



Somerville Public Schools

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Somerville Public Schools Awarded \$100,000 Cummings Foundation Grant *Funds to support adventure, leadership programming for target student populations*

Somerville, MA – Somerville Public Schools is one of 140 local nonprofits to receive grants of \$100,000 to \$500,000 each through Cummings Foundation’s \$25 Million Grant Program. The Somerville-based organization was chosen from a total of 580 applicants during a competitive review process. SPS will receive a \$25,000 award in the next school year, renewable annually for three additional years.

With these generous Cummings Foundation grant funds, the Somerville Public Schools, in partnership with [Waypoint Adventure](#), will be able to provide adaptive physical activity opportunities and social emotional skill development through adventure-based programming for target student populations. Waypoint Adventure staff are trained in outdoor adventure leadership and have extensive experience working with youth. Their organization offers adaptive kayak equipment, off-road wheelchairs, and ropes courses and rock climbing that are intentionally designed and fully accessible.

The positive impact the Waypoint Adventure experiences have on our students lasts much longer than the field trip itself. As Caitlin Kelly, the SPS District Wellness Coordinator explains, “The adventure-based education programming we offer through this program is not only about strengthening students’ physical abilities. It is also about allowing students to bolster their social emotional strengths and abilities outside of a classroom setting. A social emotional curriculum is integrated into classrooms throughout our district but for many of our students, a written curriculum will never be a replacement for the social and character skills gained from experiential, adventure-based programming – which can be life changing.”

The Cummings \$25 Million Grant Program supports Massachusetts nonprofits that are based in and primarily 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.

“We are so fortunate in greater Boston to have such effective nonprofits, plus a wealth of talented, dedicated professionals and volunteers to run them,” said Cummings Foundation executive director Joyce Vyriotes. “We are indebted to them for the work they do each day to provide for basic needs, break down barriers to education and health resources, and work toward a more equitable society.”

With the help of about 90 volunteers, the Foundation first identified 140 organizations to receive grants of at least \$100,000 each. Among the winners were first-time recipients as well as nonprofits that had previously received Cummings Foundation grants. Forty of this latter group of repeat recipients were then selected to have their grants elevated to 10-year awards ranging from \$200,000 to \$500,000 each.



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“Our volunteers bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives, which is so critical to our grant selection process,” said Vyriotes. “Through this democratized approach to philanthropy, they decide more than half the grants every year.”

This year’s grant recipients represent a wide variety of causes, including food insecurity, immigrant and refugee services, social justice, education, and mental health services. The nonprofits are spread across 45 different cities and towns.

The complete list of 140 grant winners, plus more than 900 previous recipients, is available at www.CummingsFoundation.org.

Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than \$375 million to greater Boston nonprofits.

About Somerville Public Schools

Somerville Public Schools currently serves more than 4,600 students in prekindergarten through grade 12. Students come from around the world, with varied backgrounds and life and educational experiences. Approximately 54 languages are represented among its student population. Nearly half of all SPS students list a first language other than English, and 20.9% are English language learners. Nearly 20% are students with special needs, and 64.2% of students in our district are considered “high needs.” SPS is a microcosm of the world, experiencing the benefits and challenges of a global community. More information is available at www.somerville.k12.ma.us.

About Cummings Foundation

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings 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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