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CEDAR VALLEY READERS AWARDED GRANT TO DEVELOP SUMMER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

WATERLOO, IA, May 2, 2017 – Reducing the loss in learning that often accompanies summer vacation continues to play an important role in closing the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth. As part of that effort, the Cedar Valley Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, known locally as Cedar Valley Readers, reached out to the National Summer Learning Association (NSLA) for help in aligning and strengthening local summer learning opportunities. The Cedar Valley was chosen by the NSLA as one of ten communities nationwide to be a part of the NSLA’s Summer Learning Landscape Assessment in 2017.

The assessment will provide a review of available summer learning resources and activities in the Cedar Valley, and identify key ways in which communities can increase quality summer programming for the children of families that are most in need. The project, coordinated by Cedar Valley Readers, was recently granted \$10,000 by the Cedar Valley United Way. The award comes from United Way’s Social Innovation Investment funding, and will be used to match national funding from the NSLA.

The NSLA assessment is the first step in a process aimed at ultimately aligning the efforts of the community at large in reversing summer learning loss. “Summer learning loss, or what we call ‘the summer slide,’ is an important factor in reducing the achievement gap,” says Lekeisha Veasley, coordinator for Cedar Valley Readers. “Many parents would be surprised to know two-thirds of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income high school students has been linked to learning loss during elementary school summers. We are working stop that loss.”

Planning for the assessment is underway. Results will be compiled and made available in the early fall. Updates on the project will be available on the Cedar Valley Readers’ website at www.cedarvalleyreaders.org.

About Cedar Valley Readers

Cedar Valley Readers joined the National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading in 2014. By working with area non-profits, foundations, business leaders and schools, the Campaign aims to disrupt generational poverty by removing barriers to learning and expanding opportunities for area youth. The Campaign focuses on an important predictor of school success and high school graduation: grade-level reading by the end of third grade. Research demonstrates that students who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school.

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