

Sammy Fund Grants Awarded to Area Groups

January 7, 2013, by Matt Hopf, Quincy Herald-Whig Staff Writer

Fourteen nonprofits to receive \$18,000 in funds

Fourteen area nonprofit organizations that support children are sharing \$18,000 in grants distributed Monday morning from the Samantha Otte Youth Opportunity Fund.

The grants were distributed during the morning assembly in the Washington Elementary School gym.

The fund has now distributed \$215,000 since its inception in 2000.

The fund is named in honor of Samantha Otte, who died at age 10 in March 2000. Samantha was the daughter of Chuck and June Otte, whose family and friends created something positive in her honor by forming the Sammy Fund, through which about 100 volunteers work to raise money to benefit other children. The chief source of revenue is the Sammy Fund event, held each October since 2000.

The Ottes expressed gratitude Monday for the ongoing support that has enabled the grant program to continue each year.

“We are grateful for the overwhelming support we have received because it has allowed so much goodness in Sam’s memory,” June Otte said in an interview.

The annual grant-distribution ceremonies have been conducted at various locations around Quincy.

“But this is the coolest place that we’ve done it,” Chuck Otte said Monday during the assembly at Washington School, where students got involved in passing out checks to representatives of the various nonprofit organizations. Each representative then briefly explained how the money will be used to benefit children.

June Otte said Washington School was a great venue for distributing grants this year.

“The grants benefit children that attend school here, so it really helps bring the focus back on what this all about – on the children,” she said.

The primary purpose of the Sammy Fund is to support organizations that maintain and enhance community betterment, along with artistic, leadership and humanitarian opportunities for young people.

Most of the proceeds from the annual event go to the fund, along with memorial gifts and other donations. The fund is administered by the Community Foundation of the Quincy Area.

Major sponsors of the 2012 Sammy Fund weekend were County Market, Refreshment Services Pepsi, the Quincy Herald-Whig and WGEM.

The Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that serves 13 counties in West-Central Illinois, Northeast Missouri and Southeast Iowa. It builds permanent funds to address needs and opportunities in communities.

Since 1999, the Community Foundation has awarded more than 1,300 grants totaling over \$1.9 million through more than 130 funds providing support for various programs and projects in the region.

Grant Recipients and Uses:

Grant recipients:

- Good News of Christmas – to help the Good News campaign provide gifts to needy families at Christmas.
- Midsummer Art Faire – to assist with the children’s art section for day camp organizations at the annual summer event.
- Hungry for Music, to connect low-income students with instruments, to repair donated instruments, and to buy additional instruments.
- Cornerstone: Foundation for Families, for school-based Comprehensive Youth Services program, which provides counseling and casework services to youth with social, emotional and behavioral problems.
- Douglass Community Services, Inc. – to allow additional students to participate in the Kids in Motion summer pre-employment and service learning training program.
- Quincy Family YMCA – for swim lessons for Head Start students from the Early Childhood Education Center.
- John Wood Community College Foundation – to provide tuition waivers for income-eligible children to attend JWCC’s Children’s College
- YWCA of Quincy – to fund leadership and development of the “A Girl Like Me” program for at-risk, disadvantaged girls transitioning from elementary schools to Baldwin School.
- Girl Scouts of Central Illinois – to expand program opportunities for girls, including membership assistance, aMAZE, a new troop at Washington School, and campership assistance for a weeklong summer camp opportunities.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of West-Central Illinois – to support one-on-one mentoring relationships in Adams County.
- Quincy Art Center – to help fund the smART Kids art mentoring program, which provides art instruction for students at Adams County schools
- Jackson-Lincoln Swimming Complex – to help fund a scholarship program for children and families that can’t afford pool fees.
- Quincy Symphony Orchestra Association, tuition waivers for low-income singers and instrumentalists to participate in the Quincy Area Youth Chorus or Quincy Area Youth Orchestra.
- Quincy Community Theatre, to support “On the Road” theater bus tour for students at Berrian, Washington and Dewey Schools