**For Immediate Release**

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SUNDERLAND GIFT BRINGS EUSTIS AREA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FUND CLOSER TO COMMUNITY WELLNESS CENTER GOAL

**Eustis, Neb.** – Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund is closing in on its goal to raise $520,000 for the construction of a community wellness center to serve both local students and members of the Eustis-Farnam area communities. Thanks to a generous $100,000 gift from the Sunderland Foundation, volunteer committee members are just inches away from reaching their ambitious goal. Volunteers are currently making a final push to raise the remainder of the funds necessary to support long-term facility maintenance and purchase new workout equipment. Individuals, families and businesses who would like to be part of this monumental community project are urged to make their gifts now.

In 2013, members of the Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund hosted a community visioning session facilitated by Nebraska Community Foundation. Dozens of interested community members attended the meeting which challenged participants to voice their hopes and dreams for the future of Eustis. A new community wellness center quickly emerged as one of the top priorities and members of the Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee began formulating a plan to make this community dream a reality.

“A new wellness center will not only improve the quality of life for current residents of our community, it is the kind of facility that will make the Eustis-Farnam area more attractive to returners and newcomers in the future,” said Troy Ruda, Chairman of the Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee.

The committee began its work by conducting extensive research both on community support for the project and building options. It also worked to forge a partnership with Eustis-Farnam Public Schools which had both a shared interest in providing new facilities for its students and the space to house the new center. The Eustis-Farnam Community Wellness Center will be located on the east side of the existing gymnasium. In addition to new locker rooms (which were recently completed), the center will offer a weight room, cardio machines, a walking track, and fitness classes to students and community members.

Local students have shown their enthusiastic support of the community wellness center, in particular, the group known as E-Unit. Early on, E-Unit adopted the wellness center project as its own and has shared fundraising duties with the adult committee through a number of events including cake auctions, concession stands, and a “dive-in” movie. To date, they alone have raised over $8,000 to benefit the cause.

“Without the passion and support of our local youth and their leaders, this project would not have been possible,” said Judy Brockmeier of the Eustis-Farnam Community Wellness Center Committee.

“It’s really all about helping out the community by giving back,” said sophomore E-Unit member Maggie Walker.

“The idea of a new weight room and wellness center keeps our student body excited about being physically active and that carries through to all aspects of our lives. It’s an important improvement to our school and our community,” added senior E-Unit member Christian Timm.

The project has also received significant support from many members of the community as well as the Sunderland Foundation, which awards grants for planning, design, construction, renovation, repairs and restoration of facilities to benefit communities throughout the United States.

“We are so proud to provide support for this important community project,” said Kent Sunderland, president of the Sunderland Foundation. “The wellness center will provide many benefits to the people of the Eustis-Farnam communities for generations to come.”

Community members interested in providing support for the Eustis-Farnam Community Wellness Center may visit [www.nebcommfound.org/give/eustis-area-community-foundation-fund](http://www.nebcommfound.org/give/eustis-area-community-foundation-fund) and select “Eustis-Farnam Community Wellness Center Account” when making their contribution. In addition to gifts of cash, the Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund Advisory Committee is poised to accept gifts of grain and livestock, stock and retirement assets. Gifts may be mailed to: Eustis-Farnam Community Wellness Center, PO Box 75, Eustis, NE 69028. For more information, contact Kristen Jack (308.486.5489) or Janisha Ruda (308.486.5229).

**About Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund**

Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund is working to enrich the quality of life and help create new opportunities in the Eustis area. A volunteer fund advisory committee works actively to increase charitable giving and award grants to local worthy causes and projects that are addressing emerging needs and future opportunities in the community. Established in 2004, Eustis Area Community Foundation Fund is an affiliated fund of Nebraska Community Foundation.

**About Nebraska Community Foundation**

Nebraska Community Foundation unleashes abundant local assets, inspires charitable giving and connects ambitious people to build stronger communities and a Greater Nebraska.

In the last five years, 41,776 contributions have been made to NCF and its affiliated funds. Since 1994, NCF has reinvested $323 million in Nebraska’s people and places. For information, visit NebraskaHometown.org.

Photo attached:

Eustis-Farnam Public Schools administration and school board, E-Unit members, and members of the Community Wellness Center Committee stand near the gymnasium with new locker rooms in the background. The Eustis-Farnam Community Wellness Center will be attached to the east side of the locker room addition.

Back Row L to R: Nick Hodge (principal), Jenny Dye, Maggie Walker, Alexia Wilcox, Nate Hodge, Zeb Knackstedt, Christian Timm, Andy Jack, Cade Schmidt, Spencer Pleschourt, Jacob Rupe, Gretchen Hodge, Hailey Phroper, Karissa Hodge, Steve Sampy (superintendent), and Neil Jack (school board)

Front Row L to R: Wellness Center Committee Members – Janisha Ruda, Kristen Jack, and Judy Brockmeier

Photo Credit: Don Brockmeier