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Small grant program gives \$50,000 to 26 nonprofits

The First County Bank Foundation's \$50,000 small grant program issued the last of its 2010 funds to area nonprofits last week. For many of these organizations it was the first time they applied for funds from the foundation. Since mid April, 26 nonprofits were awarded grants in amounts of \$500 to \$2,500.

"The small grant program was a welcome addition to our foundation's giving plan and enabled us to attain our goal of helping more communities in lower Fairfield County," said First County Bank Foundation Vice President Katherine Harris. Small grants, defined as grants of \$2,500 or less for those applicants who fit the regular grant criteria, and \$1,000 or less for those applicants that do not fit the regular grant criteria, were available since April 1. "And we look forward to seeing all of our grant recipients at this year's annual celebration," added Harris.

The annual event, to be held on Monday, Dec. 13, at UConn Stamford, is an invitation only event to honor and celebrate the nonprofit organizations benefiting economic development, housing, children and families living and working in lower Fairfield County.

"This 'Celebration of Mutual Partnership' that the bank hosts every year is meant to showcase some of the great work our nonprofit organizations do for the local community," said Rey Giallongo, president of The First County Bank Foundation. "While the foundation continues to make significant contributions to our community partners in a difficult economic environment, First County Bank's board of directors, corporators and employees are intent on keeping this tradition of giving in the forefront of all we do."

To be eligible, organizations must have nonprofit tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; be located in Stamford, Darien, Greenwich, New Canaan, Norwalk or Westport; have community support; address community needs; have measurable outcomes; and demonstrate fiscal and administrative responsibility. Special consideration is given to those agencies or programs benefiting low to moderate income populations.

"Because there are thousands of nonprofits in Fairfield County, The First County Bank Foundation expanded the period of time for filling out applications and also expanded eligibility for many organizations in need of financial support throughout the year," Harris explained. Since issuing its first 2010 grant in March to United Way of Western Connecticut, The First County Bank Foundation has granted more than \$570,900 to 101 nonprofit organizations throughout lower Fairfield County. Since its creation in 2001, the foundation has been able to award more than 450 grants totaling over \$4 million to

various community organizations.

Established in honor of the bank's 150th anniversary, the First County Bank Foundation was created to distribute funds annually to nonprofit organizations that support community and economic development for children and families. As a mutual bank with no shareholders, First County Bank considers contributions made by the foundation a means of paying dividends back to the local communities it serves.

First County Bank, headquartered in Stamford, Conn., is an independent mutual community bank with 15 branches in Stamford, Greenwich, Darien, New Canaan, Norwalk and Westport offering deposit products, mortgages, trust and investment services, business banking services and online banking. First County Bank has assets in excess of \$1.3 billion. For additional information, visit www.firstcountybank.com.

Organization

Location

Grant Amount

Cause

A Better Chance in Darien Inc.

Darien

\$2,500

Provide a four year academic and boarding scholarship to highly motivated and academic promising female student of color.

Bartlett Arboretum

Stamford

\$2,500

Support the Outreach Program that addresses literacy and science education.

Builders Beyond Borders

Norwalk

\$2,500

Grant will fund local projects by student volunteers such as cleaning and restoring local waterways, collecting and distributing food donations, as well as renovating local schools and assisted living centers.

Center for Children's Advocacy

Stamford

\$1,000

Support the truancy prevention work in Stamford's Rippowam Middle School.

Circle of Friends Norwalk

\$1,000

Sunday Circle/Teen Scene Program -- teenage volunteers spend every Sunday with a special needs child. Activities include music, art, sports, snacks, holiday baking and story

time.

Easter Seals

Hebron

\$2,500

Provide fully accessible summer camp to children and adults with disabilities and special needs.

Food Bank of Lower Fairfield County

Stamford

\$500

Various needs for The Food Bank

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

Greenwich

\$2,500

Help fund the Catalyst for Change Youth Fellows Program, Summer 2010. The program provides opportunity for youth to participate in hands-on event planning, social media and other outreach opportunities at a major United Nations conference

Girls Incorporated

Stamford

\$2,500

Provide Growing Together program at two community sites located in Stamford.

Greenwich Arts Council

Greenwich

\$1,000

Provide enhanced arts education opportunities by busing students to the council for special art workshops and training.

High Road School of Norwalk

Norwalk

\$2,500

Scholarship for special needs camp.

Liberation Programs Inc.

Norwalk

\$1,000

Supplies sheets, towels, personal care items, food for families and pregnant women living in the Families in Recovery program.

LINKS: Connections for Independent Living

Westport

\$1,000

Brochure that provides connections to services and events for people 55 and older.

Malta House Inc.

Norwalk

\$2,500

Assist with daily operations and programs offered at Malta House.

The Maritime Aquarium

Norwalk

\$2,500

Educational outreach and scholarship program, Red Apple Fund for Student Enrichment.

Mikey's Way Foundation

Westport

\$2,500

Provide 10 pediatric cancer patients with netbooks or iPods so they can take a break from their cancer treatment.

New Covenant House

Stamford

\$2,500

Support for soup kitchen, food pantry and after-school meals.

Norwalk Symphony Orchestra

Norwalk

\$2,500

Pay for expenses to play at local libraries and elementary schools.

Stamford Symphony

Stamford

\$1,500

Free tickets for students and seniors in city housing.

Stamford Youth Foundation

Stamford

\$1,000

Fund scholarships for disadvantaged children.

Stepping Stones Museum

Norwalk

\$2,500

Kick-off and promote the museum's Count Me In campaign.

The Links Inc.

Stamford

\$2,500

To support Fairfield County Chapter programs and community services.

Visiting Nurse & Hospice Care of SWCT

Stamford

\$1,000

To purchase equipment to help patients manage their chronic illness at home.

Women's Mentoring Network Inc.

Stamford

\$2,500

Scholarships of first generation college bound students entering college in the fall of 2010.

YMCA of Norwalk

Norwalk

\$1,000

Support youth programs that provide effective intervention strategies for high-risk children.

The Stamford Family YMCA

Stamford

\$2,500

LEAD program

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