



PRESS RELEASE

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**READING CENTER AWARDED
\$1 MILLION GIFT
TOWARD CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

(February 5, 2019, Rochester, MN)

The Reading Center was granted the largest gift in our history from the Harper Family Foundation to support their new building. **The \$1 million gift was received in December 2018 and when built, the family will be recognized with a sign on the new building that reads, The Reading Center, Harper Family Foundation Building.**



Rendering of new Reading Center building, slated to open fall 2019

Foundation Chairman and Rochester physician Dr. Mike Harper was approached by two successful Reading Center alumni about our capital campaign – Mayo Physician, Dr. Brooks Edwards, and local businessman, Joe Powers. Following that introduction, Reading Center Executive Director, Cindy Russell, was invited to present to the Harper Family Foundation Trustees about our mission and capital campaign.

Dr. Harper says his family’s Foundation likes to give to educational causes. He says The Reading Center’s long and successful history and mission to “give people the skills they need to succeed” resonated with him and his family.

Reading Center Board Member, spouse and parent of Reading Center alumni, and retired pediatrician, Dr. Terri Edwards says, “We are extremely grateful to the Harper Family Foundation for their support and their strong vote of confidence in The Reading Center. Their Foundation both challenges and inspires us to work to better our community. This gift is truly transformative and will allow The Reading Center to extend its reach and mission, providing *literacy for all.*”

UNLEASHED TO SUCCEED CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

The Reading Center entered a capital campaign in 2015 and has so far raised more than \$4.2 million toward our \$4.3 million goal. We hope to enter the building, debt free later this year. The campaign has received support from the State of Minnesota (\$1.5 million in bonding funds), Mayo Clinic and Otto Bremer Trust among others.

The new 10,000 square foot building, located at 2010 Scott Road NW, is currently under construction and should be completed by the end of August 2019.

The Reading Center Executive Director, Cindy Russell, says “**A new, right-sized building is critical to enable The Reading Center to reach the state’s most challenged readers.**” Currently due to lack of space, most of our programming is done off-site.

Individuals wishing to help the nonprofit top off and complete their capital campaign should contact Sarah Carlson-Wallrath at 507-288-5271 or read@thereadingcenter.org.

ABOUT THE HARPER FAMILY FOUNDATION

The foundation was founded in Omaha, Nebraska in 1992 by Dr. Harper’s father and mother, Dr. Charles and Joan Harper. Over the past twenty-seven years, the Harper Family Foundation has given \$75 million in grants to charitable causes.

Control of the foundation has remained in the family and now Mike Harper and his three sisters, their spouses and children, make decisions about which charitable causes to support.

ABOUT THE READING CENTER

The Reading Center is a nationally recognized nonprofit that provides specialized educational services for children and adults experiencing difficulty with reading, writing, and spelling. We: (1) Provide diagnostic and educational services; (2) Train educators in the proven research-based technique based on the Orton-Gillingham approach; and (3) Increase public awareness and understanding of language learning disabilities.

During our almost 70 years of service, 10,000 children and 2,500 adults have benefited from the research-based, multi-sensory, phonetic approach that is the hallmark of The Reading Center.

In 2018, The Reading Center tutors and trainees reached more than 750 of Minnesota’s struggling readers through our programs and partnerships. We awarded more than \$50,000 in scholarships to students and trainees. 18% of our students are receiving scholarship assistance.

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