



NEWS RELEASE

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The Dunham Fund announces *Challenge for Change* Award Recipients *Aurora University's Institute for Collaboration takes First Prize*

On March 18, 2009, the Dunham Fund, a private foundation established by Aurora businessman and philanthropist John C. Dunham, announced the winners of the Challenge for Change, a grant proposal competition for non-profit organizations developing innovative, collaborative and high-impact programs. The competition was designed to implement the principles that Mr. Dunham applied in his successful business life to provide incentives for organizations to invest in developing programs to create positive change in the Aurora, Illinois community.

At a press conference at Aurora University, the Dunham Fund named the Community Leaders Committee of the University's Institute for Collaboration as the recipient of the \$100,000 first place award. The committee's project was developed by a twelve partner collaborative of educational, government, business and social service organizations committed to the overall purpose of promoting excellence in education in the Aurora area. Ryan J. Maley, chair of the Dunham Fund Board of Advisors, said, "The Challenge for Change was conceived as a way to encourage members of the community to identify the significant needs in our community, to develop innovative solutions to address those needs and to define a collaborative effort to implement those solutions. The team led by the Institute for Collaboration has developed a well-researched and well-written proposal that certainly does this. We are happy to reward their extensive efforts with the Challenge for Change prize."

Dr. Sherry Eagle, Executive Director of the Institute and coordinator of the committee's Challenge for Change competition proposal, described the project: "The Institute and its partners have brought together a collaborative coalition with the goal of developing an Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System. As a collaborative project, the System will consist of a number of programs that may be sponsored or managed by different members of the coalition, but which have a common goal of improving the science and mathematics abilities of students, teachers, parents, and the community." The Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System's components may include the following components:

- A Magnet Academy for East Aurora and West Aurora elementary and middle school students who are gifted and talented in math and science
- After school programming with an emphasis on math and science education for all ability levels
- Saturday and summertime educational programs with mathematics and science content for all ability levels
- Pre-college programs to prepare high school students for continuing education

- Strengthening of professional development in math and science for teachers
- Programs for parents to enable them to support and encourage their students' success in school, including their math and science proficiency
- Programs emphasizing preparation for the science, technology, and engineering workforce, including career exploration and internships
- Efforts to bring Challenger Center programs to the community

Dunham Fund executive director, Robert Vaughan, said, "This program appears to be a natural progression in the continued development of Aurora and a wonderful complement to the math and science curricula offered by the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy and Aurora University. With such an educational asset in our community, families, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds, will find Aurora to be the welcome place to educate their gifted children."

The Fund also announced the second and third place award recipients at the news conference. The Communities In Schools' *Community Assessment Project* was awarded the second place prize of \$50,000. The program is a collaboration of CIS, the City of Aurora, East and West Aurora School Districts 131 and 129, the Kane County Health Department, and 708 Inc. Board, in cooperation with Northern Illinois University's Office of Research, Evaluation and Policy Studies. It seeks to develop a comprehensive, centralized data warehousing system for use by agencies who apply for funding both inside and outside Aurora. The primary focus of the project is to develop and analyze data that will support education and school-based community initiatives. Theresa Shoemaker, CIS Executive Director, said that her collaborative group studied "best practice" models in data collection and selected "a model that has been implemented in Toronto, Canada as the *Community Social Data Strategy* and involves a collaboration of twenty-five agencies." To her knowledge, no such comprehensive social database exists in the United States.

The third place award of \$15,000 was given to Rush Copley Foundation's Binary Health Integration Project proposal. Dr. Carrie Nelson, a program director for Rush-Copley Medical Center's Family Residency Program, will be able to supplement the enhancement of the residency program to include training of its family practitioners to screen and identify children and teens with potential mental health issues. "These are not typical diagnostic screenings for a family practitioner. The goal of the program is to address the prevention, promotion, and especially, the early identification, intervention and treatment of mild to severe mental illness in our children and teens. Working with our six Binary Health Integration Project (B-Hip) collaborative partners in behavioral health, psychiatry, the Aurora East School District, and local human service agencies, we will be able to provide early coordinated care to strengthen the emotional well-being of Aurora's youth and families."

Mr. Vaughan stated that "the program initiatives of the Challenge award recipients will automatically be considered by the Dunham Fund for further funding in future grant making cycles and the Fund will encourage other foundations and funders to review and support the implementation of these program concepts."

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The Dunham Fund is a private foundation established in 2006 to honor the legacy of John C. Dunham, businessman and philanthropist, through grants to Aurora, Illinois area organizations that have the vision and programs to help fulfill Mr. Dunham's dream of "making the world a more comfortable, safer place for mankind to live and prosper."