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LOCAL NEWS

By [ALANA MELANSON](#) | amelanson@lowellsun.com | Lowell Sun June 1, 2021 at 9:18 p.m.

Merrimack Valley Project awarded \$100,000 Cummings Foundation grant

LAWRENCE — The Merrimack Valley Project was awarded a \$100,000 grant over five years through the Cummings Foundation’s \$25 Million Grant Program.

The Merrimack Valley Project (MVP) is a social justice organization with 30 years of community organizing work in Lawrence, Lowell, Haverhill and surrounding communities. With an emphasis of lifting the voices of the most vulnerable populations in the region, the organization provides bilingual techniques, tactics and leadership development skills to address the area’s most pressing needs.

MVP plans to use the grant funding to maintain and expand its Wheels of Hope program, a free service that provides transportation to drug detox and treatment facilities.

“MVP is deeply grateful for the encouragement and support of the Cummings Foundation for our Wheels of Hope initiative,” MVP President Alice Mann said in a statement. “For the past six years, grassroots leaders have been assessing needs, researching innovative models and organizing community support in order to help our neighbors most affected by the opioid crisis to connect with immediate treatment openings across the whole state and — a critical new component — to receive free, supportive transportation to the available treatment location.

“Over the next five years, our strong partnership with community partners Health Resources in Action and Lucos Transportation will become even stronger, as we advocate for stable funding in the state budget and the expansion of this innovative transportation service statewide,” Mann’s statement continued. “MVP works to be the catalyst for this crucial system-level change, empowered by this five-year investment by the Cummings Foundation. ”