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Cummings Foundation awards \$5m to seven Boston area non-profits

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Freedom House Inc: (clockwise, from laptop screen) Freedom House CEO Charmaine Arthur with Cummings Foundation volunteers Joan Hadly and Drs. Aisha Francis and Judy Bigby.

Woburn, MA Seven local nonprofits are one step closer to achieving maximum impact, thanks to cash infusions from Cummings Foundation. Through its Nonprofits Experiencing Transformation (NExT) Grants program, the Woburn-based foundation divvied up an additional \$5 million among current grantees that are on the precipice of reaching new heights.

The \$3 billion Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the areas where it owns commercial buildings, all of which are managed on a pro bono basis by its affiliate, Cummings Properties. Founded in 1970 by Bill Cummings, the commercial real estate firm leases and manages 11 million s/f of suburban space, the vast majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

Lawrence Community Works 1: Shown (from left) are: Lawrence Community Works director of real estate

John Harden and executive director Jessica Andors with Cummings Foundation trustee Robert Keefe, J.D.

Each of the following organizations will receive a lump-sum NExT Grant to support a game-changing program or construction project: Freedom House Inc. (\$500,000) and Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center (\$1 million), of Dorchester; Lawrence Community Works (\$500,000); Acre Family Child Care (\$500,000) and Merrimack Valley Food Bank (\$1 million), of Lowell; Urban Farming Institute (\$500,000), of Mattapan; and Plummer Youth Promise (\$1 million), of Salem.

There was no application process, and the nonprofits were not aware that they were being considered for additional funding.

"Through our ongoing relationships with grantees, we learn about their latest and greatest initiatives," said Cummings Foundation executive director Joyce Vyriotes. "Our aim with these awards is to mitigate the financial barrier to these transformational projects, giving organizationally sound nonprofits the boost needed to amplify their impact in the regions they serve."

Maintaining its tradition of democratized philanthropy, the Foundation entrusted a diverse team of volunteers to nominate, vet, and determine the NExT Grants winners. Among these volunteers was Dr. Judy Bigby, former secretary of health and human services for the Commonwealth.

Plummer Youth Promise: (from left) Plummer Youth Promise executive director Nicole McLaughlin; Cummings Foundation volunteers Lisa Craig, Jim Kraus, and Robert D. Keefe, J.D.; Plummer Youth Promise director of operations Shane MacMaster and director of development and communications Haley Rodgers; and Cummings Foundation volunteer Judith Palmer Castor, Ph.D.

Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center: (from left) Cummings Foundation volunteers Judith Palmer Castor, Ph.D., Robert D. Keefe, J.D., and Lisa Craig; Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center chief executive officer Toni Wiley, chief development officer John Feeley, and chief program officer Charlynn Mines-Smart, MSHS; and Cummings Foundation volunteer Andy Kendall.

"I was impressed with how the organizations that were hard hit by the pandemic were reflecting on and growing from those challenges," said Dr. Bigby. "Given those ongoing hardships, and the many other unknowns, the idea for this program was spot on. Its focus on helping nonprofits elevate their programming and facilities meets a very important need for organizations that would not typically have the opportunity to secure this level of support."

Sportsmen's Tennis and Enrichment Center's grant will go toward an ongoing capital campaign. The funds will fuel the organization's physical and programmatic expansion, allowing it to provide more underserved youth and families with low-cost or free sports, academic, and wellness enrichment programs.

"The only word I can think of, beyond dazzled and grateful, is transformative," said Sportsmen's board co-chair, Paul Ridiker. "The generosity of Cummings Foundation and its core concern for Boston, its citizens, and its neighborhoods is simply beyond thanks. Your impact will echo for decades to come."

Cummings Foundation's signature philanthropic initiative is its annual \$30 Million Grants Program. It also periodically administers special interest giving initiatives to support workforce development and career preparedness locally as well as healthcare education and equity in Rwanda.

Cummings Foundation has awarded nearly \$450 million to date to nonprofits based in greater

Boston. Founded by Joyce and Bill Cummings in 1986, the \$3 billion foundation directly operates its own charitable affiliates, including not-for-profit New Horizons retirement communities in Marlborough and Woburn and Cummings Health Sciences, LLC. Additional information is available at www.CummingsFoundation.org.

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