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**More Than Words Receives Funding from Federal Government’s Social Innovation Fund and the Venture Philanthropy Organization REDF as Part Of REDF’s First Investment in Greater Boston
More Than Words Will Expand Social Enterprise and Serve More Youth with New Funds**

BOSTON (February 8, 2016) Following a rigorous national competition, More Than Words, which empowers youth who are in foster care, court-involved, homeless or out of school to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business, has been selected for the new portfolio of California-based venture philanthropy organization REDF, supported by the federal Social Innovation Fund. This is part of REDF’s first investment in the Greater Boston region. More Than Words will receive multi-year grant funding and business advisory services to support its youth-run business and powerful youth development program.

More Than Words began as a pile of books on the side of the road in 2004 and has become two vibrant youth-run bookstores on track to generate over \$900K in earned revenue this year, and an organization with a proven model and substantiated outcomes. At a time when around 12,000 youth in Boston, aged 16-24, are currently disconnected from both career and educational opportunities, More Than Words provides on-the-job training and intensive case management support to help youth achieve their goals in education, employment and self-efficacy. Several years out of the core program, youth are seeing dramatic results. Over 82% of graduates attain a High School Diploma or equivalent and the 50% of graduates who are court involved at intake decreases to 13%.

“Support from REDF, one of the nation’s preeminent funders of social enterprises, and the Social Innovation Fund is incredibly meaningful to More Than Words,” said Jodi Rosenbaum, More Than Words Founder & CEO. “This investment comes at a critical time as we map plans to grow our enterprises and empower more youth with the transformational experience of a job, high expectations, a culture of support, and a fanatical focus on outcomes.”

To select the grantees, REDF held a rigorous national competition for social enterprises to receive grants of at least \$100,000 annually for up to five years. More than 200 social enterprises from across 36 states submitted proposals but only 22 were selected. The selected organizations will employ thousands of people nationally by investing these new resources for business growth. At the same time, REDF will foster deeper collaborations with small, medium and large employers, philanthropy and government to catalyze and accelerate the growth of social enterprises in order to catalyze thousands of additional job opportunities.

“The Social Innovation Fund provides new pathways for people who have faced significant barriers to employment, said Damian Thorman, Director of the Social Innovation Fund. “We are excited this award to More Than Words, a subgrantee of REDF, will transform people’s lives by creating jobs using social enterprise solutions with funding from us.”

“REDF is investing in social enterprise growth because we believe right now is the game-changing moment when we can and must open up new opportunities to people who want to work and just need the chance to do so,” said REDF President Carla Javits. “We aim to catalyze the business community, philanthropy, government and nonprofits to work together to create job opportunities and hire people who need them, while developing an even more rigorous evidence base so that we can all do more of ‘what works best’ while developing a vibrant ecosystem that will have long lasting impact. We are grateful to the Congress and the Administration for supporting the Social Innovation Fund, to private donors and foundations that are stepping up to match this support, to the nonprofits that are taking the risk to create new business models, and most of all to the courageous men and women who are overcoming the odds, going to work and transforming their lives.”

"More Than Words is an important local organization that connects our youth with opportunities and provides them with the skills and valuable real-world work experiences needed in today's workforce," said Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "I congratulate them on being selected to receive new funding that will allow them to expand their programming and put more members of our youth on a pathway to success."

ABOUT:

More Than Words is a social enterprise that empowers youth ages 16-21 who are court-involved, in the foster care system, out-of-school or homeless to take charge of their lives by taking charge of a business. MTW youth run two brick-and-mortar bookstores, a café and an online bookselling business as a vehicle to develop critical skills and experience working 15-25 hours per week and generating over \$900K annually in earned revenue. They simultaneously have a second job, their “YOU” job, through which they receive intensive case management to work towards measurable positive outcomes for education, work and life. Youth continue to receive support for 24 months after graduating from the core program.

The Social Innovation Fund is a program of the **Corporation for National and Community Service**, a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Social Innovation Fund, and Volunteer Generation Fund programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.

The Social Innovation Fund (SIF) is a powerful approach to transforming lives and communities, an approach that positions the federal government to be a catalyst for impact – mobilizing private resources to find and grow community solutions with evidence of results. As part of the SIF program, REDF must match the federal funds dollar-for-dollar and again by the organizations they select to receive grants. To date, REDF has received Social Innovation Fund matching investments from private funders including Bank of America, the Kresge, Weingart, Annie E. Casey, Woodcock, California Wellness, F.B. Heron, Kellogg, San Francisco and California Community Foundations, The California Endowment, JP Morgan Chase, and many other foundations and individual donors.

REDF creates jobs and employment opportunities for people facing the greatest barriers to work – like young people who are disconnected from school or work, people who’ve been homeless or in prison, and people with mental health disabilities. Founded in 1997 by George R. Roberts (KKR), REDF provides funding and business expertise to mission-driven organizations to launch and grow social enterprises, which are businesses with a “double bottom line” that make money in order to employ people with multiple barriers to employment. REDF has helped over 10,000 people in California get jobs and find hope. Now REDF is taking best practices learned from 18 years of experience to grow their impact nationally and help thousands more people work, advance, and create a more stable future. For more information, visit <http://redf.org/>. To learn more about REDF’s portfolio organizations visit <http://redf.org/what-we-do/invest/>.