



For immediate release

The Mind Trust launches Equity Cohorts for Indianapolis schools and nonprofits in partnership with Beloved Community

INDIANAPOLIS – (March 22 2021) – The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit, has launched Equity Cohorts with two unique tracks for nonprofit organizations and schools or school networks. Beloved Community will lead cohort participants in training on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and support each organization with creating a 3-year plan to put their commitments into action.

“Equity Cohorts give our city’s nonprofit and school communities an opportunity to examine the ways we can take actionable steps to live out our commitments to antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion,” said Patrick Jones, Senior Vice President of Leadership and Equity at The Mind Trust. “Dismantling oppressive systems cannot be done in silos. Equity Cohorts help us build a community that can work together to create real, systemic change in our schools, neighborhoods, and city.”

During the 10-month experience, all Equity Cohort participants will complete Beloved Community’s [Equity Audit](#), examine bias in talent practices, and build capacity to lead their organizations’ DEI work. The Equity in Schools Cohort will also examine the ways schools can align diversity and equity strategy across governance, operations, pedagogy, student culture, and adult culture. This Equity at Work Cohort will build capacity for participants to successfully implement the structural changes that lead to an equitable environment and practices for their entire staff and the people they serve. Each organization has a group of several team members participating in the cohort training.

The Equity in Schools cohort has launched with six local school and school network participants:

- Cold Spring School
- Global Preparatory Academy
- Irvington Community Schools
- Neighborhood Charter Network
- Purdue Polytechnic High Schools
- United Schools of Indianapolis.

“For nearly 20 years, Irvington Community Schools has modeled “The Irvington Way” with our school community, centering our work on the tenets of Respectful, Responsible, Safe, Involved, and Focused. Through the Equity in Schools cohort, we are auditing current policies and practices through a more focused lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that the next

20 years, and beyond, strengthen those tenets and help us build a more inclusive, more welcoming school culture,” said Loryn Venekamp, Principal of Irvington Community Middle School. “Our students, staff, and families deserve this commitment, and we appreciate The Mind Trust and Beloved Community for providing us with the opportunity to do this important work.”

The Equity at Work cohort has launched with six local nonprofit organization participants:

- Girls Inc. of Indianapolis
- Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana
- Relay Graduate School of Education Indianapolis
- Stand for Children Indiana
- Teach For America Indianapolis
- The Mind Trust

“We are thankful for the opportunity to learn and engage together with local partners as part of the Equity at Work cohort through The Mind Trust and Beloved Community,” said Amar Patel, Executive Director of Teach For America Indianapolis. “At Teach For America, we are committed to becoming an antiracist organization in service of our mission to advance educational excellence and opportunities for all students. This pursuit requires actively examining our roles in perpetuating inequitable systems and changing our own policies and practices to more fully embody the diversity, equity and inclusion that we aspire towards for our city and country.”

Beloved Community, a nonprofit consulting firm focused on implementing regional, sustainable solutions for diversity, equity, and inclusion, is delivering training for both cohorts. The Mind Trust also partners with Beloved Community to provide training for Innovation and Charter School Fellows to build their capacity and knowledge of DEI in the context of launching and leading a school.

“We’re thrilled to be doing this work across sectors in Indianapolis and are excited to see the positive change that can occur in a region when both schools and organizations are deepening their commitments to racial and economic equity,” said Rhonda Broussard, CEO of Beloved Community. “Ultimately, we believe that People Change Systems and we are excited to support the Indianapolis community in creating their Equity Work Plans which will lead to consistently centering their stakeholders with the most marginalized identities.”

“The Mind Trust is thrilled to support and participate in Equity Cohorts,” said Brandon Brown, CEO of The Mind Trust. “We are grateful for the expertise of Beloved Community and look forward to the ways these cohorts will impact Indianapolis’ schools and nonprofit organizations.”

###

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 38 schools, 14 education nonprofit organizations, and has helped place more than 1,600 teachers and school leaders in Indianapolis classrooms. More information can be found at themindtrust.org.

About Beloved Community

Beloved Community is a New Orleans-based **non-profit consulting firm** focused on implementing regional, sustainable solutions for racial and economic equity. Through the **Equity in School and Equity at Work Cohorts** Beloved Community deepens regional, sector-specific capacity to deliver on equity commitments for youth and adults. The cohort series provides an opportunity for schools, nonprofits, and businesses to develop aligned language, goals, and partnerships that advance equity in their region. Beloved Community's ultimate vision is to create regional tipping points for greater racial and economic equity so that historically marginalized people have real access and opportunity to live vibrant, productive lives.

Media Contact:

Kateri Whitley

kwhitley@themindtrust.org | 317.801.9682