

Duluth Superior Community Foundation Announces Award Winners

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The Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation is pleased to announce Art Works Expo, The Northspan Group Inc., Copeland Community Center, Minnesota Land Trust, and Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs are the recipients of the 2009 Touchstone Awards.

The Touchstone Awards, presented by the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, were created to recognize and celebrate programs or projects for their leadership in transforming problems into opportunities and service into action. This year, five organizations were recognized for their achievements in the community.

This year's theme "Celebrating Our Creative Economy" celebrates the work of Dr. Richard Florida and the impact his message has had on the Twin Ports. In 2007, the Community Foundation, in coordination with the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, worked with 31 community catalysts to create new initiatives formulated around the Dr. Florida's four Ts: Technology, Territory, Talent and Tolerance. These principles are imperative in building a creative economy and prosperity for all. Today's recipients of the Touchstone Awards exemplify these four Ts, all of which are key for building a more attractive environment for economic growth.

The winners and brief descriptions include:

Art Works Expo - Talent

Art Works! Activating a Creative Economy Conference and Expo was awarded a Touchstone Award in the area of Talent for its work in bringing together the business and arts communities in an effort to increase regional prosperity. The conference, which was held in 2008, brought in more than 300 arts, business and civic leaders and community members to learn about how this region can do a better job embracing and capitalizing on the region's artistic talent. Since the conference, at least three new initiatives are moving forward including the creation of the Twin Ports Regional Arts Alliance.

The Northspan Group, Inc. - Technology

Northspan Group was awarded a Touchstone Award in the area of Technology for its enhancements to NorthlandConnection.com. In 2008, Northspan successfully implemented advanced technology and new tools to the site to ensure that it delivers information and analysis accurately, efficiently and competitively. The upgrades ensure that prospective and current businesses in the region have the tools they need at their fingertips to be successful.

Copeland Community Center - Tolerance

Copeland Community Center was awarded a Touchstone Award in the area of Tolerance for expanding the Hmong New Year Celebration to include local community members. The event draws about 350 people each year including nearly 100 percent attendance by the Hmong community. The celebration provides a unique opportunity to create a better understanding among the Hmong youth of their culture and values and to provide cultural learning opportunities in the Twin Ports area. In addition to being an education opportunity, the event is a strong example of bridging social capital.

Minnesota Land Trust – Territory

Minnesota Land Trust was awarded a Touchstone Award in the area of Territory for creating the North Shore Critical Landscape Protection Initiative. The Initiative is focused on protecting the natural and scenic heritage of Minnesota's North Shore while respecting the social and economic needs of the communities for vacationers and new residents. By working with partners, the Minnesota Land Trust created a strategy to identify specific areas in need of protection; completed four direct land protection projects that protect more than 115 acres of critical North Shore habitat and provided assistance where needed to local governments to implement planning and zoning practices that accommodate growth and conservation opportunities.

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs - Overall Achievement

Domestic Abuse Intervention Programs was awarded a Touchstone Award for exemplifying all of Dr. Florida's T's for its Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP). The project, which was developed in 1981, reduces domestic violence by shifting the responsibility of stopping domestic violence away from the victim to the community institutions. DAIP and the City of Duluth was the first in the country to use this model which is now known internationally as "The Duluth Model." To date, over 1,500 communities in the U.S. and more than 15 countries have sent participants to Duluth to receive training on the model, showcasing Duluth's potential to embrace a creative economy where talent and innovation fuel ideas.