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**Community Foundation for Northern Virginia Launches the  
Latino Engagement and Achievement Fund  
*To Strengthen the Latino Community in the Region*  
**Anonymous Donor Challenges Community with \$50,000 Matching Gift****

Oakton, VA (April 13, 2017) – The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia launched the Latino Engagement and Achievement Fund (LEAF) to promote and invest in the civic engagement, education, economic success, naturalization, health, leadership development, volunteerism, and advocacy of the Latino community in the Metro DC region. Inspired by a 2016 Aspen Institute Latinos & Society Program report titled “Unlocking Latino Civic Potential: 2016 and Beyond,” two visionary Northern Virginia leaders, Paty Funegra and Diana Katz, formed this committee advised fund at the Community Foundation to create a source of strategic, permanent funding that will strengthen and encourage the Latino community now and for generations to come. Abigail Golden-Vazquez, Executive Director of the Latinos & Society Program at the Aspen Institute and author of the report stated, “I am confident that the Latino community and many more will benefit, because when you have a fully participatory and inclusive society, you have a stronger healthier community and democracy for all.”

Inspired by the launch event, an anonymous donor has challenged the community to contribute with a matching gift. Every dollar donated to this campaign will be doubled up to **\$50,000**. **If the community meets this challenge, the fund’s** current asset base of \$100,000 will be doubled for a sum of \$200,000 before the inaugural grant cycle begins in the fall. All donors who contribute by *September 1, 2017* will be invited to join **LEAF’s Founding Ambassadors**. Members of this group will have the opportunity to participate in the inaugural year’s grants committee, attend the grantee celebration event, and more. Donors who contribute \$1,000 or more to invest in LEAF’s work will become members of the **LEAF Impact Circle**, which includes, among other benefits, recognition in the Community Foundation’s annual report and on its website. Please visit [www.cfnova.org/leaf](http://www.cfnova.org/leaf) or contact Kelly Blanks, Chief Philanthropy Officer, directly at [kelly.blanks@cfnova.org](mailto:kelly.blanks@cfnova.org) for more information and to support this Fund.

Among other findings, Aspen Institute’s report states that, “the availability of financial resources can determine the success or failure of efforts to boost civic participation,” and that a more holistic funding approach is needed to address issues beyond voter registration – for example, civic education, naturalization, volunteerism, and advocacy.

According to Pew Research Center, 57% of all Latinos in the Commonwealth of Virginia reside in Northern Virginia, accounting for over 400,000 of the 2.5 million people living in our region. “In just a generation, we Latinos will come from 18% of the population to 30% by 2060,” said Paty Funegra, President and CEO of La Cocina VA and co-founder of LEAF. “It means that those people have to be invested in today. We have to build bridges and create leaders, build networks for the everlasting quest to create a good society.”

The Fund launched on Thursday morning, April 13<sup>th</sup>, at an event the Community Foundation hosted at the Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce in Tysons Corner, VA. The keynote presenters included Javier Palomarez, President of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Abigail Golden-Vazquez, Executive Director of the Latinos & Society Program at the Aspen Institute. “This is a pivotal time for Hispanics in America as we represent the fastest growing demographic in the country,” said Mr. Palomarez. “The Latino Engagement and Achievement Fund [has the potential to] help our brethren participate more profoundly in our democracy [by] providing the manpower and financial resources to create opportunities and better our community.”

The Community Foundation will conduct a competitive grant cycle for all awards from LEAF, with the goal of awarding impact grants of \$20,000 to \$25,000 annually. In 2017, the Fund will award at least one grant of \$25,000 to support English proficiency and civic engagement programs that lead to naturalization, a direct suggestion from Aspen Institute’s Report. A second grant equal to 25% of all donations the Community Foundation receives through September 1 may be awarded. The size of that award will depend on how well the community responds to this effort.

“I see our Fund as ultimately leading the way to a more comprehensive and collaborative approach to grant making in our region, especially for funding in the Latino community,” stated Diana Katz, co-founder of LEAF.

### **About the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia:**

The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia grows philanthropy to respond to critical need and seed innovation in the region. Comprised of donor advised funds, permanent funds, giving circles, and other charitable endowments, the Community Foundation connects donors to community, and helps meet community needs with community resources.

In 2016 the Community Foundation awarded more than \$4.6 million in grants and scholarships and reported \$37 million in managed philanthropic assets.

For more information please visit us at [www.cfnova.org](http://www.cfnova.org), on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CommunityFoundationforNOVA/> and on Twitter [@CFNova](https://twitter.com/CFNova).

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