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news/features

5

## Founder of Project SUCCESS honored for leadership and achievement, encouraging all people to take on new challenges

Monet Auguston  
Staff writer

For her encouragement and support of girls and women, Project SUCCESS Founder and Executive Director Adrienne Diercks was honored with this year's 14th annual Ann Bancroft Foundation Dream Maker Award. Diercks was recognized by the Foundation for her achievement and leadership and the strides her organization has made in benefiting Minneapolis public schools.

Project SUCCESS was founded after Diercks pilot-tested a motivational workshop for 200 students at the Minneapolis North Community High School in 1994. The workshop, co-sponsored by the Guthrie Theater and the Perpich Center for Arts Education, used themes and issues raised in a Guthrie production of "Death of a Salesman." The show was attended by North students as well as their teachers and families and served as a relevant medium through which students could reflect on their motivation, dreams, and choices.

After finding success at North, proponents of the program secured support for regular services. Project SUCCESS developed a partnership with Franklin Middle School, which sends most of its students on to North. Working with related middle and high schools is one example of how this program has led young people to revere Project SUCCESS as a constant resource for life planning. Sophomore Sophia Reed regularly takes advantage of services the organization offers and said, "my favorite part about Project SUCCESS is the in class activities. It was really helpful in pushing me to think about my future."

Between 1994 and 1996, partnerships and donated tick-



Adrienne Diercks, founder of Project SUCCESS at the Ann Bancroft spring gala banquet. Diercks was presented with the award for Achievement and leadership for her work with Project SUCCESS. Photo: Monet Auguston

ets from Twin Cities' theater companies increased, permitting more students to attend more performances at a wider variety of locations. Freshman Maisie Taylor has enjoyed the plays made available through this arrangement. "Project SUCCESS is really cool because it gives students and their families the opportunity to see performances they might not get to see otherwise," said Taylor.

South High's Project SUCCESS facilitator Alex Brooks loves working for the organization and takes satisfaction in making its resources available for students like Taylor and Reed. He is grateful for the efforts Diercks has made. "I love the environment that Adrienne has fostered...It's very grounded, down to earth, and creative," said Brooks, "Everyone at Project SUCCESS wants to do the best work they can for the students."

More than helping Minneapolis achieve their goals, according to Brooks, Project SUCCESS also treats its employees as creative contributors to the organization's vitality. "[Project SUCCESS] is very open," said Brooks, "we bounce ideas back and forth...We're always collaborating."

It was in part for these qualities of teamwork and leading by example that Diercks gained recognition from the Foundation. The Bancroft Foundation itself was conceived in 1996 to celebrate Minnesotans who encourage and support the achievements of girls and women. Its mission, according to the Foundation's website, is "to focus our attention on existing and potential achievements of girls and women--in broad areas of life and work, while encouraging all people to take on new challenges."

The awards are presented to four winners at a gala banquet in the Spring of each year. Over 800 individuals representing business leadership, education, health and the arts, as well as many young girls from organizations and schools from around the state, are in attendance. Each year, the awards banquet has raised in excess of \$100,000. The money raised at each Award's benefit goes toward supporting the programs of the Ann Bancroft Foundation.