

Rochester Area Foundation - News & Publications

Quote of the Moment...

A lie gets halfway around the world before the truth has a chance to get its pants on.

~Sir Winston Churchill~

Mayo gift targets youngest learners

By Joshua Lynsen
Wed, Oct 12, 2005

Mayo Clinic is pledging \$650,000 to First Steps, an initiative that prepares children for kindergarten.

The pledge, announced this morning, gives First Steps \$250,000 both this year and next year. Mayo Clinic will donate another \$50,000 annually in 2007, 2008 and 2009, if matching community contributions are raised.

Board of Governors Chairman Dr. Hugh Smith said, in a prepared statement, that Mayo Clinic made the contribution because First Steps benefits many people.

"Mayo Clinic is supporting First Steps because this benefit to children and their families is good for the future of our community," he said. "First Steps is constructively addressing a critical preschool stage in our children's learning and development that will significantly benefit them in their subsequent years."

Created by the Rochester Area Foundation, First Steps prepares children for school through several methods. The initiative seeks to make kindergarten readiness a community priority while strengthening family participation in early learning.

First Steps also measures early care and education systems, and then creates incentives that encourage those systems to become more integrated.

Rochester Area Foundation Executive Director Steve Thornton said Mayo Clinic's pledge gives First Steps more than money. "It's recognition of the importance, as a community, to invest in the preparation of our youngest citizens for school," he said. "That has important implications not only for (the children) and their families, but for the community as well."

This is the second major pledge to First Steps. In August, the initiative received a \$125,000 pledge from Home Federal Savings Bank.

The initiative hopes to collect a total of \$4 million.

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