

Met Cares Foundation Working to Support Smooth Transition of 2022-23 Operations of Greenwood Leadership Academy to Co-Founder Tulsa Public Schools

MCF and TPS Collaborating to Preserve Achievement, Staffing, Student-Parent Experience and Unique Characteristics of Innovative Partnership School They Co-Founded in 2017

TULSA, Okla. (July 26, 2022) – Met Cares Foundation today announced it is working to support the smooth transition of all operations for the 2022-23 school year at Greenwood Leadership Academy to co-founding partner Tulsa Public Schools.

TPS will operate Greenwood Leadership Academy for the upcoming school year. This change is the result of a lapse in the Foundation's IRS-designated non-profit status.

Met Cares Foundation has taken the necessary steps to initiate IRS review and reinstatement of its status as a tax-exempt charitable organization. Additionally, it has established the Met Cares Foundation Fund with the Tulsa Community Foundation to facilitate continuity in supporters' tax-qualified charitable contributions in support of its mission to improve the quality of life for people in the North Tulsa community.

Supporting Continuity, Smooth Transition for Greenwood Leadership Academy

Met Cares Foundation is working collaboratively with Tulsa Public Schools administration to support our shared goal of an operational transition that is seamless for students and families.

The school, founded in 2017 as a partnership between Met Cares Foundation and Tulsa Public Schools, serves students in pre-kindergarten through fifth grade at its campus in North Tulsa. As part of the operational transition for the 2022-23 school year, Met Cares Foundation is assisting Tulsa Public Schools in efforts to retain Greenwood Leadership Academy staff and students.

Tulsa Public Schools administration has advised Met Cares Foundation that it is committed to doing everything possible to keep Greenwood Leadership Academy's mission, vision, culture and school design unchanged. That direction means a concerted effort to preserve the schedule, classes, curriculum, programs, school name and routines.

"This change comes with a heavy heart," said Pastor Ray Owens, chairman of the Met Cares Foundation. "It is disappointing to step back this year when we can see that Greenwood Leadership Academy is making a significant, positive improvement in student achievement. On behalf of the Met Cares Foundation board, we offer our heartfelt apology for any confusion this change may create as the school year is quickly approaching.

"We are blessed to have a capable, committed co-founding partner in Tulsa Public Schools that can carry the responsibility of operating Greenwood Leadership Academy while our foundation continues other important work this year in the North Tulsa community.

"Met Cares Foundation is resolute in our mission to improve the quality of life for students, families and other residents of North Tulsa," Owens said.

Pursuing Reinstatement of 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Status

Met Cares Foundation is awaiting IRS review to reinstate its 501(c)(3) status as a tax-exempt charitable organization, which lapsed. The Foundation in June 2022 engaged outside counsel to file the necessary forms with the IRS to support reinstatement as well as prepare, review and submit the Foundation's future tax filings.

The Foundation's outside counsel identified that an error – two transposed digits in its Employee Identification Number – is the likely reason that the IRS failed to recognize the 2019 and 2020 income-tax returns as filed. Additionally, the Foundation had yet to file its 2021 tax return.

The IRS provides no specific guidance on timing of its review and action on 501(c)(3) reinstatement filings. The Foundation has posted to its website the forms that its counsel recently filed with the IRS.

“Met Cares Foundation's board and staff understand the importance of our responsibilities to the community we serve and our partners,” said Dion'trae Hayes, who joined the Foundation in April as executive director. “We have engaged outside counsel and are putting controls in place to ensure that we are worthy of the trust that our funding partners continue to place in our organization and our mission.”

Providing Continuity of Mission Support

Met Cares Foundation has established a fund with the Tulsa Community Foundation that is designed to ensure continuity of non-taxable contributions that supporters make to support its mission.

“The strength and breadth of the Tulsa Community Foundation is a vital resource for Met Cares Foundation to continue, reset and grow our mission – today, as we await reinstatement of our non-profit status, but also in the future,” Owens said. “We are thankful for their leadership in the community.”

Continuing Commitment to Programs Designed to Improve Quality of Life for People in North Tulsa Community

Met Cares Foundation began in 2015 after several major community meetings where participants supported a vision to make a positive change in the trajectory of significant educational underperformance and enrollment in North Tulsa schools.

“We will take this year to reflect, reset and refine our strategy of how best to support our mission to lift up people – through educational achievement and economic development – in the North Tulsa community,” Owens said. “Met Cares Foundation is grateful to our important funding and strategy partners – with whom we have shared our situation and action plan – and they are continuing to support the important work of our mission.”

The Foundation's continuing programs include:

Growing Greenwood, a homeownership initiative designed to address the significant wealth gap in the North Tulsa community and support the efforts to restore the Greenwood community back to a state of prominence. With engagement and resources from community partners, Met Cares Foundation provides financial support, as well as

education and resources, to first-time home buyers to promote a healthy, stable community;

LevelUp Tulsa, created by and for North Tulsa community members to help give more parents living in North Tulsa access to job training opportunities; and

The Art of Us, an art-based, after-school program for students at Central Junior High and Monroe Middle Schools with social-emotional competency-infused curriculum.

About Met Cares Foundation

Since 2015, the Met Cares Foundation has been working to drive advocacy, fuel positive change and encourage civic engagement by inspiring community ownership and improving and increasing educational opportunities throughout North Tulsa.

www.metcaresfoundation.org.