



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 25, 2015**  
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### **Helping Kids Succeed Changes**

**(Hastings, MN)** Since the fall of 2012, the community of Hastings has been working on the Helping Kids Succeed initiative to help engage youth and adults and build webs of support. Throughout 2013, information was gathered from members of the community and in 2014, the *Helping Kids Succeed—The Hastings Way* handbook was published based on feedback gathered from the community. The handbook provides a snapshot of the connectivity of the Hastings community, information on the web of support model, and ideas on how to strengthen webs of support. Throughout the past year, hundreds of handbooks have found their way to community members, followed by presentations and discussions on strengthening webs of support.

Helping Kids Succeed was initially funded in 2012 by a collaboration of the United Way of Hastings (UWH) (funding & initiative oversight), City of Hastings, Hastings Independent School District #200, Hastings Ministerial Association, and the Ruth Gale & George W. Doffing Charitable Fund. The initial funding covered the work that was accomplished in the community to gather inputs and publish the handbook. Subsequent funding was provided by the UWH and the City of Hastings to disseminate the handbooks and lead discussions in relation to the handbook and how to apply the tools in the handbook.

Over the past year, Jane Neumiller-Bustad, first as a volunteer, then as the Helping Kids Succeed Director of Connections, has been working with the UWH, the Helping Kids Succeed teens, and the community to implement the strategies associated with initiative. As the initiative looks to transition into the long term, and ultimately into the hands of the community, we are asking the entire community for ongoing leadership and support. Every community member has the potential and the opportunity to build webs of support. While the transition involves Jane no longer serving in the part-time Director of Connections position, she believes strongly in the importance of building webs of support and will be involved as a volunteer. Meanwhile, the United Way of Hastings will continue to provide oversight during the transition with the primary contact for Helping Kids Succeed being Mari Mellick, UWH Executive Director.

Over the coming months, there will be an increased effort to make more handbooks available and build webs of support. By strengthening our webs of support, we are strengthening our community. Would you like to strengthen our youth? Would you like to strengthen our community? Now is the time for you to get involved. Contact UWH at [mari@unitedwayofhastings.org](mailto:mari@unitedwayofhastings.org) or 651-438-3337 to provide financial or volunteer support.

The UWH is an independent United Way that has worked for over 50 years serving Hastings and the surrounding rural communities within Independent School District #200. Its mission is to build partnerships to improve the lives of people in our community. Donations are accepted year-round. For more information about the UWH and the agencies it funds, visit [www.unitedwayofhastings.org](http://www.unitedwayofhastings.org).

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