

Impact Award – Jan Malcolm

ANN BANCROFT:

Want to understand Jan Malcolm? Look way back. Like many of the girls who apply for ABF grants, Jan was playful, loving, smart, and talented. And of course, she had big dreams. I mean, really specific dreams. She wrote an essay when she was eight: “When I grow up, I am going to be a doctor.” Well, she did pre-med at Dartmouth and fell in love with public health.

I met Jan right out of college. We became instant friends. When I started dreaming my wild dreams, she backed me. She was a mentor, a board member, a visionary in any capacity needed. She was there as we launched our adventures, as we created curriculums for school kids, as we paid down the expedition debt. She was at the table when we decided to refine our focus, to really commit to lifting up girls as they’re finding their place in the world. It’s about the girls, and Jan never forgets that.

I mean, think about it. She’s one of the country’s top public health experts. She’s served as Health Commissioner under three Governors. And she’s never taken her eye off this foundation. She wants girls to thrive. So whatever discussion we’re in, Jan always brings it back to the mission. How can we best serve these girls? How can we maximize our impact? And how can we imagine something bigger? She really gets that if you invest in a girl, you’re changing a family and you’re healing a community.

That’s no surprise because community healing is Jan’s life’s work. Right now, she’s leading Minnesota through a monumental public health emergency. She’s the voice of calm and of principle. She has this lovely, unassuming way of bringing everybody together, of moving the ship forward.

And that’s what she’s done for ABF. She embodies everything we want to see in girls across our state. She embodies everything we strive for. Courage, vision, service, transformation. She has done so much to forge the way for us, so much wonderful, world-healing work. She’s been with us the whole way saying yes and yes and yes again. “Yes” is what the foundation seeks to say to Minnesota girls. Yes to your dreams, yes to your curiosity, yes to your future. Thank you, Jan, for helping us to say “yes.”