

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Science Club for Girls Awarded \$750,000 Cummings Grant

Cambridge-based non-profit receives 10 years of funding from Cummings Foundation

May 30, 2024 (Cambridge, Mass.) – Science Club for Girls (SCFG), a leader in mentorship-based programs that foster confidence, excitement, and literacy in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) for girls and gender-expansive youth, has received a 10-year, \$750,000 grant from Cummings Foundation. The funding will support SCFG’s continued expansion to reach more girls and gender-expansive youth who are most underrepresented in STEM by race and socioeconomic factors over the next decade. Since restructuring in 2018, SCFG’s enrollment has grown 350%, and they’re now serving 700 participants with 190 mentors in their semester-based clubs and over 1200 participants in the year.

“We are so incredibly grateful to Cummings Foundation for this transformational 10-year investment in our programs. This long-term support is essential to our sustained growth and allows us to reach more K-12 girls and gender-expansive youth with hands-on, mentorship-based, fun STEM programming,” said Dr. Bonnie Bertolaet, Executive Director of SCFG.

Cummings Foundation Grant Program supports Massachusetts’ nonprofits with the aim of supporting a wide variety of causes, including housing and food insecurity, workforce development, immigrant services, social justice, education, and mental health services.

Currently, women represent just 34% of the STEM workforce with Black and Latina women comprising only 4% of scientists and engineers in the United States. By providing free, experiential programs and maximizing meaningful interactions with women-in STEM Mentors, SCFG addresses the systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing quality STEM programming. Through their programs, girls and gender expansive youth have the opportunity to dive into their hands-on, engaging STEM curriculum with the support of mentors who share similar lived experiences and backgrounds.

SCFG programs span grades K-12, including junior mentoring and leadership experiences for high school participants. Adult mentoring and role modeling is facilitated by volunteers studying STEM disciplines in higher education and working in STEM careers. Over the last 14 years, over 90% of Science Club for Girls’ high school juniors and seniors have gone to college (compared to the national average of 66%), with more than 55% majoring in STEM fields.

“At this stage of growth, this high-level, multi-year grant from Cummings Foundation allows us to plan strategically for expansion, knowing we have dedicated funding sources we can rely on as we expand to new communities. We are committed to making long-term investments in these new locations and it wouldn’t be possible without generous sustaining support from Cummings Foundation,” said Alejandra Carvajal, SCFG Board Co-Chair and SVP & Chief Legal Officer at Mersana Therapeutics.

SCFG programs pave a pathway into higher education and careers at all levels of the STEM ecosystem, thus building a more diverse and inclusive STEM community. This investment in SCFG’s programs for girls and gender expansive youth will allow SCFG to sustainably expand access to individuals across Greater Boston, and maximize the engagement, accessibility, and delivery of quality materials and programs. Long-term, SCFG efforts will lead to a diversity of perspectives and individuals from all backgrounds finding their place in STEM fields, and therefore strengthening key industries in Massachusetts.

“Greater Boston is fortunate to have a robust, dedicated, and highly capable nonprofit sector that supports and enhances the community in myriad ways,” said Cummings Foundation Executive Director and Trustee Joyce Vyriotes. “The entire Cummings organization is thankful for their daily work to help all our neighbors thrive.”

“It is a true honor to both continue and deepen our partnership with Cummings Foundation. Joyce and Bill Cummings’ values are embedded into everything the Foundation’s staff and volunteers do. As a result, their approach is incredibly intentional and thoughtful. They center the non-profits and the communities being served at every stage of the process. We are so thrilled to be engaged in this meaningful partnership that will have a profound and lasting impact on our organization and the communities we serve,” said Dr. Bonnie Bertolaet, Executive Director of SCFG.

About SCFG

Since 1994, Science Club for Girls (SCFG) has been fostering confidence, excitement, and literacy in STEM for girls and gender expansive youth from underrepresented communities. By providing free, hands-on, experiential programs and maximizing meaningful interactions with women-in STEM Mentors, SCFG addresses the systemic barriers that prevent them from accessing quality STEM programming. SCFG is training the future STEM workforce and, with its focus on addressing inequities in STEM as it relates to gender, race, and socioeconomic status, it strives to create a future that is more equitable and economically just. SCFG’s vision is a STEM community that reflects the diversity of the communities we work and live in. To learn more about Science Club for Girls, visit: www.scienceclubforgirls.org.

About Cummings Foundation

Woburn-based Cummings Foundation, Inc. was established in 1986 by Joyce and Bill Cummings of Winchester, MA and has grown to be one of the largest private foundations in New England. The Foundation directly operates its own charitable subsidiaries, including New Horizons retirement communities, in Marlborough and Woburn, and Cummings Health Sciences, LLC. Additional information is available at www.CummingsFoundation.org.

###