The Mind Trust invests $200,000 to create Community Learning Sites for Indianapolis families most in need of weekday in-person eLearning support

Indianapolis - (August 14, 2020) - The Mind Trust today announced it will invest $200,000 in School Community Partnership awards to 11 local nonprofit organizations to fund the creation of Community Learning Sites for working families in Indianapolis who need access to weekday in-person eLearning supervision and support. At least 500 students will be able to immediately register for a Community Learning Site, with sites aiming to launch no later than August 24, 2020. Families will not have to pay a fee and can find registration information at CommunityLearningSites.org.

“Marginalized families in Indianapolis continue to shoulder a disproportionate burden as a result of COVID-19. As many schools make the understandable decision to begin the new school year virtually, families continue to tell us and our community partners that they need support navigating the many obstacles they currently face,” said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust. “Leaning on our Community and Equity core values, The Mind Trust is eager to do our part in supporting students and families during this time of tremendous need.”

Tens of thousands of public school students within Indianapolis Public Schools’ (IPS) boundaries will be engaged in full-time eLearning until at least October. Because of this shift, many families have found themselves in need of eLearning supervision and support for their students during this time. Additionally, many working families with younger children are facing a childcare crisis.

To help with these needs, The Mind Trust is awarding local nonprofits with funds to create and staff Community Learning Sites. Locations will aim to begin operations no later than Monday, August 24 until at least the end of IPS’ scheduled fall break on Friday, October 16. Funds provided by The Mind Trust can be used for expenses related to supporting small groups of students with their eLearning experiences such as personnel costs, facility-related costs, wireless infrastructure, meals, Personal Protective Equipment, and transportation support for families.

The Mind Trust will support Community Learning Site partners with opportunities for best-practice training on facilitating small group eLearning environments, recruitment of facilitators, outreach to families, and other guidance to support this critical need.
**Community Learning Site locations:**
- Chaney Microlearning Center, far east
- Christamore House, near west
- Cornerstone Lutheran Church Indianapolis, in partnership with Shepherd Community Center, east side
- Crossroads AME Church, midtown
- Edna Martin Christian Center, east side
- Freedom Academy Inc. (The Reset Center), far east side
- Hawthorne Community Center, west side
- Kids Inc., in partnership with Shepherd Community Center, south side
- Shepherd Community Center, east side
- Tabernacle Presbyterian Church, midtown
- Westside Missionary Baptist Church, northwest side

Community Learning Site partners were selected based on an organization’s interest in participation, capacity to quickly implement programming, and location in high-need areas. Selected partners will focus their efforts on serving students who attend schools of all types within the IPS boundaries, but participation is not limited to only these students and services should align with community needs.

Community Learning Sites will follow all CDC, State of Indiana, and Marion County Health Department guidelines and orders, including mask orders and social distancing guidelines. Sites may use awarded funds to purchase items needed to ensure these guidelines and orders are followed. All sites either already have authorization to provide school-age care or will pursue authorization through the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration.

Families will not need to pay any fees to participate, but they do need to register with the site that works best for them. Breakfast and lunch will be served daily at all sites. Interested families can go to CommunityLearningSites.org to find current locations, hours, and information on how to register.

“Given the challenges so many families are encountering during this pandemic, it was incredibly important that The Mind Trust work to provide some sort of relief for families who need it most,” said Shannon Williams, The Mind Trust’s Senior Vice President of Community Engagement. “We asked our partners in the community for help and they eagerly stepped up to the plate because they know the need is so great. Our collective efforts and shared desire to help find eLearning support demonstrates the true power of community partnerships.”

“Indianapolis Public Schools is grateful to The Mind Trust and partners in the community for providing additional support to our most vulnerable families as they balance the need to work with the desire to ensure their children have access to the best learning opportunities during the remote learning phase,” said Aleesia Johnson, IPS superintendent. “This is what equity in education looks like as we continue to navigate our way through these challenging waters to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.”

The Mind Trust’s investment of $200,000 seeks to fund nonprofits in executing their vision of supporting students until the end of IPS’ scheduled fall break on Friday, October 16. If it is determined that remote learning is likely to continue through the fall, The Mind Trust, pending available funding, will invite Community Learning Site Partners to apply for an extension of funding to support their work with students.
To support funded partners with staffing, The Mind Trust is seeking community members interested in serving as ‘eLearning Facilitators.’ Facilitators will be matched with a community organization to work with small groups of students as they engage in the virtual learning curriculum delivered by the student’s school. Facilitators will receive compensation of at least $15 per hour through the organization they are assigned.

The Mind Trust is asking the community to consider supporting this effort by making a donation today. The cost to support one student for one week is $100. With donor support, The Mind Trust can fund additional Community Learning Sites and serve more children and families. Community members can donate online at themindtrust.org/donate.

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**About The Mind Trust**
The Mind Trust is an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit that works to build a system of schools that gives every student in Indianapolis, no exceptions, access to a high-quality education. The Mind Trust does this by building a supportive environment for schools through policy and community engagement, empowering talented, diverse educators to launch new schools, and providing existing schools with the support they need to hire world-class talent and achieve excellence. Since 2006, The Mind Trust has supported the launch of 37 schools, 13 education nonprofit organizations, and has helped place more than 1,500 teachers and school leaders in Indianapolis classrooms. More information can be found at themindtrust.org