

Foundation gives financial assistance to organizations, agencies

Published 10/25/2007

A SCIFIT total body ergometer is something Dan Knight, with the Holcomb Recreation Wellness Center, sometimes has to explain to people.

It's a machine normally seen in physical therapy clinics vs. recreation or fitness centers and is the combination of a recumbent bike and upper-body bike that people can use either their legs, arms or both to pedal.

The benefit is almost anyone can use the machine regardless of age or physical ability, Knight said, but it runs about \$4,500.

And without funding from the Western Kansas Community Foundation, Knight said, he probably wouldn't have seriously looked at buying the machine at that cost.

The wellness center is one of 21 southwest Kansas organizations and agencies awarded grant money this fall through applying with the community foundation -- the foundation awarded \$37,270 to those that applied and were selected by the grant committee for funding. The foundation also awarded more than \$130,000 in advised and designated funds -- meaning donor selected -- to groups.

Funding for the grants is through income earned on endowed accounts through the foundation, formed as a nonprofit in May 1996.

This year marked the first organizations and agencies had four application times available throughout the year, said Michelle Komlofske, foundation executive director.

Before, groups had a fall and spring application deadline -- this year, they could apply in February, May, August and the year's last deadline of Nov. 1. The donor-advised grant funding is still only awarded once a year.

The foundation generally provides funding for projects and programs that fall under the categories of arts and cultural enhancement, health and well-being of children and community betterment.

This was the first year Knight applied for funding through the foundation, receiving \$2,500 in grant money. The machine is on order.

The Western Kansas Community Foundation awarded grant money to the following recipients that applied: Catholic Social Services; Communities in Schools of Grant County; Community Day Care; Families Together; Finney County Extension; Garden City Family YMCA; GC Teachers Federal Credit Union/Salvation Army; Garden Valley Retirement Village; Holcomb Recreation Wellness Center; Kansas Children's Service League; Kansas Health Consumer Coalition; Kansas Pediatric Foundation; Mosaic; Satanta Arts Council; Southwest Arts & Humanities Council; Southwest Kansas Live on Stage; Spirit of the Plains CASA; Western Gymnastics

Booster Club; Western Kansas Child Advocacy Center; USD 214, Ulysses; and Emmaus House.

Grant recipients through advised and designated funds include: Russell Child Development Center; High Plains Public Radio; GC Presbyterian Church; St. Catherine Development Foundation; GCCC Endowment Association; McPherson College; GC Family YMCA; Spirit of the Plains CASA; Finney County Historical Society; United Methodist Mexican-American Ministries; GC Piano Teachers League; GC Civic Choral Union & Symphony; Emmaus House; Laura's Legacy Foundation; USD 363 -- Holcomb FFA; USD 457 -- Garden City FFA; Leadership Garden City; Leadership Garden City for Children; and Finney County Public Library.

The Western Kansas Community Foundation also awarded more than \$40,000 to 14 organizations, including the Holcomb Recreation Wellness Center, in connection with the "change something" initiative started by the Kansas Health Foundation, a private philanthropy based in Wichita aimed at improving the health of all Kansans.

The WKCF was one of four community foundations to develop a community plan around nutrition and physical activity -- a three-year grant from the Kansas Health Foundation is helping with those efforts.

For more information on the Western Kansas Community Foundation or for an application, visit www.wkcf.org, or contact the office at 271-9484 or inside Western State Bank at 1500 E. Kansas Ave.