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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Summit 54 Announces Continuation of Summer Advantage RFV in 2017**

Summit 54 succeeded in raising sufficient pledges and donations to commit to funding the highly effective Summer Advantage USA program in the Roaring Fork Valley for 2017. Six years ago, Summit 54 obtained a matching five-year federal Social Innovation Fund (SIF) Grant through Mile High United Way that allowed the charitable organization to partner with the Roaring Fork School District (RFSD) to bring the nationally acclaimed summer academic and life enrichment program to the Roaring Fork Valley. Now that Summit 54 has successfully completed the five-year matching funds grant, SIF money is not currently available in Colorado for early literacy programming. Thus, Summit 54 needs to raise double the money of previous years to make up the lost grant funds to continue this vitally important program.

The federal grant required independent research and evaluation of the program. The research, conducted by APA Consulting, demonstrated that students who participated in Summer Advantage RFV not only reversed “summer learning loss”, they moved forward 14 percentage points in their District standardized tests as a result of the five-week program, and were able to begin the fall school year 1.8 months ahead of where they completed the prior school year! This is especially important in the RFSD as 84% of Summer Advantage participants in Basalt, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs receive free or reduced price lunch during the school year and national statistics indicate that low-income children typically forget 2-3 months more per summer than their middle-income peers.

“We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of our community members who stepped up in a huge way to help us continue this very successful program,” says Terri Caine, Co-Founder of Summit 54. “Although we have been successful thus far in our fundraising efforts, more donations are needed for this summer’s program and for the on-going sustainability of Summer Advantage in the RFV.”

“Summer Advantage harnesses the power of summer learning to raise the educational achievement of all students,” explains Caine. “At Summit 54, we are especially interested in Early Literacy because the focus of education in Kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is on teaching children to read. However, beginning in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, half of the information students are expected to learn is given to them in a written format. Thus, if a child is not at grade level when entering 4<sup>th</sup> grade, it is very difficult to succeed. Not surprisingly, there is a high correlation between low third grade literacy rates and high school drop out rates. We are thrilled with the independent research findings and the demonstrated value of the Summer Advantage program in helping the District improve academic achievement for more than 600 students in Kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grades.

We are also grateful for the strong partnership between Summer Advantage USA, the Roaring Fork School District and Summit 54. Without this cohesive 3-way partnership, we would not be able to offer this important program to our Valley's youth."

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Summit 54 was able to obtain recognition by the State of Colorado for Summer Advantage as an "approved child care provider." Thus donations to Summit 54 for the Summer Advantage program qualify for an additional 50% tax credit, on top of normal charitable donation tax benefits, together making the net cost to a donor as little as 6% of the donation amount. As an example, the net cost of a \$1300 donation (the cost to sponsor one student at \$52/day) can be as little as \$77. To make a donation to Summit 54 for the Summer Advantage program, please mail a check to: Summit 54, 1550 Larimer Street, Suite 770 Denver, CO 80202  
Or, donations may be made online at <http://summit54.org/donate/>  
Summit 54 is a 501(c)3 organization, ID# 27-2978700

The free five-week academic and life enrichment program will be offered for K-4<sup>th</sup> grade students in Basalt, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs from June 26 – July 28, 2017. The program includes two daily nutritious meals, two hours of literacy, one hour of math, recess and two afternoon enrichment classes Monday – Thursday. "Fun Fridays" include inspirational speakers and field trips. The program also includes a college visit and a community service project.

For additional information about the Summer Advantage program in the RFV, please inquire with District elementary school offices or go on-line to <http://www.summeradvantage.org/>

Staff applications are being accepted on-line at: <https://summeradvantage.dataintegratedsolutions.com/index.php?r=front/careers>  
Scholar applications will be accepted beginning in March.

For additional information about Summit 54, please go on-line at <http://summit54.org/> or contact Terri Caine at 970-618-2219.

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