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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sunflower Foundation Announces 2018 Advocacy Fellows

TOPEKA – Sunflower Foundation is proud to introduce the Advocacy Fellowship Class of 2018. Over the coming year, this multi-sector class of 15 nonprofit leaders from across Kansas will further improve their advocacy skills, with a special emphasis on civil discourse and finding common ground to address issues of public concern.

The Advocacy Fellowship is part of the foundation’s non-partisan advocacy initiative and is designed to provide education and training opportunities for community leaders whose work can help shape public policy and ultimately improve the health of Kansans. A total of 89 leaders have graduated from the Fellowship’s first six, biennial classes.

The 2018 Fellows were recruited from seasoned and emerging leaders in a variety of sectors—including health, business, social service, faith, built environment, housing, education, and public health.

“Each class of Advocacy Fellows brings together knowledge and experience that is as diverse as the communities they come from,” said Billie Hall, President and CEO of Sunflower Foundation. “The Fellowship is a unique opportunity to work with other accomplished Kansans toward cross-cutting approaches for improving Kansans’ health. Together, these Kansas leaders inspire and drive each other to expand their approaches to advocacy.”

The program includes six sessions over the course of a year, including a visit to Washington, D.C. Curriculum includes developing advocacy strategies, building effective coalitions and grassroots efforts, navigating the political process, and working with the media.

“The public policy challenges facing Kansas today demand innovative approaches. But finding solutions becomes much more likely when we practice respect for others’ perspectives, listening, genuinely trying to understand” Hall said. “That’s why the Fellows explore advocacy approaches rooted in objectivity and consideration for differing experiences.”

The goal of the Fellowship is to help leaders improve their advocacy skills so that they are better equipped to serve their communities and to bridge political divides in pursuit of common goals.

“Bringing together nonprofit leaders with a wide range of experiences and interests introduces a new voice to policy discussions,” Hall said. “Advocacy Fellows are committed to learning, engaging, and building upon a growing network of leaders across the state, each of whom—in their own way—are working to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities.”

For more information, contact Phil Cauthon, Sunflower Foundation Director of Communications: (785) 232-3000

Community leaders selected for the Advocacy Fellowship Class of 2018 are:

HUTCHINSON

Anthony Finlay, Executive Director, Hutchinson Recreation Commission

KANSAS CITY

Seft Hunter, Executive Director, Communities Creating Opportunity

Lucia Jones Herrera, Project Manager, Community Health Council of Wyandotte County

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LAWRENCE

Jon Stewart, CEO, Heartland Community Health Center

MANHATTAN

Jayne Morris-Hardeman, Director of Finance & Advocacy, Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas

MAYETTA

Zach Pahmahmie, Tribal Council Vice-Chairman, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

PAOLA

Callie Peace, Executive Director, Kansas Parents as Teachers Association

PITTSBURG

Becky Gray, Director of Community Development & Housing, City of Pittsburg

TOPEKA

Carl Frazier, Pastor, Southwest Baptist Church
Timothy Wood, Executive Director, InterHab
Carolyn Zimmerman, Advocacy Fellow Emeritus

TRIBUNE

Christy Hopkins, Director, Greeley County Community Development

WICHITA

Brandon Johnson, Executive Director, Community Operations Recovery Empowerment Inc.
Becky Tuttle, Community Development Director, Greater Wichita YMCA
Juston White, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of South Central Kansas

The Sunflower Foundation Advocacy Fellowship began in 2008. The Fellowship helps leaders in health-related nonprofit organizations develop the understanding, experience, and expertise they need to become even more powerful voices for the Kansans they serve. The Fellowship requires a 12-month commitment and includes six sessions, averaging three days per session. The sessions are scheduled in November, January, March, May, July, and September.

Among the benefits for these leaders' organizations is that they become more adept in educating the public and policy communities about the issues and needs of those they serve. Thus, people served by the organization are better represented in policy discussions at the local, state, and national levels.

To read brief bios of each of the 2018 Advocacy Fellows, visit the Sunflower Foundation website: SunflowerFoundation.org/fellowship2018. For more information about the program in general, visit SunflowerFoundation.org/fellowship.

Sunflower Foundation was established in 2000 "to serve as a catalyst for improving the health of Kansans." The Topeka-based nonprofit directs resources statewide aimed at:

- *promoting healthy living in partnership with Kansas communities;*
- *promoting the integration of medical and mental health care; and*
- *developing leaders of Kansas organizations in a variety of sectors to be even more effective advocates for the causes and communities they serve.*

→ **For more information, contact Phil Cauthon, Sunflower Foundation Director of Communications, (785) 232-3000 or pcauthon@sunflowerfoundation.org.**

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