

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KAFÉ12 RECEIVES SAFER CALGARY AWARD

March 11, 2010, Calgary: Safer Calgary recognized the importance of educating our youth, when Kafé12 was honoured today with a Jim Gray Safer Calgary Award for the group's work on improving high school completion rates in our city. The Jim Gray Awards honour groups and individuals that contribute to Calgary being a safer city to live, work and play.

Kafé12 (www.kafe12.org) is a virtual and actual community where diverse members engage in meaningful conversation about what will help children and youth to succeed at school. The common thread of the Kafé12 community is the belief that the best start for children and youth is finishing high school. The most recent statistics indicate that only 68 per cent of Calgary students complete school within three years of entering grade 10.

“Completing high school is a crucial step along the pathway to well-being in adulthood. We all know that high school dropouts are more likely to receive social assistance; experience poor family functioning; be in poor health; become parents in adolescence; commit crimes; and abuse drugs and alcohol,” said Barbara Burggraf, executive director for EducationMatters. EducationMatters along with other Funders for Youth partners including the United Way of Calgary and Area, City of Calgary FCSS and the Burns Memorial Fund, attended the awards luncheon. Burggraf accepted the award on behalf of the partnership.

“The good news is youth who complete their education will become more engaged members of our community and in turn creating a safer community for everyone,” concluded Burggraf in her acceptance speech. The award also included a cash prize of \$1,000.00.

Kafé12 was started in 2008 when a group of Calgary funders, called The Funders for Youth, who support vulnerable youth got together with a vision to make a difference for youth in the community. The group chose to focus on improving high school completion rates after learning the alarming statistics. Since then over 300 concerned citizens have become Kafé12 members and some participated for over one year in working groups around policy, partnerships and public awareness. Recently a steering committee has formed to move forward key action items supporting the issue including the launch of a pilot ‘stay in school’ program.

Kafé12's goal is to raise the high school completion rate to 90 per cent over the next ten years or 20 per cent by 2020. For more information on the Kafé12, visit www.kafe12.org.

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EducationMatters is Calgary's public education Trust, and engages the Calgary community in supporting enhancements programs and student awards for Calgary's public education students. The Trust is the PLUS that gives students more so they can have the best possible learning experiences.

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