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## **Health Foundation Announces Activation Fund Grants**

### **Area Organizations Receive Grants Totaling Over \$530,000**

**Worcester, MA** – The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts recently awarded eight Activation Fund grants to area organizations totaling more than \$530,000. These grants, listed below, will support a wide range of projects throughout Central Massachusetts aimed at improving health, targeting the most vulnerable populations.

“Since its founding, the Foundation has applied a social determinants of health framework to guide its investments in nonprofit organizations working to address barriers to health equity and improve health outcomes throughout 60 cities and towns in Worcester County,” said District Court Judge Timothy M. Bibaud, Chairman of the Board of the Foundation. In 2021, 53 letters of intent to participate in the application process for support from the Activation Fund were submitted. After a thorough review of the letters and applications by Foundation staff, eight projects totaling \$530,385 were funded, representing a diverse mix of organizations located throughout the region, half of which are first-time award recipients. Judge Bibaud continued, “Through the Foundation’s annual Activation Fund process and related community outreach, the Board and staff are able to learn about pressing and emerging health issues from those in the community and direct Foundation resources accordingly.”

Dr. Jan Yost, President and CEO of the Foundation, noted, “The goal of the Activation Fund is to enable an organization to move to a higher level of capacity and to then continue to function at that higher level after the grant ends.” Dr. Yost explained that Activation Fund grants typically are for one-year projects that demonstrate a creative and innovative approach to alleviate an existing community health concern or that address an emerging health challenge in the region.

The grant awards are as follows:

**Building Futures** - \$59,250 for equipment to expand its Terraponics Program, a method of growing organic produce year-round using tiered racks, benefitting Worcester Housing Authority residents and helping to promote healthy eating and address food insecurity.

**Catholic Charities** - \$75,000 for facility renovations for its Crozier House  $\frac{3}{4}$  Graduate Program, providing housing and support for men with substance use disorders upon completion of residential treatment.

**Community Health Connections** - \$100,000 for buildout of four urgent care rooms at its new Community Health Center in Gardner that will also offer primary care, dental, and behavioral health services.

Girls Inc. - \$41,882 to purchase equipment and furniture for transformation of a large meeting hall into smaller classrooms to expand program capacity and better accommodate work in small groups, which is more conducive for addressing social-emotional needs of participants.

Guild of St. Agnes - \$90,000 for renovation of its childcare center in Gardner, which provides quality, affordable, early education and school-age programs for children from 15 months to 12 years of age.

Lovin' Spoonfuls - \$75,000 for purchase of a refrigerated truck to enable expansion of its perishable food rescue and redistribution program into Worcester County to address food insecurity.

Mount Wachusett Community College - \$73,903 to upgrade sterilization equipment at its dental education clinic located within the Community Health Connections Community Health Center in Fitchburg.

Viability - \$15,350 to purchase exercise equipment for its accredited Tradewinds Clubhouse in Southbridge, which provides vocational and life skills training and social support for people experiencing mental illness.

The Health Foundation was established in 1999 with the proceeds from the sale of Central Massachusetts Health Care, Inc., a physician-initiated, not-for-profit HMO. The Foundation currently has assets of approximately \$95 million and has awarded grants totaling over \$48 million since it began its grantmaking in 2000. For further information about these grants or about the Foundation's grantmaking programs and application process, please visit the Foundation's website at [www.hfcm.org](http://www.hfcm.org) or call (508) 438-0009.

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