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Granting good works

Editor's Blog, posted by Emily West, editor of Danville Express, on May 26, 2010 at 12:56 am

As a reporter, I must maintain the fine balance of getting immersed in a story while being careful to keep a certain distance. For some assignments, this is easy for me. Yet, at Thursday's Kiwanis Club of San Ramon Valley luncheon, the words being spoken permeated whatever wall I had built up and truly sunk into my heart.

Call me a softy, but I consider sharing the great works of local nonprofit organizations to be one of the best parts of my job. When I worked in Pleasanton, we did this through writing stories about groups supported by our annual Holiday Fund. So, one of my first introductions to many of the local nonprofits was through Thursday's luncheon at the Round Hill Country Club.

I got to know several of groups, since the Kiwanis Club awarded more than \$27,000 in grants to 29 area nonprofits. Grant amounts ranged from \$350 to \$2,250, with top grants given to Bay Area Crisis Nursery, Down Syndrome Connection, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, Loaves & Fishes, STAND! Against Domestic Violence and The Taylor Family Foundation.

Sitting next to Angi Carmignani, executive director of The Taylor Family Foundation, she shared stories of the camp for children with special needs. Not only does it provide opportunity for summer fun, but also a chance for kids to feel normal and not identified by their special needs.

Carmignani said that one little boy who had undergone heart surgery was very self-conscious about his scar and never took off his shirt in public. Yet, at camp, he noticed another boy had the same scar and proudly lifted his shirt to show off his own scar.

In thanking the Kiwanis Club, Melanie Buerke, founder of the SonRise Equestrian Foundation, recalled a time when miniature horse Blackie visited a girl in a coma in the hospital. During the visit, she awoke and was able to interact with her family. Buerke said the girl died the next day.

A representative from the Lucielle Glass Mauzy Foundation, with the Mauzy School based out of Alamo, hit the nail on the head when she described how interconnected the groups are. Not only are they helping a vast group of people across the region, but they band together during these times of tight budgets when funding is hard to secure.

Dave Romano, fundraising chairman for the Kiwanis Club, said the group has raised more than \$580,000 in the last 10 years. Not only that, this year they were able to support 80 percent of the organizations who applied for the grants.

So as the community prepares to snag the best spot for the annual Fourth of July parade, remember that behind the floats and fun are these important organizations doing much needed work.

Other grant recipients included: Camp Camelot, Contra Costa for Every Generation, Hope Hospice, Hospice of the East Bay, Moment by Moment, Museum of the San Ramon Valley, Ombudsman Services of Contra Costa, San Ramon Library Foundation, Senior Helpline Services, Shelter Inc. of Contra Costa County, SonRise Equestrian Foundation, The Wellness Community, Agape Villages, Child Abuse Prevention Counsel, Danville Community Band, Friends of Danville Library, Gardens at Heather Farms, Monument Crises Center, Special Olympics, Vestia Inc, and We Care Services for Children.

To learn more about the Kiwanis Club of the San Ramon Valley, visit www.kiwanis-srv.org.

Comments

Dear Emily,

Well written and considered, and very personal in its reflection of who you are.

Thank you
Posted by Ralph N. Shirlet, a resident of another community, on May 26, 2010 at 6:58 am

I am Kiwanis member in Brentwood. I know a couple of people in this club. This is just one of the great things Kiwanians throughout the world do. I am proud to call myself a Kiwanian. Posted by Tom Ontis, a resident of another community, 14 hours ago

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