

Nonprofits awarded grants

Community Foundation helps record number of institutions, social services

By Jeff Danna
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The Highland Park Community Foundation gave a record amount of grant and scholarship money in 2012 to local institutions, nonprofits and social service groups.

At its annual awards dinner in December, the foundation presented 25 grants totaling \$131,700, the most the charity has given since it was founded in 1992, leaders said.

The grants come at a time when nonprofits have seen once-reliable funding streams run dry, yet the foundation's endowment is at an all-time high, said Jack Blane, a founder of the Highland Park Community Foundation and a current board member. The grants help pay for specific services, from youth outreach to arts programs, that affect residents of Highland Park and Highwood.

"It's not for operations — it's for programs — for people who are in need," Blane said.

Over the years, the foundation has built an endowment from donations and investments that sustains the grant program. During the recession, the fund took a



Jeff Danna/Tribune photo

Stephanie Garrity points out a drawing at the Zacharias Sexual Abuse Center, an organization that received \$8,000 from the Highland Park Community Foundation.

financial hit, but it has since rebounded, Blane said. It currently has a balance of \$2.5 million, and foundation leaders hope to increase that amount to \$3 million in the near future. If that happens, annual grants

could go up to \$150,000, according to a press release from the fund.

"As the endowment increases, we're

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able to give away more," Blane said.

Foundation liaisons work with nonprofit leaders early in the year on grant applications, Blane said.

"I think that's a rather unique facility we have," he said. "It brings us really close to the people who receive the grants."

Grants have been essential for the Zacharia's Sexual Abuse Center, one of the 2012 beneficiaries, said Stephanie Garrity, director of development. Although the center is based in Gurnee, it serves people across Lake County, and the \$8,000 it received will fund sexual abuse awareness programs in Highland Park schools.

"We have a very large prevention presence in Highland Park, and we're quite proud of it," Garrity said.

Family Network, a Highland Park-based nonprofit that averted budget cuts in the fall thanks to donations, also received a grant from the Highland Park Community Foundation. Director Jordan Friedman said the money will provide scholarship help to families for early childhood and family support services.

"Having a local foundation in our community that values the work of local organizations and helps to sustain them at a time when funding to non-profits have been cut across the state has been greatly appreciated," Friedman wrote in an email.