



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 19, 2020

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## **Big Picture Initiative Receives Funding for New Digital Magazine Written by Students**

Peoria, Illinois — Big Picture Initiative announced a \$25,000 charitable donation from the Gilmore Foundation on July 30, 2020. The funding will provide an avenue to launch a new online magazine, written by students, entitled **Giving Voice**. The first digital issue will be published in early Fall 2020 and will be available to the public.

Giving Voice students will write articles and create videos on a variety of topics and issues affecting today's young people: racial injustice, environmental protection, adapting to a virtual world, living through COVID-19, and much more. The students will work with a professional writer and mentor to hone their writing skills, and they will be paid for published articles.

Big Picture Initiative is undertaking the Giving Voice project to support the next generation who will be solving today's problems—providing valuable professional resources and amplifying their voices. "By giving students the opportunity to gain experience in being more effective communicators and having a public audience, we are preparing the next generation for the workplace of the future," said Doug Leunig, co-founder, Big Picture Initiative.

"The Big Picture team's creativity and passion, combined with strong partners in the Giving Voice Initiative (Bradley, Richwoods, Peoria Public Schools, and ICC), have created a vehicle for arts education in the midst of the challenges of Covid-19 that the Gilmore Foundation is proud to support," said Laura Cullinan, Gilmore Foundation executive director.

"Big Picture prides itself on having an arts connection through every project. I think this is an amazing opportunity for students of diverse backgrounds to come

together and talk about issues that matter to them,” said Big Picture intern Trent Miles.

The goal is to be part of the answer in creating empathy and equity in our community. To that end, in addition to the online zine by students, Big Picture will publish Giving Voice Community Stories, where people from different backgrounds and beliefs are invited to share their personal stories in podcasts and videos. “The resulting stories will help members of our community understand what life is like for those in our city who are not our immediate neighbors or the folks making headlines,” said Eileen Leunig, Big Picture co-founder.

Finally, Giving Voice’s professional mentor Mae Gilliland Wright, PhD, adds, “Learning how to communicate effectively is a key professional and personal skill. It is a tool that allows students to articulate their viewpoints, communicate ideas, and create conditions for creative problem solving. They build a base upon which they can grow their professional careers and community involvement.”

Big Picture Initiative is inviting student writers to submit a 300-500 word article on a topic of interest to them. They are also looking for students who want to work on animation, illustration, and graphic design opportunities. Students can reach the **Giving Voice** team at [bigpicturepeoria@gmail.com](mailto:bigpicturepeoria@gmail.com).

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Big Picture Initiative is a 501(c)(3) grassroots nonprofit group of dedicated volunteers who believe that art has the power to change our community. For more information, contact [bigpicturepeoria@gmail.com](mailto:bigpicturepeoria@gmail.com). To learn more about Big Picture, visit [bigpicturepeoria.org](http://bigpicturepeoria.org).