

The Index

Matching grant prompts fundraising *Community group hopes to raise \$25,000*

By Janet Gordon
Contributing Writer

The Hickory County Community Improvement Foundation has announced fundraising plans as part of their efforts to earn matching fund grant dollars through the Harry Cooper Supply Company Campaign for the Ozarks. Each dollar earned between now and the end of December will be matched up to \$25,000, making it possible for a total of \$50,000 to be raised to benefit Hickory County.

"The Foundation is the link to obtain funding for Hickory County exclusively from individuals, businesses, government and any kind of federal or private funding," says Alisa Carter, administrator for the Hickory County Health Department. "The Foundation is responsible for making certain these funds go back into Hickory County."

"As part of that responsibility, we are constantly pursuing grants and other funding opportunities that will benefit our communities of Hickory County," she stated.

Members of the HCCIF include Walt Darling, chairman; Alisa Carter, vice-chairperson; Pam Jackson, secretary; Dawn Vader, treasurer; and Julie Foster, member-at-large.

"The HCCIF represents our county as an affiliate to the much larger Community Foundation of the Ozarks. The HCCIF is the fiscal agent for the Community Improvement Coalition and represents the community by applying for grants made possible through the CFO and by establishing new funds through community donations to be used in Hickory County," Carter explained. "Without the board for the HCCIF, the CFO would not have local representation and would not know how to meet the needs of this community."

Carter noted that there are many benefits to the HCCIF because of their affiliation with the CFO. For example, the fund becomes part of

a publicly supported organization benefiting the community; donors may get a larger tax deduction for current and future gifts; donors may remain anonymous if they wish; and there is no minimum distribution requirement. Additionally, since the fund doesn't pay excise tax, there sometimes is more available for charitable purposes; funds may be set up in one day, rather than months; and the fund is managed by a full-time, staffed organization with expert advisors.

"That is where the Hickory County Community Improvement Coalition plays such an important part in the decision-making process by making recommendations as to how grant money can fill gaps and needs without duplicating services that are available," Carter commented. "The CIC can bring partners together to reach their goals in a way that each of the partners individually might not be able to do on their own."

Carter said the new walking trail below the Pomme de Terre Dam is an example. "The US Army Corps of Engineers would not have been able to make the new walking trail by itself," she said. "By partnering with the Health Department to provide additional funding, and with the CIC and Hermitage Schools for volunteer workers, the project became a reality."

That particular project provides additional recreational and physical activity opportunities to the community as a whole, helps the Health Department promote healthy lifestyle behaviors, and provides a safe place for high school cross country runners to use, according to Carter. "It was a win-win situation for all involved, and the community benefited most of all. It was a practical solution that could only be made through collaboration."

Vader noted, "The HCCIF meets the first Thursday of each month at 4 p.m. at the McCarty Senior Cen-

ter. This is the place where needs can be presented and concerns may be voiced about a need that's not currently being met, etc."

Members on the HCCIC include representatives from the Department of Family Services, Hickory County Health Department, McCarty Senior Center, each of the four Hickory County Schools and others. Their purpose is to discuss issues concerning each entity and how to work together to find local solutions. Vader explained that the CIC then takes those items into consideration and presents that to the Hickory County Community Improvement Foundation.

"The HCCIF has already given in many ways to Hickory County," Carter said.

Car seats have been provided to the Health Department with funds through CFO; \$6,000 was provided to the Mary Shaw Butler Domestic

(Continued to Page 3A)



The Hickory County Community Improvement Foundation includes (front) Pam Jackson, secretary, Alisa Carter, Hickory County Health Department administrator and Hickory County Community Improvement Foundation vice chair, Lance Hutton, Hickory County Community Improvement Coalition chair; (back) Debbie Smith, community member and volunteer, Julie Foster, member-at-large, Dawn Vader, treasurer, Walt Darling, chair.

>Community group gets \$25,000 matching grant

(Continued from Page 1A)

Violence Shelter for a new roof and to help pay general maintenance for the facility; small grants have been provided to all the local volunteer fire departments; tornado victim recovery funds were collected and distributed to meet the direct needs of the tornado victims of Hickory County.

Darling added, "Through the Foundation, we have been able to provide over 1,100 weather alert radios for Hickory County residents to purchase at the low, wholesale price, which made them much more affordable."

With the Harry Cooper Supply Company Challenge Grant, the board's hopes are high that many more needs of Hickory Countians may be met in the near future.

"We hope we can take full advantage of this generous offer for a matching funds grant," Hutton commented. "It's not often that an opportunity of this type comes along, and we hope everyone can understand how much this can help our community."

Once the money has been collected and matched, the fund may be set up and used to award grants using the interest the funds generate. Grant applications will be approved by the five-member HCCIF for such things as scholarships, family crisis emergencies, burn victims, schools, law enforcement,

emergency management, and others," Hutton said.

"We're excited about the possibilities," Carter said. "We are so fortunate to have Debbie Smith helping us with the project. Debbie has worked at the Hickory County Health Department for 19 years and has great compassion for clients of the department and for the entire community. She has volunteered to coordinate all fundraising activity involved with reaching our grant goal."

Pam Jackson, Health Education for the Hickory County Health Department, agrees, "There is no one in our community with a bigger heart and willingness to help our community." She adds, "We hope to earn at least the \$25,000 so we can receive the matching \$25,000 funds for a total of \$50,000 to establish the endowment fund, an interest-bearing account. All interest earned will be given out in grants."

"If someone gave \$100 today, that \$100 will still be working for Hickory County years and years down the road," Carter said.

Smith has many plans already in place as part of their fundraising activities. "I am excited to be a part of this challenging but wonderful opportunity for my community," she said. Among the events scheduled are Hickory County Schools Give Big, a Hickory County Swap Meet,

"Got Talent" Talent Show, golf tournament, bowling tournament, Christmas family photographs, concert, and others.

The Hickory County Schools Give Big fundraiser will begin soon and will include Weaubleau, Hermitage, Skyline and Wheatland Schools. Each school will compete against the others to see which school can raise the largest amount of money for the HCCIF by working through the student councils from each school. Objectives and rules will be explained to each school's student council.

The Hickory County Health Department Golf Tournament Four-Person Scramble is scheduled for September 27 at Shadow Lake Golf Course. The "Got Talent?" Talent Show is scheduled for October 11 at Hermitage High School. The Hickory County Swap Meet is scheduled for Saturday, October 25, at the McCarty Senior Center.

"This kind of opportunity doesn't come along every day, and we need to make the most of it," commented Smith. "I realize that local businesses and citizens go above and beyond when it comes to supporting this community, but this is such a special situation that has the potential for long-term benefits for the entire community, so it's very important for everyone to be involved."

Information about the fundrais-

ing events or about donating to the matching funds grant is available by contacting the Hickory County Health Department in Hermitage.

THE INDEX, Hermitage, Mo. September 3, 2008