



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safe Passage Project Proud Recipient of \$480,000 Grant from Keith Haring Foundation

New York, NY - Safe Passage Project, a New York-based legal services organization, announced today that it has been awarded a \$480,000 grant by the Keith Haring Foundation. This generous grant, which will be allocated in two yearly installments of \$240,000, will provide Safe Passage Project with general operating support to provide legal defense of children being targeted for deportation.

“Safe Passage Project is deeply grateful to receive this support from the Keith Haring Foundation,” said Safe Passage Project’s Executive Director, Rich Leimsider. “These funds will allow us to expand our legal and social services to some of the most vulnerable children in New York.”

Last year, more than 40,000 children travelling alone were apprehended at the US Southern Border. Despite their impoverished economic status, these children are not provided with a court-appointed lawyer. According to data from Syracuse University’s TRAC Program, without legal representation, immigrant children have only a 17% chance of success in court, despite eligibility for relief under United States immigration law.

To address the needs of these vulnerable children, Safe Passage Project specializes in recruiting, training and mentoring pro bono attorneys to become adept in representing immigrant youth in Family Court, Immigration Court, and with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. Since its founding, the small nonprofit has taken on full representation of over 1,000 unaccompanied immigrant children, and has maintained a success rate of over 80%. The funds provided by the Keith Haring Foundation will enable Safe Passage Project to accelerate its growth and to overcome the increasing obstacles in US immigration law. With this grant, Safe Passage Project plans to take on full legal representation of an additional 200 children over the course of 2018 and 2019.

“The significance of this cannot be overstated. With these funds, the Keith Haring Foundation has ensured that Safe Passage Project will be able to fight for more children than ever in the years to come. Every new case that we are able to take on brings us closer to our vision of a world where no child faces Immigration Court alone,” continued Leimsider.

“We are so very proud to renew and increase our investment in Safe Passage Project,” said Julia Gruen, Executive Director of the Keith Haring Foundation. “Haring believed in giving children opportunities to live their lives creatively and without fear. We continue to celebrate his legacy through this meaningful and urgent partnership.”

Before his death from AIDS-related complications in 1990, Keith Haring established his foundation to ensure that the causes he cared about continued to receive support. The Keith Haring Foundation focuses on giving to organizations that assist marginalized children and organizations involved in education, research and care related to HIV and AIDS.

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