

Foundation awards grants to local social services

By Elida S. Perez

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Local organizations got a boost from Oregon Community Foundation grants to continue providing critical services to the community.

The foundation awarded \$230,835 in grants to organizations in the Northern Willamette Valley — part of more than \$7,360,000 in grants made statewide.

"We were able to award almost the same amount this year as last year, which is good considering the economy," said Megan Schumaker, senior administrative officer for grants with the foundation.

Organizations such as Family Building Blocks received \$25,000 to work in conjunction with Salem-Keizer School District to implement the Teen Parent Child Development Program.

The grant will help pay teacher salaries and to operate the center, said Sue Miller, executive director.

"We just started running the program in September," Miller said. "It's a new program for us, so it was our first opportunity to apply for grants for it."

Being awarded the grant also serves as a Good Housekeeping Seal, Miller said.

"They really investigate their programs before they fund," Miller said, adding that it shows their interest in helping support families.

Oregon Community Foundation's mission is to improve life in Oregon and promote effective philanthropy. Through donors from around the state, the foundation is able to create



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Yazmin Garrido, 17, zips up her son Ian Karlo Gomez's jacket as she picks him up from The Young Explorers Community Preschool, Monday, Nov. 15, 2010. The preschool is located at Winema Place at Chemeketa Community College in northeast Salem. Family Building Blocks, a Mid-Valley nonprofit that serves young children and families, is operating the preschool, as well as the early childcare services for the Salem-Keizer School District's teen parent program.

Grant recipients

Linfield College, McMinnville: \$5,000 for Northrop Hall.

McMinnville School District: \$7,500 for all fifth-grade students of Columbus Elementary School to attend an outdoor science expedition at Twin Rocks Camp.

CAUSA Oregon, Salem: \$7,000 for outreach to Jefferson County.

Family Building Blocks, Salem: \$25,000 to work in conjunction with the Salem-Keizer School District to implement the Teen Parent Child Development Program.

Farmworker Housing Development Corp., Woodburn: \$1,000 for general support.

Habitat for Humanity-North Willamette Valley, Mt. Angel: \$5,000 for the endowment fund.

La Luz del Valle Church, Keizer: \$10,000 to

charitable funds to support community causes. The foundation awards more than \$60 million annually in grants and scholarships.

Schumaker said some of the factors that help them decide which organizations receive grants include how much money they are asking for, how well the grants fit the foundation's funding priorities, the strength of the nonprofit and whether the organization is effectively meeting the needs of the community.

The Family Building Blocks grant was awarded through discretionary funds that fit the donor's interest. The donor, E. Henry Wemme, was well known in Oregon 100 years ago as a philanthropist and was interested in helping young mothers and their children, Schumaker said.

"It's hugely satisfying to see a donor being able to make a difference long after the donor is gone," Schumaker said. "There's that legacy that we can still make valuable to our communities."

While Family Building Blocks helps young mothers and their babies, other awardees also help the community with vital services.

The Marion-Polk Food Share received \$15,000 for their educational warehouse program.

Ron Hays, president of the food share, said the funds will help them create displays to educate people on nutrition and food and ending hunger.

Hays said that because the program is converting to a nutrition-based inventory, the grant money will help educate people about making healthy choices by creating visual and hands-on displays for people of all ages that go through the warehouse.

"This grant allows us to expand our mission to include those elements," Hays said.

The Medical Foundation of Marion and Polk counties, which has sites in Salem, Woodburn, Dallas and Stayton, was awarded \$35,000 for Project Access. The project helps the community by coordinating donated medical services for uninsured, low-income residents.

"It's a heck of a gift to help keep us going," said Dean Larsen, executive director.

For every dollar from the foundation, the project will be able to provide more than \$100 of medical services and medicine to their neighbors, Larsen said.

Since the program started in April 2009, Larsen said, the funds will help keep them growing. The project also received a grant from the foundation when it first started.

"This helps us maintain for another year while we work toward self sufficiency," Larsen said.

build the capacity of the Mid-Valley Literacy Center.

Marion-Polk Food Share, Inc., Salem: \$15,000 to educate the greater community and mobilize volunteers around issues of local food insecurity.

Mt. Angel Developmental Programs, Mt. Angel: \$2,000 for general support.

Oregon State University Marine Mammal Program, Newport: \$5,000 for general support.

Salem Free Medical Clinic, Salem: \$20,000 for a volunteer coordinator.

Santiam Hearts to Arts, Mill City: \$5,000 to add a "Kid Zone" at the annual CanyonArts Festival.

Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program, Dallas: \$2,000 for general support.

St. Joseph Church, Salem:

\$5,000 for the English language tutoring program.

Other recipients in the Mid-Willamette Valley include the Salem Free Medical Clinic, which was awarded \$20,000 for a volunteer coordinator, and the Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program in Dallas received \$2,000 for general support.

Schumaker said the foundation recognizes that nonprofits still are struggling and are extending their recession-response guidelines, including allowing for requests for basic operational funding.

"Nonprofits can apply for bridge funding because of the economy," Schumaker said, adding that it will be the third year they extend those guidelines.

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