boston-based organization was selected from a total of 630 applicants during a competitive review process. It will receive \$150,000 over three years.

CitySprouts’ mission is to cultivate curiosity and wonder for all children with hands-on science learning through urban gardening. For more than 20 years, CitySprouts has partnered closely with public elementary schools in Cambridge and Boston to engage children in deep and authentic science education through schoolyard learning gardens. CitySprouts works closely with teachers in 24 public elementary schools to implement CitySprouts’ garden-based curriculum, *Early Start in Science*, that builds on and complements established state and local science curriculum.

Susan Diller, CitySprouts Executive Director expressed gratitude for this multi-year opportunity from Cummings Foundation. “CitySprouts’ partnership with Cummings Foundation has been instrumental in ensuring children have equitable access to early science experiences as well as natural spaces where they can learn, grow, play, explore and claim as their own. We look forward to the next three years of growth as our *Early Start in Science* curriculum continues to develop, and our Garden Educators work to provide enriching learning experiences to thousands of Boston and Cambridge public school students.”

The Cummings \$30 Million Grant Program primarily supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties.

Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the areas where it owns commercial property. Its buildings are all managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. This Woburn-based commercial real estate firm leases and manages 11 million square feet of debt-free space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

“The way the local nonprofit sector perseveres, steps up, and pivots to meet the shifting needs of the community is most impressive,” said Cummings Foundation executive director Joyce Vyriotes. “We are incredibly grateful for these tireless efforts to support people in the community and to increase equity and access to opportunities.”

The majority of the grant decisions were made by about 90 volunteers. They worked across a variety of committees to review and discuss the proposals and then, together, determine which requests would be funded. Among these community volunteers were business and nonprofit leaders, mayors, college presidents, and experts in areas such as finance and DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion).

“It would not be possible for the Foundation to hire the diversity and depth of expertise and insights that our volunteers bring to the process,” said Vyriotes. “We so appreciate the substantial time and thought they dedicated toward ensuring that our democratized version of philanthropy results in equitable outcomes that will really move the needle on important issues in local communities.”

This year's grant recipients represent a wide variety of causes, including housing and food insecurity, workforce development, immigrant services, social justice, education, and mental health services. The nonprofits are spread across 46 different cities and towns.

Cummings Foundation has now awarded \$480 million to greater Boston nonprofits. The complete list of this year's 150 grant winners, plus nearly 1,500 previous recipients, is available at www.CummingsFoundation.org.

About CitySprouts

CitySprouts is committed to greater equity in science education and children's access to nature no matter where they live. Early Start in Science is a pre-kindergarten through 5th grade curriculum that builds a strong science foundation for children through garden-based learning. Garden exploration helps children develop a relationship with nature and see firsthand how the world works. Meaningful, accessible science exploration is a natural container for children's social emotional learning. More information about CitySprouts' programs for pre-K through 8th graders is found at www.citysprouts.org.

About Cummings Foundation

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings of Winchester, MA and has grown to be one of the largest private foundations in New England. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities, in Marlborough and Woburn, and Cummings Health Sciences, LLC. Additional information is available at www.CummingsFoundation.org.

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