



## Community foundation awards \$15K in grants

Rain and wind didn't stop Hutchinson Community Foundation from awarding its annual Changemakers at Work grants Thursday evening.

Eight area nonprofit organizations received a total of \$15,000 at a gathering at Pizaacos, 112 S. Main St., as part of the evening's Third Thursday festivities. The program was originally scheduled to take place at the Avenue A Park gazebo but was moved across the street to Pizaacos because of the weather.

Changemakers at Work grants are small funds available to Reno County residents and organizations working on projects that spark community spirit and pride, build social capital, and create opportunities for positive changes that strengthen the county.

This year's awards ranged from \$915 to \$2,500. The grants are supported by the Fund for Reno County, the foundation's unrestricted fund designed to meet the ever-changing needs of Reno County.

Grants were awarded by the community foundation's Changemakers at Work Grants Committee made up of foundation board members and Reno County residents selected through an application process. Members of the 2022 committee are Sara Alexander, Sam Boxberger, Jordan Brown, Dawn Johnson, Lovella Kelley, Kimberley Kincaid-Warner, Jay Schrock, Annette Smith and Barbara Vieyra.

The following organizations received grants:

**Graber Elementary School, "Growing a 'Music' Garden," \$915:** Funds will support the addition of permanent musical instruments, such as hand drums, chimes and bells, in Graber Elementary School's outdoor classroom, providing yet another reason for students to make use of and enjoy this educational space.

**Hutch in Harmony, "Sketches of Reality: Untold Stories of Civil Rights," \$2,500:** Hutch in Harmony, in collaboration with Hutch Rec, the Reno County Museum and Darrell Pope, is developing a series of videos capturing stories of the civil rights struggle and progress as it was enacted and witnessed by Reno County residents. Funds will allow for a professional media company to edit the videos into a feature-length film that will be shown locally and then housed at the Reno County Museum.

**Hutchinson Friends of the Zoo, "Nature Play Expansion," \$2,170:** Funds will support the purchase of a spiderweb climbing feature that will be part of the new Nature Play area at the Hutchinson Zoo. The area will also include other features and opportunities for children and families to interact outdoors and will be open to zoo visitors in the fall of 2022.

**Morgan Elementary School, "Morgan Elementary Outdoor Classroom," \$915:** The school is in the process of constructing an outdoor classroom, which will provide a new learning experience for the students and allow them to experiment with growing plants and tending flower boxes and the butterfly garden. During this first phase of construction, grant funds will support the purchase of supplies to build the concrete story stage planned for the outdoor classroom.

**Partridge Community Church, "Gathering to Grow," \$2,500:** Partridge Community Church is beginning a three-phase project to create an outdoor community venue for music, storytelling, gardening, learning and fellowship. In addition to providing a space to bring area residents together, community members hope to share the harvest from the future community garden plots with families in need of fresh produce. Funds will support installation of electricity and water.

**Rise Up Reno Prevention Network, "Youth Empowerment Summit (YES!)," \$1,500:** YES! is an all-day event led by Reno County high school students and Rise Up Reno staff for students in fifth through eighth grades. Through a series of activities and discussions with community members — including business owners, a mental health professional, a sheriff's officer and a motivational speaker — students will become better equipped for transitions into middle and high school. They will learn about dealing with stress and anxiety and how to access leadership opportunities all while beginning to build relationships with caring adults and older students. The grant will support the cost of the youth motivational speaker.

**SW Bricktown Neighborhood Committee, "SW Bricktown Hispanic Heritage Events," \$2,500:** The SW Bricktown Neighborhood Committee is organizing and hosting two events in 2022 in celebration of Hispanic heritage: a Cinco de Mayo event in May and the second-annual SW Bricktown Fiesta in September. All Reno County community members are encouraged to share in the celebrations. Funds will be used to support the costs of entertainment and logistics, such as security and waste management, for the Cinco De Mayo event.

**United Way of Reno County, "Reading Under the Lights," \$2,000:** Reading Under the Lights is an evening event designed to encourage summer reading opportunities and maintain or improve reading levels among children ages 5 through 8 during the break from school. Students and their families will find opportunities to participate in story walks, hear stories read by community celebrities, share dinner with their family and friends, sign up for library cards, and leave the event with free books to begin their summer reading.

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 to organizations.