Grant Highlights

In 2007, The Amy Helpenstell Foundation made a $150,000 grant, payable over three years, to the Robert Young Center for Community Mental Health (RYC) to study the issue of eating disorders in the greater Quad City area. RYC was challenged by The Amy Helpenstell Foundation to learn about and take the lead on the dynamics of awareness, diagnosis, and the best practices associated with eating disorders.

To accomplish this, Dr. David Deopere, President of RYC, convened a team of local professionals around this issue and formed the Q.C. Eating Disorders Consortium. The consortium’s objective was to obtain baseline information to begin to understand the community’s perception of eating disorders. Using monies from The Amy Helpenstell Foundation’s grant, the consortium enlisted the help of McKeon & Associates, Chicago, IL, to conduct an eating disorders survey.

Approximately 99% of survey respondents believed that women would be the most likely to experience an eating disorder closely followed by persons with depression (95%). Survey results also indicated that 50% of Quad City area residents would recommend their family doctor as the place to seek assistance for an eating disorder.

From these and other findings, the consortium identified a need for a formal eating disorders program and looked to national resources for help.

“After much research by local therapists, Scott Stange and Betsy Zmuda-Swanson, the consortium agreed to adopt the American Psychiatric Association’s guidelines for eating disorders treatment so clinicians will have a protocol to follow and be in compliance with insurance companies,” said Barb Lynch, consortium coordinator.

To promote these best practices and eating disorders standards, the consortium created a web site, www.qceatingdisorders.com. The consortium hopes the web site will be the main resource on eating disorders for our community. Support group information and a list of local providers can be found on this site.

In addition, the consortium has generated community awareness of eating disorders by establishing a bi-monthly Q.C. Eating Disorders Support Group, publicizing information in a wide variety of media, surveying physicians, supporting educational opportunities for therapists, and offering presentations to schools.

“The Q.C. Eating Disorders Consortium is bringing the issue of eating disorders to the forefront locally and their work would not be possible without the generosity and support of the Amy Helpenstell Foundation,” said Dr. Deopere.

For more information on The Amy Helpenstell Foundation, visit www.amyhelpenstell.org.
After-school program thrives with TAHF support

Ann Schwickerath, Project Renewal executive director, says The Amy Helpenstell Foundation has made a great difference in the financial stability of the organization.

“Many funding sources do not like to support salaries or operating expenses,” said Ann. “It happens to be that the essence of our entire program relies on our dedicated staff, volunteers and general operating expenses.”

In 2008, Project Renewal received a $12,500 grant to help fund its after-school program. The organization was one of 41 organizations that received assistance from The Amy Helpenstell Foundation last year.

“We do not always need ‘stuff,’ but we always need people and the funding to keep our place going. This includes paying bills, utilities, insurance, salaries, and providing the children with opportunities to learn, grow and succeed,” said Ann.

Established in 1974, Project Renewal is located in the inner city of Davenport and operates out of a house in the neighborhood it serves. Project Renewal works with all members of the neighborhood, but specializes in after-school and summer programs for children and youth.

“From 3 to 6 p.m. every day, treats are passed out and homework assistance is provided to children of all ages who attend school that day,” said Ann. “Educational and recreational activities are available for the children to provide a positive alternative to the negative elements they may otherwise encounter.”

The support of The Amy Helpenstell Foundation means participants of Project Renewal’s after-school program will not only be offered daily homework and tutoring help, but also opportunities to learn how to be good neighbors and citizens. Through cultural events, block parties and neighborhood clean-ups, Project Renewal is helping area youth live peacefully among others.

Most of the children who live in the surrounding area of Project Renewal either do not have the financial or family support to be involved in extracurricular activities, sign up for lessons, or participate in hobbies and classes. Participants come from varying family structures and socioeconomic backgrounds.

“We strive to remain flexible and responsive to the needs of the children and the families we serve,” said Ann. “Our job is not your typical 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We respond to needs as they arise regardless of the day or hour.”

Mission

The mission of The Amy Helpenstell Foundation, Inc. is to improve the quality of life in the Quad Cities area by funding educational programs and by funding grants for health, community development, youth development and cultural activities.

Grantmaking Policy

The Foundation awards grants to area organizations that honor the memory of Amy E. Helpenstell and her charitable objectives. Grant applications are considered twice each year by invitation only. Unsolicited grant applications are not accepted.

Since 2005, The Amy Helpenstell Foundation has distributed more than $1.5 million in grants.