

Media Release

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October 8, 2015

Foundation Awards \$84,930 in Grants to Eight Area Nonprofits

WILL COUNTY, IL - At our fall reception, The Community Foundation of Will County awarded Community Partner Grants in the priority areas of health, education, human services and the arts. "We have always felt the need outweighed what we can fund. So it was exciting for the first time this year, to share the grant requests with the individuals who have donor advised funds with us. Through their generosity we are able to increase our total impact by over 50%, adding \$29,930 of their support to our \$55,000, for total grants awarded of \$84,930." noted Grant Committee Chair, Kathy Cawley. The grants ranged in value from \$2,000-\$15,000.

Nonprofit organizations serving Will County apply for grants through the Foundation's annual Community Partner Grant program. In 2015, with more than \$337,000 of funding requests received from 31 organizations, the Board of Directors had difficult decisions to make.



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Community Leaders, Foundation donors, Trustees and other friends joined representatives from the recipient organizations at the reception on Wednesday, October 7th to celebrate the distribution of the grants and learn more about how they will be used to support the projects and initiatives of the various recipient organizations. Lewis University and Br. James Gaffney, FSC, Community Foundation Past Board Chair and President of Lewis University, graciously sponsored and hosted the event.

The following is a list of the 2015 grant recipients and projects they will be implementing:

Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet - *Homework Help Center at Daybreak Center* - \$5,430 to provide a dedicated homework space for children living at the shelter. The center is a quiet place for homework including laptops, printer, educational resources and assistance from University of St. Francis students serving as volunteer tutors. *(Fully funded by the Voyager Group Fund)*

MorningStar Mission - *Beth's Garden* - \$15,000 to support a collaborative project between MorningStar Mission and Joliet Junior College's interior design department to build a vegetable and flower garden, install playground equipment, and plant trees in the backyard of the B.E.T.H. House --a home for

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young women and girls who are pregnant and need a place to stay and support while striving to become self-sufficient. *(Funded in part by the Joliet Woman's Club and an anonymous donor)*

Northern Illinois Food Bank – *Network Partner Capacity Building* - \$14,000 to purchase refrigeration and freezer storage to increase capacity and distribution of more nutritious food to Will County residents through the following network partners: Kuzma Care Cottage (*Wilmington*), St. Patrick's Food Pantry (*Joliet*), Helping Hands (*Peotone*), Lift Him Up Ministries (*Joliet*), St. George Coptic Church Food Pantry (*Monee*). *(Funded in part by the Fred and Maria Schaffer Charitable Fund)*

Power Connection – *Forklift Certification Training Expansion* - \$10,000 to purchase a stand-up forklift truck to expand their job certification training program and improve opportunities for employment for graduates. Currently there are over 500 job openings for forklift operators in Will County.

Rockdale Elementary School District #84 – *Rockdale Green STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) and Wind Project* - \$8,000 to provide a wind turbine that will gather energy data and provide a unique lab experience for STEM education within the curriculum, including research using data collected

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from green energy sources; and to increase the number of STEM projects like solar race cars, wind turbines, video projects, and solar cooking that are built and tested at the middle school level.

Southwest Suburban Immigrant Project - *Mariachi Matters: Community Music Program* - \$5,000 to involve Latino-immigrant youth in a competitive music education program that enhances the talents of local youth while strengthening cultural traditions and identities through community performing. *(Fully funded by the Wadsworth Family Cultural Arts Endowment)*

United Way of Will County - *Strategic Plan*- \$15,000 to develop a new strategic plan to improve results amidst many changes in the corporate and funding sectors of Will County.

Warren-Sharpe Community Center - *South Side Urban Farm* - \$12,500 for the expansion of the South Side Urban Farm to support and facilitate youth entrepreneurship; and increase outdoor classroom experiences by providing for year-round microgreen and baby greens production, using 14' x 18' greenhouse and the cultivation of native Illinois fruit trees. *(Fully funded by the Joliet Woman's Club)*

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Since its inception in 2006, the Foundation has built its assets to over \$3 million and awarded more than \$1 million in grants to nonprofit agencies serving the residents of Will County and beyond.

Community Foundation of Will County:

The Community Foundation of Will County seeks to improve the quality of life throughout Will County communities by PROMOTING philanthropy, CONNECTING donors to community needs and BUILDING partnerships.

The Community Foundation of Will County was founded as a geographic Affiliate of The Chicago Community Trust by local residents in 2006 to serve as a local resource for donors and professional advisors in the implementation of charitable strategies through donor advised funds and other planning vehicles, to build endowments in special areas of interest that fund a competitive grant program annually, and to hold various nonprofit agency/organization endowment funds. Since its inception, the Foundation has grown to over \$3 million in assets and award over \$1 million in grants to nonprofit agencies serving the residents of Will County and beyond.

For more information about the Foundation, or to arrange future media opportunities, please contact Marilyn McSteen, program director, at (815)744-9223, or mmcsteen@cfwill.org.



Caption: The Voyager Group Fund of The Community Foundation of Will County presented a grant to Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet at Wednesday's Grant Awards Reception. Pictured (l.to r.) Michael Trench, Foundation, executive director; Courtney Suchor, director of Daybreak Center of Catholic Charities, Diocese of Joliet; Kathy Cawley, President of The Voyager Group, Foundation Trustee and Grant Committee Chair; Br. James Gaffney, FSC, President Lewis University, Foundation Trustee and Past Board Chair; Michael Rittorf, Foundation's current Board Chair.