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The Boston Foundation has awarded \$1 million in rapid response grants

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Boston, MA According to The Boston Foundation, one of its donor advised funds has awarded \$1 million in rapid response grants to meet the needs of children impacted by school closings due to the COVID-19 crisis. The Waldron Charitable Fund, co-managed by Rob and Jennifer Waldron, is expediting support in the wake of a flood of requests from nonprofits nationwide serving the health, nutrition, and special education needs of underserved children impacted by school closures. Rob Waldron is CEO of Curriculum Associates, an education technology company that provides more than 10 million K-12 students nationwide with personalized learning materials to prepare them for success. Jennifer Waldron works with uAspire, a nonprofit organization removing financial barriers to higher education that was launched with the support of the Boston Foundation. A call for proposals went out from the Waldron Fund on March 16 with a deadline of March 20, resulting in an astounding response of more than 1,000 applications from nonprofits across the country. A team of qualified volunteers evaluated all applications against a rigorous rubric, ensuring finalists were positioned to serve as many children as possible as quickly as possible. Less than one week after the announcement, grants of up to \$50,000 were awarded to 47 recipients nationwide. The fund has now completed distribution of nearly all \$1 million in grant funding, and notifications and award messages are being shared with all applicants.

“I am deeply concerned about the sudden loss of essential services for our nation’s children due to school closures,” said Rob Waldron. “Having served schools across the country for decades, I know these institutions provide so much more than academics. My family and I feel an acute responsibility to do everything we can, as quickly as we can, to help communities in need, and we hope other funders will join us.”

“The Boston Foundation is so proud that individuals and families with donor advised funds at the Foundation are stepping up to respond to the effects of the coronavirus,” said Paul S. Grogan, President and CEO of the Boston Foundation. “The Waldrons are demonstrating how donors can partner with community foundations to respond quickly and decisively to urgent needs. And, because they’re focusing their philanthropy on an area where they have expertise, they can be a model for other donors who are eager to meet the urgent needs, but aren’t sure exactly when or how to direct their contributions.”

A number of the grants from the Waldron Charitable Fund are earmarked for Massachusetts, where Curriculum Associates has its headquarters. Grants include \$50,000 to the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Holyoke, Inc. for the installation of close to 200 Wi-Fi hotspots in target locations to facilitate

remote learning.

Examples of grants in other parts of the United States include \$40,000 to the Girls and Boys Club of Northeast Texas to provide dinner, snacks, and weekend snack bags as well as supplemental educational resources to Texas children, \$25,000 to the Boston-Thurmond Community Network to provide food and enrichment materials for children in low-income housing in the Boston-Thurmond community of Winston-Salem, NC, and \$15,000 to The Arc of Union/Cabarrus to provide educational and other support for children with special needs in North Carolina.

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