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Kinship to join Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches

Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, a community-based program that provides children ages 5-15 with caring adult mentors, is joining the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches' (GMCC) family of programs on Sept. 1, 2011.

"I can't imagine a better fit than this," Gary Reiersen, president of GMCC, said. "The mission fit, the values fit, the rootedness in the faith community yet not limited to the faith community and our impact areas are in synergy."

With the continuing economic uncertainties and funding challenges facing nonprofits both locally and nationally, Reiersen explained the GMCC-Kinship collaboration will strengthen both organizations. "This will allow more resources to be dedicated to programming, not overhead," he said. "We are both very successful with a long history of service to the community. This strategic alliance will enhance that service."

The alliance was discussed informally beginning in 2008. Those preliminary discussions led to Kinship leasing space in GMCC's Ewald Center beginning in February 2010. Late last year, discussions between the boards covering mission fit, financial sustainability and long-term growth potential became more serious and strategic.

"Sustainability is important to us and after several months of studying programs under the umbrella of GMCC, we made the decision to move forward with confidence that this joining of forces will strengthen us," Margie Edberg, interim director of Kinship, explained.

The forerunner of the mentoring program, Kinsman, was founded in 1954 by a group of Lutheran seminary students. In 1988, Kinship of Greater Minneapolis was established as a separate, nonprofit organization servicing much of Minneapolis and the neighboring suburbs. Today, the organization serves Hennepin and Anoka counties and has mentored 2,000 youth since its inception.

Kinship will broaden the successful youth mentorship efforts established in the Division of Indian Work's Youth Leadership Development Program. With the addition of Edberg and eight Kinship staffers, GMCC will employ more than 100 people in 30 community service programs.

GMCC is a multi-program community service organization. It has been bringing together businesses, civic groups, congregations and individuals to empower those in need to achieve self-sufficiency and self-reliance since 1905.

Media contacts:

Rev. Gary Reiersen, GMCC President and CEO, 612-721-0772, reiersen@gmcc.org

Margie Edberg, Kinship of Greater Minneapolis Interim Director, 612-588-4729, margiee@kinship.org

Randy Miranda, GMCC Marketing and Communications Manager, 612-721-8687, ext. 308, rmiranda@gmcc.org