

Mission of the Fund

The Fund aims to help children and youth (ages 3-24) succeed in school and improve their chances of becoming confident and contributing adults. This year, the Fund has the following Focus Areas:

- Investing in leadership among youth ages 11-24 and the parents, teachers and school staff that support them. **What we see:** Only 36 percent of high school seniors in California are prepared to go to four-year college. In Napa County, only 25 percent are prepared. Among Latino kids in our region, the number is 11 percent. Yet, our knowledge-based economy means that the future earning power of our youth will be driven largely by their level of educational attainment. Part of getting into college is academic preparation, and part of it is determination and vision to pursue bigger things. Peer mentoring programs, life-skills training, and classes that challenge youth to go beyond their perceived limits can build character and resiliency. Parents and teachers with strong leadership skills are pivotal to kids' ability to embrace and face life's challenges.
- Supporting enriching or innovative education models that seek to improve academic performance and keep students (and their parents) engaged in learning. **What we see:** It's been 30 years since California voters passed Proposition 13. In that time, our state has plummeted from 18th to 44th in the national rankings for per-pupil spending (1975 to 2005). California spends roughly \$8,000 per pupil on K-12 education, while New York spends nearly twice that amount. And, California has larger numbers of students per classroom, many of them immigrants. Napa County's teachers are under-resourced and struggling to improve student performance. As a result, ideas for engaging children's imagination and interest (like art, music and science programs), as well as unique instruction formats, are being squeezed out of our schools.
- Increasing access to afterschool and preschool programs, as well as on-campus support services for parents and students. **What we see:** Afterschool and preschool programs are heavily clustered in the City of Napa. For children and families living up and down Valley, the choices are much more limited, and transportation is a significant obstacle. Language or cultural barriers, and lack of familiarity with school systems often leave parents and students unaware of services. Outreach efforts are uncoordinated and often only directed to the most at-risk families, which means many students in need fall through the cracks.

Examples of Projects

\$25,000 to pilot an integrated arts curriculum in a low-performing elementary school has translated into another \$360,000 in grants from private foundations and government agencies, and the model is being replicated at another school.

How to Apply

The Fund is open year-round for applications. Grant decisions are made at the discretion of the Community Foundation Board of Directors, with recommendations from staff. For more information, please contact Marla Tofle at 707.254.9565.