

Reno County youth award \$5,000 in grants

HUTCHINSON – The Youth Philanthropy Council of Hutchinson Community Foundation awarded \$5,000 in grants at a ceremony Sunday at the Hutchinson Art Center.

Led by students from across Reno County, the Youth Philanthropy Council is a grantmaking program designed to involve area students in philanthropy: the practice of giving money, time and talents to help make life better for other people. This year's group began meeting in November to discuss local issues of concern to youth, learn about grantmaking and award grants to youth-serving organizations.

The grants are awarded from the Richard W. Dillon Memorial Fund, established by the Dillon family to honor Dick Dillon for his extensive philanthropic work in the community.

The 14 members of the 2021-22 council are Andrew Auxier, Tanner Lindahl and Ava Waln, Buhler High School; Karly Combs, Fairfield High School; Travis Harper, Haven High School; Zion Burgess, Jayci Moriasi and Sadye Patterson, Hutchinson High School; Joseph Martinez, Nickerson High School; Copper Collins and Sophi England, Pretty Prairie High School; Laurissa Adelhardt, Anthony Clennan and Tanner Weathers, Trinity Catholic High School.

The following awards were given Sunday afternoon.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Hutchinson Inc., "Biggie Smalls," \$850: In this mentoring program, older student members of the club who meet at the Shaddock Park location will be matched with younger students at the Avenue A location. These pairs will do activities, share snacks and build relationships. At the end of the school year, they will choose a field trip celebration experience. Funds help support purchase of matching T-shirts, activity supplies, snacks and travel, and entrance fee costs for the celebration.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Hutchinson Inc., "To Infinity and Beyond," \$900: Funds will allow the club to purchase a 32-inch Infinity Game Table that will bring the fun of board games back to the youth. The electronic table stores over 40 favorite board games that youth can access and enjoy without the pieces to keep track of and boxes to store. Old favorites like Operation and Clue will make a comeback, and youth leaders envision developing leagues for various games, promoting good strategy, teamwork and sportsmanship in addition to fun.

BrightHouse Inc., "Safer, Smarter Kids," \$600: BrightHouse has been providing relationship safety training to high school-aged students for several years, and this grant will allow the organization to purchase developmentally appropriate curriculum for teaching younger students about healthy and safe friendships and relationships. BrightHouse's goal is to help youth recognize healthy and unhealthy relationships, help them build skills for responding to dangerous situations, and instill the understanding that they can seek help if involved in abusive relationships.

Buhler Public Library, "Lego Club at the Library," \$300: Buhler Public Library will begin offering a Lego Club, encouraging children to practice scientific and spatial reasoning skills along with building cooperation and problem-solving skills while facing the challenges of designing, constructing and communicating. Lego Club also gives children and families an added reason to visit the library, reminding them of their opportunity to read and check out books and other materials. Grant funds will support the purchase of Legos, base plates and character/structure-shaped Lego pieces.

Graber Elementary School, "Graber 'GLOW' Shop," \$400: Funds will be used to help the newly formed Graber Student Council begin an entrepreneurial project designed to engage students with real-life experiences while building meaningful connections and developing long-lasting skills to apply throughout life. The students, with

support from the principal, counselor and sixth-grade teachers, will lead the decision-making process and plans regarding merchandise sold, how to allocate funds earned, etc.

Trinity Catholic High School Key Club, “No Sew Tie Blankets,” \$630: Trinity High School's Key Club makes felt blankets to give away to community members who may be hospitalized, going through medical treatments or for new babies whose mothers are receiving services from Open Door Pregnancy Care Center. Youth not only make the blankets, but they also deliver them out into the community, practicing philanthropy throughout the entire process.

United Way of Reno County, “Reading Under the Lights,” \$885: Summer reading is an important part of helping youth reach and surpass a third-grade reading level, which is an indicator of continued success in school and linked to high school graduation. Funds will support a free, family friendly, summer reading kickoff event targeting USD 308 children from age 5 through third grade. It will be an interactive event with dinner for all attendees, reading circles, celebrity readers, library card sign-up, a storybook walk and a free book for all students.

Wiley Elementary School, “Mini Sweet Treat,” \$435: Mini Sweet Treat at Wiley aims for students to become young entrepreneurs. They work to sell healthy products and become fiscally responsible. The grant funds will allow for the purchase of a mini fridge, allowing students to sell items that must be kept cool. It will also cover the cost of a rolling cart large enough to display items for sale, so the younger, non-reading students at Wiley are able to view items and make purchase decisions.

Hutchinson Community Foundation’s mission is to inspire philanthropy, collaboration and innovative leadership to strengthen Reno County communities. Since 1989, the foundation has granted more than \$92 million.