



111 S Fourth Avenue E • Ely, MN 55731

Supporting Youth & Their Families since 1978

218-365-5254 • www.elycommunityresource.org

February 27, 2023

Dear Public Safety Committee Members:

I write in support of HF 1712. Ely Community Resource is a community-based non-profit providing youth programs. Since its creation in 1978, ECR's programs have worked to make sure that ALL Ely youth have opportunities to thrive in school and in the community, regardless of their family's ability to provide them. We work during school hours to support academics and social/emotional needs of K-12th grade students in collaboration with teachers and administrators. After school, we provide reading and homework help for all grades plus enrichment and social skills practice in age-appropriate small groups. Year-round, ECR also facilitates a mentoring program, academic enrichment opportunities, and recreation activities. Our Family Resource Facilitator heads up our support for basic needs and mental health referrals and connections. Partnerships with mental health agencies, Ely Schools, and the City are strong. Community volunteers help us provide additional meaningful relationships.

As you are aware, so many youths of today have significant need for extra adult support to assist them in making up for lost opportunities, academic set-backs, and emotional trauma inflicted by isolation and uncertainty related to COVID 19. It's significant that referrals and requests for mentors have tripled. As their problem-solving capacity and "attitudes about life" develop during their school career—in today's often very negative world—these young people need opportunities to be challenged, supported through mistakes made, and recognized for their worth today and their future importance. In the interest of public safety, we have a responsibility to provide that support.

Funding from HF 1712 would be of great help to us as we work to meet the needs of our kids. While Rescue funds helped us expand our reach to "socially and emotionally inexperienced" Kindergarten – 2nd graders for afterschool and dedicate more resources to a larger mentoring group, the increased cost of everything is worrisome as we think about continuity and follow through. One of our strengths is working with students throughout their school career, and passage of this bill would help to assure that we can do it.

Sincerely,

Julie Hignell
Executive Director