



WCCF invests in future of Will County

By **Sandy Cowgill**
Executive Director

What on earth are you doing now? This question has been raised by many people who know me. There is an old Chinese proverb that says, “One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.” I am planting trees.

Just as investments prepare families for a brighter future, the Will County Community Foundation (WCCF) is creating an investment for the future of the county. People who care about the community now have an opportunity to pool their resources into an endowment fund.

WCCF is a public charity. Donations are tax deductible for the donor and the endowment provides a permanent legacy for future generations. The interest from this fund will be used to address needs in the county as determined by the board of directors, a group of community leaders. The first

grants from the WCCF to local agencies were announced last month. Eight grants totaling \$122,000 were presented to local agencies.

I love the all inclusive nature of WCCF. People who have a favorite charity can create a fund for the benefit of that agency. People who have a specific field of interest such as basic human needs, arts and culture, community development, health or education can create a fund directing the income be used for that field. While fulfilling the wishes of individual donors, the collective group of foundation funds works together for the benefit of the entire community.

The Will County Community Foundation is strengthening Will County now, and forever. Would you like to plant some trees with me?

A legacy
of giving

Endowment



What is endowment? *When you create a charitable fund through the Will County Community Foundation, you have the opportunity to benefit the community forever with a permanent endowment. Your gift is invested over time. Earnings from your fund are used to make grants addressing community needs. Your gift - and all future earnings from your gift - is a permanent source of community capital, helping do good work today and in the future.*

Legacy and stability. Donors who endow their gifts can make a difference in their community during their lifetime and, at the same time, provide a gift that lasts forever. Grants will continue to be made in the name of the fund you establish so that your charitable wishes are preserved, even if an organization receiving grants ceases to exist in the future.

Leaders of a nonprofit organization may also look to the community foundation to hold their organization’s endowment because they know that having a constant source of funding helps them respond to emergency needs as well as plan for the future and sustain the good work they do.

Expert help. When donors or nonprofit organizations work through the community foundation to achieve their charitable goals, they benefit from the expertise of experienced local program staff, community leadership, and investment management.

10 reasons people choose to give through community foundations

- one** We are a **local organization** with deep roots in the community.
- two** Our professional program staff has **brand expertise** regarding community issues and needs.
- three** We provide highly **personalized service** tailored to each individual's charitable and financial interests.
- four** Our funds help people **invest in the causes** they care about most.
- five** We accept a wide **variety of assets**, and can facilitate even the most complex forms of giving.
- six** We partner with **professional advisors** to create highly effective approaches to charitable giving.
- seven** We offer maximum **tax advantage** for most gifts under federal law.
- eight** We **multiply the impact** of gift dollars by pooling them with gifts and grants.
- nine** We build **endowment funds** that benefit the community forever and help create personal legacies.
- ten** We are a **community leader**, convening agencies and coordinating resources to create positive change.

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Marty Hawrysko
Newsletter Editor

WCCF distributes grants, strengthens Will County



Front Row: Sandy Cowgill, Rhonda Sykes, Tempie Bates, Michelle Cottrell, Yvonne Smith, Chris Bzdun, Tamara Notter, Dr. Doris Langan. Back Row: Br. James Gaffney, Wayne Klasing, Terry Mazany, Alex Szalinski, Andy Mihelich, Steve Cordero, Dennis Tonelli, John Zalanka, Sharon Schultz, Beth Garrow, Mike Hennessy and Ed Dollinger.

The Will County Community Foundation has announced distribution of its first eight grants, dedicated to strengthening services in Will County. The grants were announced at a reception, hosted by the WCCF on Thursday, Nov. 1, at Lewis University in Romeoville.

Grants were distributed as follows: Child Care Resource and Referral, \$10,000; The Fairmont Partnership/Education Service Network, \$10,000; George Werden Buck Boys and Girls Club, \$25,000; Harvey Brooks Foundation, \$10,000; Spanish Community Center in partnership with the Lamb’s Fold Women’s Center, \$12,000; Our Lady of Angels Retirement Community, \$10,000; Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center in partnership

with the Joliet Grade School District 86 and the Joliet Park District, \$25,000; and Warren-Sharpe Community Center, \$20,000.

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R): \$10,000 for the expansion of the Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Care Training Program

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) is a not-for-profit agency providing services to families, childcare providers and employers. It promotes and facilitates affordable, quality childcare through assistance, education and advocacy and is the only agency in Will County that serves these demographics.

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Since 1991, CCR&R has provided childcare referral services to 30,000 families. The agency has also provided 3,000 workshops to child care providers. Approximately 75 percent of the families that receive CCR&R services have low-incomes and these parents tend to use relatives or small family childcare homes for childcare.



Children complete an arts and craft project at a CCR&R funded childcare service.

Funding from the Foundation will provide CCR&R with childcare development training based upon the Creative Curriculum school readiness system, a program designed to enhance the quality of early childhood programs. CCR&R will provide nine interactive trainings reaching 45 providers serving a total of about 100 children within a year. For providers unable to attend trainings at the center, a bus equipped with staff and materials delivers the program to neighborhoods. Creative Curriculum offers practical, innovative and developmentally-appropriate curriculum and assessment materials as well as parenting resources, training services and materials.

The Fairmont Partnership/Education Service Network (ESN): \$10,000 for the partial salary of a community literacy-wellness coordinator

The Fairmont Partnership provides strategy and implementation support for a variety of services both in the school and community, including professional development and enrichment activities for its school staff. Projects include increased access to health care, school enrichment programs and curriculum enhancement, safe neighborhoods and economic development. Education Service Network (ESN) is an umbrella organization formed in 1978, to serve Will, Grundy, and Kendall Counties. This organization helps implement programs that include truancy prevention and intervention, alternative education, substance abuse prevention, academic assistance, social and life skills and

parent education.

Funding from the Foundation will allow ESN to match pledges from Partnership members to hire a community literacy-wellness coordinator who will assist District 89 in improving students' reading scores and address community health issues. An essential role of the coordinator will be to reach the parents to further the health knowledge of the community. The coordinator will help develop and implement thematic, innovative and student friendly Illinois Learning Standards, language arts and health initiatives across school community curriculums, with the goal of increasing test scores, as well as improving the understanding of obesity, asthma, mental health and access to health care issues.

Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center (PSJMC) in partnership with Joliet Grade School District 86 and the Joliet Park District: \$25,000 for the implementation of "Kids 'n' Nature Adventure"

This partnership brings together three cornerstone organizations in Joliet to create a new program that targets children with weight issues from low income households. The lead agency, Provena Saint Joseph Medical Center (PSJMC), is now the regional leader of health services, providing excellence in health care to a 23-community population of over 600,000. PSJMC proactively develops and offers outreach programs promoting health and wellness among all community residents, reaching out especially to those most vulnerable and at risk.

The grant from the Foundation will allow PSJMC, in partnership with District 86 and the Joliet Park District, to engage 125 students from Joliet Public Schools District 86 in organic gardening and nature exploration activities designed to positively address the area's burgeoning child obesity problem. "Kids 'n' Nature Adventure" was designed to address many of these social influences that contribute to childhood obesity. For previous generations being outdoors was a mainstay of life where much of a person's living was done. Vegetables were grown at home and eaten on a daily basis. Children played outside until they were required to come in. The program seeks to restore these values to today's children through this after-school program that will help children truly experience nature and enjoy physical activity while learning about nutrition through organic gardening activities.

Harvey Brooks Foundation: \$10,000 for an obesity prevention and physical activity program for at-risk children

The Harvey Brooks Foundation (HBF) serves approximately 200 children annually. Because of its close proximity to the Joliet Housing Authority, 70 percent of

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program participants live within walking distance to the center. In addition to providing a wide variety of community services, HBF provides an after school program serving snacks and a summer program providing lunch. This gives HBF a unique opportunity to improve the nutrition and food knowledge of the children it serves.

The WCCF grant will allow HBF to implement an obesity prevention and physical activity program modeled after the "Go Girls Go" program, an age-specific educational curriculum developed by the Women's Sports Foundation. The program educates girls about health-risk behaviors and life lessons on topics such as body image, bullying, diversity, smoking, drugs and stress. The staff of HBF identified these issues as a critical need for their program participants. More than 60 percent of program participants are girls, a majority of whom report little knowledge of nutrition and who do not participate in sports or recreational activities. The program combines athletic instruction and nutritional programming with the delivery of educational information aimed at reducing risk behaviors that threaten the health, social and academic advancement of girls ages 8 to 18.

Spanish Community Center in partnership with Lamb's Fold Women's Center: \$12,000 for the "Creative Curriculum" in each organization's child care center for the 0 to 3 age group

In order to better serve their respective constituencies in the area of early childhood education, both Lamb's Fold and The Center recognized the need to bring more professional development to teachers in the classrooms and more resources to children and families they serve. Creative Curriculum is a comprehensive model developed by Diane Trister Dodge in 1988. The program translates research and theory from the field of early childhood education into



Children of The Center enjoy plenty of educational time, in addition to recreational time.

a practical, easy to understand approach to working with children and families. In September 2007, both organizations will implement Creative Curriculum for their pre-school aged children, 3 to 5 years old.

Through the Foundation grant, the agencies will be able to build on the curriculum already in place by expanding to those under the age of three. In its first year, the program will serve more than 110 children in this age group. Starting the Creative Curriculum approach at an early age is critical because children who accomplish age-specific developmental milestones are shown to be more successful in academics, attendance at school, more resilient to outside negative pressures and better adjusted to form positive social relationships.



Left to right: Herminia Meszaros CNA; Sister Mary Tikva, Our Lady of Angels resident and Dawn Disera RN, Assistant Director of Nursing.

Our Lady of Angels Retirement Community: \$10,000 for a pilot Certified Nursing Assistant Mentorship Program

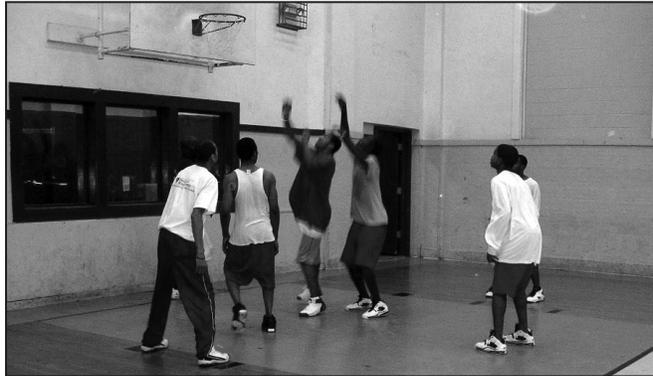
Our Lady of Angels Retirement Community (OLA) is home to 140 sisters and lay residents. It offers five levels of care, creating the only such community in the Greater Joliet Area. Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) are the backbone of the care given to residents at Our Lady of Angels. Working in a person-centered care culture, the organization seeks to improve the retention rate of CNA staff and has developed the peer mentoring program with incentives in an attempt to increase retention. Currently, the organization's CNA turn over at a rate of 42% each year. The goal of this program is to reduce this rate by 20% in the first year.

The Foundation funding will allow OLA to implement a pilot mentorship program to enhance the CNA staff's performance and effectiveness. The program will use qualified staff to mentor less experienced peers through supportive, caring relationships and example-setting between

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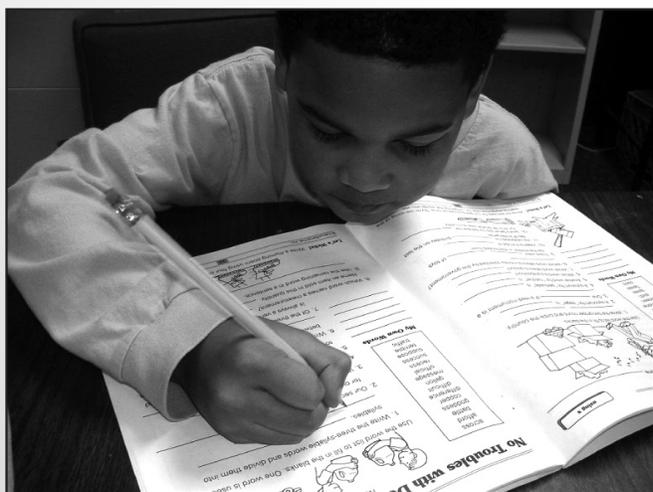
the mentor and trainee. The residents will continue to benefit from ever-increasing care. Current CNA staff will be offered mentorship positions, along with a \$1.00 per hour increase to mentor the newer staff. Two peer mentors will be assigned to each of the three work shifts, allowing a mentor to be present at all times.



These young men are enjoying a pickup game of basketball.

George Werden Buck Boys and Girls Club: \$25,000 to continue Power Hour program at Laraway School

Over the past five years, the George Werden Buck Boys & Girls Club has collaborated with Laraway School District 70C to provide an after-school program to disadvantaged and at-risk youth. Of the Laraway students served, 78 percent are classified as low-income and 70 percent are from single-parent families. The program has provided these students access to extra academic help and regular adult supervision. A recent evaluation revealed numerous positive outcomes, including an increase in ISAT scores, the removal of Laraway School from the academic watch list and a



Children at the George Werden Buck Boys and Girls Club have plenty of time to finish their homework.

dramatic decrease in behavioral disturbances at the school. But the program has become a victim of its success, leading to a loss of funding – threatening to turn back this recent progress. The program’s success has been based on strong partnerships. Lewis University provides work-study students and social work department interns to tutor and mentor the children at Laraway. The Girl Scouts provided free seminars to the girls on peer pressure. Illinois State University students promote healthy living. The University of St. Francis’ education department provides reading specialists to work with the students one-on-one.

Warren-Sharpe Community Center: \$20,000 to provide computer and media-based literacy training to low-income youth, training for teachers and computer/internet access for the community at large

Warren-Sharpe Community Center is a not-for-profit, community-based organization founded in 1991 to offer social service programs and assistance to low-income, at-risk families on the south side of Joliet.

The grant from the Foundation will permit the center to provide computer training, media-based literacy activities, Internet and multimedia training to 72 low-income youth, ages 3 through 18; to provide on-site training to teachers and teacher aides; and to provide public access to computers and Internet to community residents. The program’s older students will complete training modules in word processing, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, multimedia presentations and Internet use. Younger students will make use of self-guided software, including a series that includes a digital cartoon that will lead them through the virtual environment.

“It is the mission of the Will County Community Foundation to engage donors in the charitable endeavors that matter to them for the good of our community.”

We do this by:

- **Serving as the vehicle for donors’ charitable wishes,**
- **Awarding grants to charitable projects and organizations, and**
- **Addressing community needs as a catalyst and convener.**

For information on how you can be a part of the Will County Community Foundation, please contact Executive Director Sandy Cowgill by phone at 815-740-6301 or by email at scowgill@willcountycf.org.

