



FR1ENDS of the CH1LDREN

Generational Change,
One Child at a Time

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW FRIENDS OF THE CHILDREN CHAPTER SET TO LAUNCH IN SAN FRANCISCO

With support from a \$1.2 million Social Innovation Fund grant, Friends of the Children - SF Bay Area will serve youth in and around Bayview Hunters Point.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA – Today, Friends of the Children - SF Bay Area (Friends-SF) – the newest chapter of the revolutionary mentoring program that transforms the lives of vulnerable children – received a four-year, \$1.2 million Social Innovation Fund (SIF) grant from Friends of the Children National in support of its *One Child at a Time Expansion Project*.

Friends-SF will begin mentoring its first class of vulnerable San Francisco kindergarteners this Spring. The SIF award, together with matching funds to be raised locally, will enable Friends-SF to scale 33% faster than originally planned. The organization plans to enroll a new cohort of local kindergarteners each year, primarily from the Bayview Hunters Point neighborhood of San Francisco, which was identified by the Brookings Institution as one of five “extreme poverty” neighborhoods in the city.

Friends of the Children provides long-term professional 1:1 mentors to the most vulnerable children from kindergarten through high school graduation – 12.5 years, no matter what. The model, proven through 24 years of rigorous evaluation, increases graduation rates, and decreases teen parenting and juvenile justice involvement while focusing on the growth potential of each child.

Fueled by a \$5.4 million grant from the Social Innovation Fund, a federal program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the National organization’s *One Child at a Time Expansion Project* will expand Friends of the Children’s evidence-based program to reach more youth in foster care and high-poverty, high-crime neighborhoods across the country. Specifically, over the next four years, the project will increase the number of children served by Friends of the Children by 50% nationally.

Michael Rugen, Founder and Executive Director of the new chapter said: "We are thrilled to join the Friends of the Children network and honored to receive this incredible Social Innovation Fund grant. Our outstanding Board of Directors and our generous donors have worked long and hard to make the Bay Area chapter a reality and, thanks to this catalytic award from the Social Innovation Fund, nearly 200 of the most vulnerable San Francisco children will be on their way toward breaking the generational cycle of poverty by the end of the grant term!"

“The Social Innovation Fund is an innovative program that invests in truly compelling solutions to the most persistent challenges facing our communities,” said Lois Nembhard, acting director of the Social Innovation Fund at CNCS. “Friends of the Children has a proven track record of changing the life-trajectories of youth facing the toughest challenges, and we are thrilled to support the expansion of their high-impact work to serve more young people in the San Francisco area.”

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Parag Gupta, Vice President of the Stupski Foundation, said, "As an early investor in Friends-SF we are excited about the deep support they bring to children in our community. We are excited to see them receive such a prestigious award, which will bring this unique model to even more children."

The SF chapter is partnering with HOPE-SF – a public/private partnership led by the Mayor's Office, designed to transform several of the City's most isolated public housing communities – by selecting children who live in those neighborhoods. Theo Miller, Director of HOPE-SF said, "We are impressed with Friends of the Children's dedication to serving the most vulnerable children, its evidence-based approach and its long track record of helping children break the generational cycle of poverty. Our new partnership with Friends-SF will further HOPE-SF's mission of improving the quality of life for children residing in the City's public housing, for their families and the surrounding communities."

Friends-SF will select kindergarteners from three public schools in and around Bayview Hunters Point, pairing each with a salaried, professional mentor (a Friend) for 12.5 years, through high school graduation. The mentoring organization is currently hiring Friends and will begin selecting and enrolling youth into the program next month. The Selection Committee stated that it based the ultimate award both on Friends of the Children's history of replication efforts and its belief that Friends-SF will institute and manage the model with a high degree of fidelity, quality and long-term sustainability.

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About Friends of the Children

Friends of the Children changes the story for our nation's most vulnerable youth by providing them a salaried professional mentor (who we call a Friend) from kindergarten through high school graduation – for 12.5 years – no matter what. Our Friends support and guide our children in becoming healthy and contributing members in their communities. Today, Friends serves children in Harlem and the South Bronx, NY, Seattle, WA, Boston, MA, Portland, Gresham and Klamath Falls, OR, Tampa Bay, FL, and Cornwall, United Kingdom. Friends of the Children has been named the Most Admired Nonprofit in Oregon in 2016 and 2015 by the Portland Business Journal. For more information, visit friendssfbayarea.org.

About the Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that engages millions of Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the nation's volunteer and service efforts. SIF positions the federal government to be a catalyst for impact—using public and private resources to find and grow community-based nonprofits with evidence of results. The Social Innovation Fund focuses on overcoming challenges confronting low-income Americans in three areas of priority need: economic opportunity, healthy futures, and youth development. To learn more, visit www.nationalservice.gov/sif.

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