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**Affinity Plus and United Way Revitalize Born Learning Trail**

*The trail will create an interactive learning experience for families in the Rochester community that’s highly inclusive*

**ROCHESTER, MINN. (May 26, 2021) –** Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union is pleased to announce its partnership with United Way of Olmsted County for the revitalization of Rochester’s Born Learning Trail. The Born Learning Trail is an interactive, playful, and visible community engagement tool designed to help parents, caregivers, and communities support early learning by helping boost children’s language and literacy skills while encouraging families to get active.

Through an $11,000 contribution from the Affinity Plus, the Credit Union and its employees will both sponsor and maintain the trail for at least the next 5 years.

The trail is located at approximately 840 7th St NE, along the Silver Creek bike path near Three Links Park in Rochester. Included in the revitalization were 10 new interactive learning games painted directly onto the path along with corresponding signage in English, Spanish, and Somali that explains the games to parents and caretakers. It also serves as a way to elevate awareness of early childhood education, encourage outdoor play, and promote active learning in nature.

“Early learning is a critical part of childhood development, and it can happen anywhere, at any time. We are thrilled to bring this to the Rochester community,” said Billie Packer, Rochester Branch Manager, Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union. “At Affinity Plus, we value educational development, and we hope the Born Learning Trail will help our community do even more to get kids off to the right start. We’re proud to help make the park an environment to grow, learn, and interact.”

"The new Born Learning Trail is just one way United Way of Olmsted County is supporting young people in our community,” said Amy Wilfahrt, Outreach Coordinator, United Way of Olmsted County. “Paired with initiatives like Community Schools and Cradle 2 Career, we can make lasting systems-levels change to ensure future generations are on a path toward success."

Spark Children’s Museum is also partnering with United Way of Olmsted County and Affinity Plus to bring the Born Learning Trail to life. Spark offers people of all ages the opportunity to learn about the world, each other, and local environments through hands-on, inquiry-based exploration.

“We encourage everyone to get outside and move,” said Lindsey Hemker, Development Manager at Spark Children’s Museum. “Materials will be at the children’s museum for families to bring to the Born Learning Trails to ask inquiry-based questions about the world and the environment.”

To learn more about the Born Learning Trail, please visit: https://www.uwolmsted.org/

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**About Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union**

*Based in St. Paul, Minn., Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union is a not-for-profit, financial cooperative that puts people first above profits. Members of Affinity Plus receive maximum value through competitive rates, minimal fees, and unique, member-centric products and programs. Established in 1930, Affinity Plus has 28 branches located throughout Minnesota and is owned by more than 220,000 members. Affinity Plus has over $3 billion in assets. Additional information is available at www.affinityplus.org or by calling (800) 322-7228.*

**About United Way of Olmsted County**

*United Way of Olmsted County is a social change organization that fights for the education, health, and financial stability of every person in our community.*

*We do this in a variety of ways. We operate programs and provide shared resources that support the community, such as our 211 information and referral service or our Get Connected volunteer matching portal. We work collaboratively with partners from many organizations and walks of life to create system change and solutions that elevate our community more than any single program or organization could. We provide financial, technical, and volunteer support for programs that make a difference.*

*At United Way, we LIVE UNITED with the change-makers, risk-takers, and problem-solvers as we seek, find, and create lasting solutions to the challenges that face our community.*