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## News Release

### District 742 Local Education Activities Foundation (LEAF) Announces \$40,000 Matching Homeless Fund Campaign

Contact: Bruce Hentges  
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#### **LEAF Announces Campaign for Homeless Student Services Fund**

St. Cloud, MN— The District 742 Local Education & Activities Foundation has announced “The 742 Challenge for Children: Supporting Students Experiencing Homelessness,” a campaign to raise \$40,000 in support of homeless students in District 742. This kickoff coincides with *Minnesota Food Share Month*.

*“Every day students experiencing homelessness face the daunting task of focusing on a quality education while worrying about the basic needs of reliable food, clothing and shelter,”* said Bruce Hentges, LEAF executive director.

Two local couples, Mark and Ann Thelen and Mike and Diana Podawiltz, each have pledged to match up to \$10,000 in additional contributions to LEAF for the Homeless Student Services Fund during the months of March and April. If successful, the campaign will result in \$40,000 to assist students experiencing homelessness who attend District 742 schools.

*“We are deeply committed to the welfare of all children in our community”,* said Diana Murphy-Podawiltz, one of the challenge donors; *“but especially with homeless children who are homeless through no fault of their own or others. As a community we owe these children a place to call home. They will do better as we try to makes things better for them. Consequently, we will all do better. We would like to appeal to others to help us in this endeavor.”*

Since LEAF began supporting a Homeless Student Services Fund in late 2014, the fund has provided more than \$25,000 in support to students experiencing homelessness through contributions from community members. This support has ranged from healthy snacks and needed supplies for homeless students in the classroom to assistance with crisis shelter outside of the school day. School District social workers access county and community social service programs when possible, turning to the LEAF Homeless Student Services Fund only when those sources are inadequate to address the need.

Donors who wish to contribute to the fund, which will provide needed school supplies, clothing, food and crisis housing assistance for District 742 students experiencing homelessness, can make tax-deductible contributions online at [www.leaf742.org](http://www.leaf742.org) or to the LEAF address of P.O. Box 1132, St. Cloud, MN 56302.

View a video of the campaign, with comments from the challenge grant donors and District Homeless Students Social Workers at [www.leaf742.org](http://www.leaf742.org).

## **About LEAF**

The District 742 Local Education & Activities Foundation (LEAF) was founded in 1993 as a fully independent, non-profit organization for the purpose of promoting and enhancing school-based, extra-curricular activities and academic opportunities in District 742 Public Schools. LEAF's endowment fund provides supplemental funding for *academic, activities, arts and athletic* programming in the district's schools. LEAF also provides grants to the District through other efforts including, the PAKRAT and Immersion Programs, the Homeless Student Services Fund, Adopt-A-Classroom. Since 1996 LEAF has been able to contribute **\$1,386,413** to projects in District 742.

**Check out the LEAF story at [www.leaf742.org](http://www.leaf742.org).**