



portland children's investment fund

For Immediate Release

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Nov. 15, 2005

Portland Children's Investment Fund and Meyer Memorial Trust Partner Together for Juvenile Rights Project

The Portland Children's Investment Fund and Meyer Memorial Trust announced they are providing matching grants of \$325,000 to fund the Juvenile Rights Project's SchoolWorks Program.

The combined investment of \$650,000 will help the program expand by extending the age range of children served from the current 8 to 15 years of age to 5 to 18 years of age.

Currently, 220 to 230 children are annually served by SchoolWorks. An additional 130 will receive services each year with the new funding that begins in 2006.

"Our SchoolWorks staff is thrilled to see their hard work recognized. Even more importantly, we will be able to serve more vulnerable children with this support," said Janet Merrell, executive director of the Juvenile Rights Project. "JRP is focused on giving children living with family challenges a better chance at succeeding in the classroom."

SchoolWorks began in 2002 and is modeled after TeamChild, a Seattle-based program. SchoolWorks advocates for the education rights of children in foster care and youth in the juvenile justice system with the goal of improving their likelihood of succeeding in school.

The children receive educational advocacy and social service coordination to ensure they are enrolled in and regularly attend school as well as receive any special education services they may need.

The grant from the Children's Investment Fund and Meyer Memorial Trust will support additional attorney and social work staff to assure physical, mental and disability-related needs are met.

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Past JRP data on students served by SchoolWorks show it is successful in helping children stay in school, improve their academic performance and reduce their disciplinary actions. It also has reduced the number of moves between schools for students and assisted securing additional services for children when necessary.

The allocation is the second from the Children's Investment Fund's \$3 million Leverage Fund, created last December to match public investments with private funders for a concentrated effort to serve Portland's youth. The first investment was a partnership with the Schnitzer Care Foundation to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Portland.

In making the latest partnership announcement, backers call the JRP's SchoolWorks a model program advocating for some of the neediest children in the city, especially those who have been in and out of foster homes, to stay in school and receive the vital social and education services key to their avoiding future legal trouble.

"The JRP's SchoolWorks program has made real inroads in supporting Portland's at-risk children," said City Commissioner Dan Saltzman, who chairs the Children's Investment Fund Allocation Committee. "We are pleased to be part of this advocacy and with the help of Meyer Memorial Trust, increase the number of children the program serves."

Meyer Memorial Trust Executive Director Doug Stamm said, "The Juvenile Rights Project levels the playing field for children and youth whose families are unable to advocate for their educational needs. We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Children's Investment Fund to advance this important work."

Saltzman said the latest Leverage Fund match was just one more avenue that the Children's Investment Fund has taken to improve the lives of Portland's youth as well as to maximize tax dollars through public-private partnerships. He expects to announce additional Leverage Fund allocations in the coming months.

In 2002 Portland voters passed Measure 26-33 creating the Children's Investment Fund. The Fund provides approximately \$8.5 million a year for five years to support 61 programs in early childhood development, after-school mentoring and child abuse prevention. Eligible programs must demonstrate cost effectiveness and a proven success record.

The Children's Investment Fund is subject to annual audits and its administrative costs cannot exceed 5 percent. For more information, see www.childrensinvestmentfund.org.

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Meyer Memorial Trust was created by the late Fred G. Meyer, who built the chain of retail stores bearing his name throughout the Pacific Northwest. When Meyer died in 1978 at the age of 92, his will established the Trust, which began operating in 1982. Meyer Memorial Trust is a private, independent foundation representing his personal philanthropy. The Meyer Trust is not connected in any way with Fred Meyer Inc., the retail enterprise.

The Meyer Memorial Trust makes grants to qualified tax-exempt applicants in Oregon and Clark County, Washington. The Trust operates four grant making programs: General Purpose Grants, Program Related Investments, Small Grants and Support for Teacher Initiatives. Not favoring a particular field of interest, the Trust awards grants in arts and humanities, education, health, social welfare, community development and environmental conservation and restoration.

Juvenile Rights Project, Inc. is an Oregon non-profit corporation founded for the purpose of providing high quality legal services to children and families, without the means to retain counsel, through individual representation in juvenile proceedings and through class-wide advocacy in the courts and legislature. Information can be found at www.jrplaw.org

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