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Photos Available: *If you are interested in publishing a photo including your local e² Fellowship participants, please contact Christel Gollnick, listed above. A list of participants by location is included at the end of this release.*

Youth and adult participants graduate from Heartland Foundation's e² Fellowship

(e²) education emPowers® initiative is growing appreciation for lifelong learning and a greater understanding of education's role in the region's vitality.

St. Joseph, Mo. (April 29, 2016) – Forty youth and adult participants graduated from Heartland Foundation's e² Fellowship on Wednesday, April 27, 2016. The program engaged intergenerational teams from both large and small communities in Kansas and Missouri to explore collaborative leadership and creative solutions to common challenges in organizations and communities. The teams gathered five times on the emPowerU® campus in downtown St. Joseph, Mo. over the past several months applying the Foundation's challenge-based model for critical- and creative-thinking.

The e² Fellowship sessions focused on the importance of educational attainment and lifelong learning to the overall health and well-being of individuals, households, neighborhoods, communities, the region, and our country. They learned about different working, thinking, and learning styles; leadership character traits and values; and, power struggles and shifts as they relate to how poverty and prosperity play a role in the decisions leaders make. The participants also had an opportunity to collaboratively work with established leaders on real-life ethical dilemmas as well as determine several actions they can take together throughout the region to be difference-

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makers in the lives of the residents of America's heartland.

"This was a great experience creating ideas to change the world while working with others," said Aubree Robinson, an e² Fellow from Highland, Kan.

The 2015-2016 e² Fellows asked and answered tough questions as they explored how to make America's heartland a more thriving and globally-competitive region. The senior high school students and adults concluded that our youngest citizens need and deserve more mentorship and help in understanding that what they are learning in school has relevance to their lives. The group also expressed their belief that everyone can participate in cleaning up their communities to make them more enjoyable places to live as well as attractive places for people to invest in further.

Nominations for the 2016-2017 e² Fellowship are now open. Information and application forms can be found at <http://www.heartlandfoundation.org/what-we-do/programs/e2fellowship/>.

The e² Fellowship is part of the (e²) education emPowers® initiative of Heartland Foundation and its Healthy Communities Regional Investor Partners including Missouri Western State University; Mosaic Life Care; North Central Missouri College; Northwest Missouri State University; and, SSM Health St. Francis. The leadership program enhances and leverages the skills of emerging and experienced leaders and deepens the commitment to education and empowerment advocacy. A cross-section of individuals and organizations have formed volunteer teams addressing early learning, STEAM education and awareness, and multiple workforce pathways to prosperity. They aim to find new, collaborative solutions that lead to better jobs, better wages, healthier people and thriving communities. Serving as a catalyst, convener, innovator, and connector, Heartland Foundation is a public charity dedicated to championing education and empowering people to build healthy and thriving communities. Founded in 1982 and leading the region's Healthy Communities movement since 1994. Call 816.271.7200 or visit www.heartlandfoundation.org to learn more.

Heartland Foundation 2015-2016 e² Fellowship Participants

KANSAS

Doniphan County — Mary Curry, Carson Lackey, Aubree Robinson (Doniphan West USD #111 High School Team, Highland, Kan.);

Seth Bembrick, Angie Newton, Kylee Newton (Riverside USD #114 High School Team, Wathena, Kan.)

MISSOURI

Andrew County — Sam Davis, Ellen Lilly, Alex Modlin, Hannah Nitti (Savannah High School Team, Savannah, Mo.);

Buchanan County — Jasmine Kalamon, Wyatt Phillips, Emily Zawodny-Walkup (Benton High School Team, St. Joseph, Mo.);

Kyle Loehning, Jr., Andrea Robinson, Liz Robinson (Bishop LeBlond High School Team, St. Joseph, Mo.);

Bailey Cordonnier, Aimee Hausman, Claire Hausman, Hannah Otterberg (Central High School Team, St. Joseph, Mo.);

Roxann Beckham, Jacob Proctor, Jake Roderick (Hillyand Technical Center Team, St. Joseph, Mo.);

Victor Boynton, Kelsey Kendall, Lauren Wegart (Lafayette High School Team, St. Joseph, Mo.);

Mazzie Boyd, Matthew Corkins, Ethan Olson (St. Joseph Christian Team, St. Joseph, Mo.);

Melissa Carson, Kristal Short, Carrie Turner, (St. Joseph School District Volunteers, St. Joseph, Mo.)

Clinton County — Ryan Beatty, Kayley Clements, Lori Clements, Conner Jackson (Clinton County R-III Plattsburg High School Team, Plattsburg, Mo.)

Nodaway County — Justin Briney, Andrew Freemyer, Abbie Groomer, Vanessa Riley (Northeast Nodaway R-V High School Team, Ravenwood, Mo.)