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## **Walker Awarded \$100,000 Grant from the Cummings Foundation**

### *Needham nonprofit receives major Cummings Foundation Grant*

Needham, June 15, 2016 — Walker, a nonprofit leader in special education, behavioral health, and residential treatment for children and families, is one of 100 local nonprofits to receive grants of \$100,000 each through Cummings Foundation's "\$100K for 100" program. The \$100,000 grant supports Walker's Permanency Project. The Permanency Project, in partnership with Cambridge Family and Children's Service (CFCS), addresses the urgent need to secure legal, permanent families for children in the Massachusetts child welfare system by accelerating direct family placements throughout the state.

"Walker is grateful and honored for the partnership of the Cummings Foundation in supporting the necessary and urgent work of permanency," said Susan M. Getman, MSW, Walker's President and CEO. "Whether a child is headed back to his or her own home, to that of a relative, or to a new adoptive home, we believe that growing up in a family is every child's birth right and the key to a promising future. Walker is committed to creating new ways to address the urgency of permanency for children at Walker and beyond."

Each year, there are more than 10,000 children in the Massachusetts child welfare system who are unable to return home or have no families to return to. A multitude of studies confirm that youth without permanent families are compromised academically and challenged with complex and painful mental health difficulties. On any given day, over half of the children placed in Walker's care are waiting to be adopted, or have been adopted by a family that is now struggling mightily to cope with the challenges facing the child. Walker's goal is to accelerate the successful placement or return of children earlier in their lives in order to avert these grim and costly outcomes.

"I look forward to joining Walker in this endeavor and continuing our work of ensuring permanent families for the children we serve," said Robert Gittens, the Executive Director of Cambridge Family and Children's Service. "CFCS and Walker will be exploring and developing new and creative approaches that provide a timely, streamlined pathway to permanency for all children."

Walker's Permanency Project will work to accelerate direct family placements, build the capacity of programs state-wide in "adoption competency," and work with public policy leaders on system-wide reforms that improve the permanency status of children throughout Massachusetts. With this grant, Walker will develop an innovative Walker Permanency Practice Model which promises to dramatically accelerate a child's movement back to his or her own home or to a new, adoptive home. For those children in need of adoption, the partnership with CFCS provides for a seamless transition from Walker's therapeutic residential program to a pre-adoptive home recruited especially for that child. In addition, Walker will build a comprehensive training and consultation center for other providers who need to hone their own permanency practices. Finally, the project partners will collaborate with others across the Commonwealth to advocate for systemic changes that have historically compromised a timely permanency process in Massachusetts.

"We admire and very much appreciate the important work that nonprofit organizations like Walker are doing in the local communities where our colleagues and clients live and work," said Joel Swets, Cummings Foundation's Executive Director. "We are delighted to support their efforts."

During a competitive review process, Walker was chosen from a total of 479 applicants. Representing the Needham-based nonprofit, Susan M. Getman, MSW, Walker's President and CEO, and Carolyn Wood, Walker's Vice President of Advancement, joined some 300 other guests at a June 9 reception at TradeCenter 128 in Woburn to celebrate the \$10 million infusion into Greater Boston's nonprofit sector. With the conclusion of this grant cycle, Cummings Foundation has now awarded more than \$140 million to local nonprofits alone.

The "\$100K for 100" program supports nonprofits that are not only based in but also primarily serve Middlesex, Essex, and Suffolk counties. This year, the program is benefiting 41 different cities and towns within the Commonwealth. Through this place-based initiative, Cummings Foundation aims to give back in the area where it owns commercial buildings, all of which are managed, at no cost to the Foundation, by its affiliate Cummings Properties. Founded in 1970 by Bill Cummings of Winchester, the Woburn-based commercial real estate firm leases and manages more than 10 million square feet of space, the majority of which exclusively benefits the Foundation.

This year's diverse group of grant recipients represents a wide variety of causes, including education, homelessness prevention, elder services, healthcare, and food insecurity. Most of the grants will be paid over two to five years. The complete list of 100 grant winners is available at: [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

#### **About Walker**

Walker is a leading not-for-profit charitable organization providing intensive, highly specialized therapeutic and academic services for exceptionally vulnerable yet resilient children, teens, and families facing complex mental health, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges. Founded in 1961, Walker's evidence-based programs positively impact thousands of children, teens, and families each year throughout Greater Boston, the North and South Shore as well as in Central Massachusetts. Walker provides services through campuses in Needham and Watertown, community-based clinical, home-based, parent education and youth development programs, professional seminars, consultations, and coaching. For more information, please visit [walkercares.org](http://walkercares.org) or [facebook.com/WalkerCares](https://facebook.com/WalkerCares).

#### **About Cambridge Family and Children's Service**

The mission of Cambridge Family and Children's Service's (CFCS) is to strengthen and support families so that their children can be raised in loving & nurturing homes, within communities that support them. CFCS is one of the oldest human services agencies in Greater Boston. Founded in 1873 as the Avon Home, an orphanage for local children, CFCS has a long and distinguished history of serving children, adolescents and families in the Cambridge area and in Greater Boston and its suburbs. Today CFCS provides services for foster and group care, adoption, developmental disabilities, and family support, all programs that support children and youth and to strengthen families in more than 100 cities and towns throughout Massachusetts. For more information, please visit <http://www.helpfamilies.org/>.

#### **About Cummings Foundation**

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings of Winchester. With assets exceeding \$1 billion, it is one of the largest foundations in New England. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including two New Horizons retirement communities in Marlborough and Woburn. Its largest single commitment to date was \$50 million to Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University. Additional information is available at [www.CummingsFoundation.org](http://www.CummingsFoundation.org).

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