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EXCEPTIONAL MINDS

For Immediate Release

**Adobe and the Adobe Foundation Donate Time and Money to
Exceptional Minds School for Young Adults with Autism**
*\$100,000 grant is the latest in a long list of support by software leader dating
back to when the school opened.*



Sherman Oaks, Calif. –December 22, 2016 – [Exceptional Minds](#), a nonprofit vocational school and working studio for young adults with autism, kicked off its 2016 giving season with a generous donation from multimedia giant and old friend, Adobe.

The \$100,000 donation from the Adobe Foundation is the latest in a long list of its support dating back to 2011, when the school and working studio was started by visionaries in the film and visual effects industry to create a bridge between high school and the working world for individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

The check was delivered to Exceptional Minds by the Adobe Foundation during the week of [GivingTuesday](#) and will provide much-needed funding for job development and computer resources as well as financial aid for students in need. Also in recent weeks, Adobe donated new software and sent to the school a team of product development specialists to provide instruction and tips that will help Exceptional Minds students and graduates advance their job skills. “Between the donation of funds, software and interactive time, Adobe has truly become one of the most important partners we have in making our mission a reality,” commented Ernie Merlán, the Executive Director for Exceptional Minds.

“The Adobe Foundation’s investments in education are focused on providing opportunities to underrepresented youth, which also contributes to the diversification of the workforce,” said Michelle Crozier, Executive Director, Adobe Foundation and Director, Adobe Social Impact + Sustainability. “We are proud of our partnership with Exceptional Minds and admire their mission of bringing out the innate creativity among young adults with autism, and getting them ready for careers in digital animation and visual effects.”

Over the past five years, Adobe and the Adobe Foundation have donated time and thousands of dollars in software applications, training resources and mentoring to the school. Exceptional Minds was the first vocational school for young adults with autism to certify its students as Adobe Certified Associates (ACA) in order to prepare them for careers in visual effects. Adobe products such as Animate, After Effects, Illustrator, Photoshop and Premiere remain a cornerstone in the Exceptional Minds curriculum for preparing young adults with autism for careers in the visual effects industry. “Adobe understood from the start the significance of what we are achieving here at Exceptional Minds. Their continued support has meant so much to our students and their families,” said Merlán.

In addition to Adobe, Cartoon Network, Viacom, HBO, and other [Exceptional Minds sponsors](#) have provided funding and support to the school in order to help meet the groundswell of demand by young adults on the spectrum in need of job skills. Graduates of Exceptional Minds’ three-year vocational program go on to work in the animation and visual effects fields for studios such as Marvel and Stargate, or for the Exceptional Minds Studio, which has worked on more than 50 productions, including *Doctor Strange*, *Game of Thrones*, *X-Men: Apocalypse*, *Avengers: Age of Ultron* and *Captain America: Civil War*.

Currently, the majority of the nation’s 3.5 million people with autism are unemployed or underemployed, according to government statistics. More than 500,000 U.S. children impacted by the disorder will enter adulthood during this decade, with more than one in 68 children to follow.

Exceptional Minds is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. To find out more, go to www.exceptionalmindsstudio.org/donate.htm.

About Exceptional Minds (<http://www.exceptionalmindsstudio.org>): Exceptional Minds is a non-profit vocational center and working production studio for young adults on the autism spectrum. It was chartered in 2011 to provide the training necessary for creatively-gifted individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) who may not otherwise be able to make the transition from high school to careers. Exceptional Minds offers technical proficiency and work readiness training that prepares students for careers in graphic arts, animation, web design, visual effects and rotoscoping. Located in

Sherman Oaks, California, Exceptional Minds is both an instructional learning facility and a working studio with hands-on student involvement in production projects, many for the film industry.

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Photo caption: In addition to funding through the Adobe Foundation, Adobe donated new software and sent to the school a team of product development specialists, shown in the front row, to help Exceptional Minds students advance their job skills.