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Bay Area Nonprofit Aim High Launches Endowment With \$5M Donation From Longtime Donor

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF - Educational nonprofit Aim High announced the launch of an endowment made possible with a \$5 million leadership gift from a longtime donor. This is the largest gift in Aim High's history.

"After contributing to Aim High for many years and observing the positive changes and opportunities it has brought to the lives of those included in the program at a time of their critical development, it was an easy decision to make this endowment. I see this as an excellent and highly leveraged investment in education," says a statement from the donor, who wishes to remain anonymous.

Aim High is the largest summer learning program in Northern California. The nationally-recognized organization provides a free summer enrichment and academic program to adolescents from low-income communities. Since its launch in 1986, Aim High has worked to eliminate summer learning loss, while boosting middle school achievement (a key indicator of on-time high school graduation and college readiness). Aim High's multi-year model embraces team-teaching, project-based and social emotional learning and culturally relevant curriculum to ensure that middle school students stay academically and socially engaged and are prepared to transition to high school.

The launch of an endowment helps ensure that Aim High's impact will continue to grow for generations to come.

Former educators Alec Lee and Eleanor McBride co-founded Aim High with a small grant from The San Francisco Foundation. Fifty students comprised the first summer of the program at Lick-Wilmerding High School in San Francisco where Lee and McBride both taught. Over the last 34 years, Aim High has expanded to 18 campuses serving 2,300 students and 550 educators annually.

"The launch of an endowment will have a huge impact on Aim High students, teachers and families," says Lee, who has served as the executive director since 1986. "Aim High has a track record of success and a commitment to continuous learning, improvement, and expansion into new communities. I am firmly convinced we have earned this kind of investment in our model."

For the last three decades, Aim High has remained committed to narrowing the opportunity and achievement gaps between low-income youth and their more affluent peers by offering middle school students multi-year, no-cost summer programming. Educators have long maintained that middle school and summer are critical junctures for young people, but are often overlooked in favor of school-year programming and services geared toward elementary and high school populations. Aim High has been a vital provider in this gap.

ABOUT AIM HIGH: Today Aim High operates 18 campuses across the Greater Bay Area and Tahoe Basin. Since 1986, more than 15,000 students have gone through the program. In 2006 and 2018, the National Summer Learning Association presented Aim High with the Excellence in Summer Learning Award, making Aim High the only organization to receive this distinction twice. Visit aimhigh.org to learn more.