 **Evanston Lighthouse Rotary Club**

**Community Grant Awards – June 14, 2015**

The **Evanston Lighthouse Rotary Club** is pleased to announce the following year-end grants to local projects and organizations. The funds for these and other Club programs, scholarships and exchanges were raised primarily through the holiday sales of plants, nuts, citrus and hams by Rotary Club members, as well as member donations, and other club fundraising efforts.

**2015 Theme of the Community Service Committee**

***Support organizations and programs that help improve the quality of life for Evanston residents most in need. Proposals in the areas of education, hunger, homelessness, employment, and health will receive priority consideration.***

**Total grants awarded today: $ 13,000**

**Bundled Blessings $500 and diaper drive**

***Diaper Pantry***

Bundled Blessings’ mission is to supply diapers to families in need through partnerships with local service agencies. The target population is families primarily in Evanston, with children who are at or below the poverty line, as well as homeless/transient families.

The grant will allow for the purchase of approximately 2,500 diapers. Diapers are distributed monthly to families through six partner agencies. Bundled Blessings’ goal is to increase distribution by 60%, to 96,000 diapers per year.

**Connections for the Homeless $500**

***Client Enrichment Programming***

Connections is ending homelessness by preventing people from losing their homes, housing the homeless, and providing support to help people at risk achieve long-term self-stability.

The Connections project will provide funding to clients living in Supportive Housing that will allow them to participate in enrichment activities in the community. Enrichment activities are designed to enrich the lives of families and individuals in Supportive Housing and include things such as attending workshops on parenting or financial planning, museum visits and other activities for children.

**Dental Access Days $3,000**

***Dental Access Days Clinic 2015***

Dental Access Days are two-day events staffed by local dental professionals to provide free services to the most vulnerable citizens in Evanston.

The project goal is to offer dental services to the poor, the homeless, and the mentally ill, at no charge at the Levy Senior Center of Evanston, conveniently located for those who most need the services. In the past, 120 needy patients have been treated as comprehensively as possible with more than 50 volunteer dental professionals.

**Evanston Scholars $1,000**

***Accepted College Campus Visits***

Evanston Scholars is a college access and success program aimed at helping ambitious, first-generation, low-income Evanston youth graduate from college. Starting in high school and continuing through college graduation, the program offers mentors, workshops, college visits, ACT preparation, and college counseling.

A critical component of choosing a “best fit” college is physically visiting the campus. Most Evanston Scholars students find the resources to visit their accepted colleges, but a fraction (around 5 of 30 students) cannot due to more severe lack of resources and support network. This project would enable those students to visit colleges to which they have been accepted, which will help them make an informed college choice and therefore be more likely to graduate.

**Evanston ReBuilding Warehouse $750**

***WORKFORCE training program***

The Evanston ReBuilding Warehouse (ERW) promotes reduction of waste in landfills through sustainable deconstruction and renovation building practices. Reclaimed building materials are sold at low cost and support education, job-training and job-development programs which foster individual, community and economic growth in Evanston and beyond.

WORKFORCE is an employment program creating green jobs that pay a living wage. Participants will spend an intensive one month in training followed by six months of on-the-job training to learn skills in construction and deconstruction. They will be prepared to enter the job market in the construction or deconstruction markets or they will remain at the ERW on permanent staff.

**Evanston Township High School $1,000**

***Assistance for Homeless Students***

Embracing its diversity, ETHS dedicates itself to educating all students to their fullest potential.

Of the 3,267 students currently enrolled at ETHS, 155 are homeless. The project goal is to help as many of these students as possible with money for clothing, food, school supplies, and transportation to school. The grant will cover an entire month of these living expenses for four students.

**ETHS Youth Technology Corps $1,000**

***Middle School Outreach Pilot Program***

Part of a larger, Chicago-metro nonprofit, ETHS Youth Technology Corps (YTC) is transforming teens, empowering them with the skills necessary for the technology of the 21st century. YTC youth improve their skills while donating technology to their communities.

ETHS YTC will donate refurbished computer hardware and science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educational programming to directly benefit middle school youth in Evanston. Middle school participants will learn the basics of computer hardware and software structure, and they will become familiar with the high school and its students, easing their eventual transition to ETHS. Additionally, non-profits which serve middle school students will receive tech donations. High school students who participate in this pilot project will gain leadership and service experience in addition to STEM training.

**Interfaith Action of Evanston $750**

***Voicemail Accounts for Homeless People***

Interfaith Action of Evanston strives to build a just community. It works with diverse faith communities and individuals seeking to address the systemic issues of poverty, unemployment, homelessness and hunger.

Interfaith Action’s employment counselors help people with their resumes and other areas of their job search. Providing voice mails to homeless people who are searching for employment will allow them to have appropriate and available contact information. Prospective employers will be able to reach them. Interfaith Action also provides voicemails to homeless people who have medical concerns and need to have contact with their health care professionals.

**Justin Wynn Leadership Academy $500**

***Community Soup Kitchens***

The Justin Wynn Fund’s mission is to help Wynners develop leadership skills and a deep sense of responsibility for improving their communities. The organization serves 100+ Wynners who are in the program by providing them with an 8-year leadership development program, which includes many opportunities to participate in service-learning projects.

The project goal is to cook and serve at the following soup kitchens throughout the program year: Beth Emet Synagogue (2-4 times), A Just Harvest (2 times), Hilda’s Place (1 time), and First Methodist Church (1-2 times). As many as 600 dinner guests in total will be fed. The grant will help cover the cost of groceries, and students will cook and serve the meals.

**Literature for All of Us $1,000**

***Curt’s Café Collabaration***

Literature for All of Us brings the rewards of reading and writing through book group discussions to teen parents and other young people in underserved neighborhoods. We build communities of readers, poets, and critical thinkers. We develop family literacy by providing children’s literature and child development resources to teen parents.

The grant will help pay the stipends for young men who participate in a “soft skills” program at Curt’s Café in Evanston. The café is a workforce development program that trains at-risk boys and teen mothers. The young men will engage in literacy and trauma-informed book groups to develop social-emotional skills such as perseverance, conflict resolution, and self-esteem enhancement.

**James B. Moran Center for Youth Advocacy $1,000**

***Clean Slate Initiative***

The Moran Center provides low-income Evanston youth, 21 and younger, and their families with integrated legal and social work services to improve their quality of life at home, at school, and within the Evanston community. Staff attorneys represent and advocate for youth in juvenile court, criminal court, and school and special education proceedings. Social workers restore lives by supporting and counseling struggling youth. The programs redirect youth and their families – building skills and rebuilding lives through training, advocacy and support programs.

Through the Clean Slate Initiative, the Moran Center and its partners will educate and inform Evanston youth about the legal and employment consequences of an arrest record, and assist eligible participants in the legal process of clearing such records so that young people in our community have the fullest opportunities for education, housing, and employment.

**North Shore Senior Center $500**

***Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Childcare Enhancement***

The North Shore Senior Center fosters the independence and well-being of older adults, enhances their dignity and self-respect, and promotes their participation in and contribution toward all aspects of community life.

The grant will purchase materials needed to enhance the childcare portion of the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren support group from simply babysitting to one with age-appropriate educational activities. The childcare specialists, both certified public school teachers, are eager to advance the childcare offering into time focused on helping the children—ranging in age from preschool to high school—learn.

**PEER Services $1,500**

***Nuestra Familias***

PEER Services eliminates substance abuse and the problems it causes for individuals, families, and communities through collaborative high-quality prevention and treatment services. It offers services to youth, teens, and adults in Evanston and the surrounding communities.

The project goal is to remove barriers that often limit Latino parents from actively participating in their child’s treatment and recovery. Nearly 90% of Latino teens who are referred to the treatment program come as mandated clients, referred by school or law enforcement. Without parental support, treatment is placed solely in the hands of the teen-- eliminating the strength of a family bond and cohesion so common in Latino culture. By mobilizing parents using culturally relevant strategies, PEER Services will be better able to help teens enter recovery and develop the tools they need to live healthy, productive, substance-free lives.

In the current fiscal year, the Evanston Lighthouse Rotary has also supported the following community service projects:

* Lighthouse Beach Clean-up – Alliance for the Great Lakes
* Soup Kitchens – First United Methodist Church and Hilda’s Place
* Campus Kitchens meal deliveries
* Golf Road Cleanup "Adopt-A-Highway"
* Food collection for Streetwise Kitchen