

## Caesars hands out \$350,000 to area organizations

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— While the voters of Floyd County didn't want Caesars Indiana in their own back yard a decade ago, they have been affected by the riverboat casino.

Some may argue the benefit has been a negative one, but to the 36 smiling faces Wednesday afternoon, the riverboat's presence has been a pure blessing.

The Caesars Foundation of Floyd County handed out its spring grants to nonprofit organizations, educational institutions and government agencies Wednesday afternoon at the Carnegie Center for Art and History in New Albany. In the last eight years, the foundation has awarded \$15 million to groups in Southern Indiana.

Grant amounts were handed out in various sums — the lowest being \$1,975 to eight \$20,000 grants.

"It's really amazing to think they give out over \$300,000 twice a year. Just think of the number of kids and people these grants benefit," said Ray Day, former director of development at Providence High School, who now serves as the school's Webmaster.

Providence picked up one of the \$20,000 matching grants to provide educational tools and design space to help students with learning differences.

"We couldn't do it without this money," Day said.

Other groups to receive \$20,000 were: Southern Indiana Asset Building; Family Health Center of Floyd County Inc.; New Albany High School; Georgetown Optimist Club; Youth Count; Floyd County 4-H Corp.; and the Indiana University Southeast School of Nursing. The money will be used for everything from new bleachers and support beams for the 4-H Fairgrounds, to providing financial counseling sessions to 100 low income families in Floyd County.

Caesars Foundation of Floyd County Executive Director Jerry Finn said the grants' committee received 60 applications for the spring cycle. He said that was the largest amount of grant applications ever received.

He also said the committee members go through the applications and make site visits before making their recommendation to the foundation board.

"The grants' committee members really take this serious. Nothing just slides through," he said.

Organizations that failed to receive a grant can reapply for the fall grant cycle. Organizations receiving grants must wait a year to apply for more funding.

S. Ellen Jones Principal Susie Reis is certain her Caesars grant for \$9,600 will benefit hundreds of students and their families. The money will go toward paying New Albany Police Officer Chad Armenta to work as a school liaison for the 2008-09 school year. He will work from 9 to 11 a.m. each day and his job will be to help increase student attendance, improve communication with parents and develop student assets. His job also includes communicating social service information to families.

Armenta worked at the school during the second semester this past year, and Reis said the school and its students saw immediate benefits.

"We have so much mobility in our neighborhood that attendance has been an issue," Reis said. "Now if a student doesn't show up, and no one calls, he goes to the house. Our attendance has improved and he is building a positive relationship with the kids. Many of our families don't have phones and he communicates information to them."

Armenta said the experience has been a rewarding one.

"I was nervous at first because I didn't know how the kids would react to me," he said. "The first day I

had kids trying to kick me or hit me because they had been told police officers are bad. But by the end of the year, we were best friends.”

The following is a list of grant recipients and a small description of what their money will be used for.

- St. Mary’s Catholic School, \$1,975; to upgrade the music education program with a digital piano that better meets the vocal needs of students.
- Bridgepointe Services and Goodwill, \$2,500; to fund the Young Leaders Today and Tomorrow program and the Great Expectations Career Camp.
- Clark County Youth Shelter & Family Services, \$2,500; to purchase SafePlace materials to be used in Floyd County schools, parks and organizations.
- Tri-County Health Coalition, \$2,566; to fund Shots for Tots to encourage teenage parents to participate in the free vaccination project for the best health of their child.
- Boy Scout Troop 4025, \$2,845; to replace damaged equipment — tents and tent related items and to purchase two new personal information security cabinets.
- American Diabetes Association, \$3,500; to provide camp scholarships for the Camp Hendon, a week-long camp for kids with type 1-2 diabetes.
- Silver Street Elementary, \$4,500; to help support the “STAR” T-shirt reward earned by students and to assist in the funding to replace 250 school library books.
- Carnegie Center for Art and History, \$4,500; to fund the International Traveling Hooked Rug Exhibit.
- Friends of the Culbertson Mansion Inc., \$4,521; to print and provide 5,000 professional, souvenir books of the Culbertson Mansion to be given to third-grade teachers.
- Cancer Center of Indiana, \$5,000; to purchase brochures, books, videos, wigs and provide health and medical programs for patients.
- House of Ruth Inc., \$5,000; to continue to provide homeless prevention activities, supportive services and emergency support to HIV-positive men, women and children living in Floyd County.
- The Louisville Chorus, \$5,000; to fund the annual Christmas Concert held at St. Mary’s Catholic Church.
- IUS School of Education, \$5,000; to purchase literacy materials for a resource room that will be used for a collaborative project with Mount Tabor School to tutor struggling readers.
- IUS Division of Student Affairs, \$5,000; to provide an orientation service-learning project benefiting Floyd County partnering agencies and the students at IUS.
- Our Place Drug and Alcohol Educational Services Inc., \$5,000; to fund a fully functional and integrated multimedia system for new Education/Resource room.
- St. Mary of the Knobs Catholic School, \$6,000; to update/enhance the Technology Lab by purchasing eight computers and hardware and software improvements.
- Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, \$8,000; to replace mechanical door locks on exterior doors.
- Indiana Youth Institute, \$8,000; to present a two-day training “Preparing Successful Grant Proposals” for local youth-serving improvements.
- Family and Children First, \$8,580; to fund the middle-school express, a prevention program that brings families together for weekly sessions and support groups.
- S. Ellen Jones School, \$9,600; to fund a project to increase student attendance, develop student assets and improve communication with parents.
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana, \$10,000; to fund Hazelwood school-based mentoring program with students from New Albany High School.
- Floyds Knobs Lions Club, \$10,000; to purchase a vision-screening camera with the ability to detect vision disorders and provide free screenings to children ages 1 through 5.
- Community Coordinated Child Care Inc., \$10,000; to provide child care assistance for low-income residents.
- Lifespan Resources, \$10,000; to provide funding to update technology, communication and storage needed for new office space.
- Mt. St. Francis Sanctuary Inc., \$10,000; to fund the renovation of the lakefront with new restrooms, storage and rebuild docks.
- St. Mary of the Knobs Youth Ministry, \$12,500; to purchase 20 to 25 passenger bus to transport youth.
- Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana, \$15,000; to develop resources for families which help them

actively pass on the traditions of youth giving their time, talent and treasure for community good.

- Fairmont Elementary School, \$17,000; to fund Scholastic's READ 180 program for English as a Second Language Students.
- Southern Indiana Asset Building Coalition, \$20,000; to provide individual financial counseling sessions to 100 low-income residents.
- Family Health Center of Floyd County Inc., \$20,000; to subsidize medication to 1,200 patients of the center who are low income, uninsured or under-insured.
- Providence Junior/Senior High School, \$20,000; to provide educational tools and design space that will meet the needs of students with learning differences.
- New Albany High School, \$20,000; to purchase 30 RealCare Babies and other equipment to be used in Child Development Classes.
- Georgetown Optimist Club, \$20,000; to put a new roof on facility
- Youth Count, \$20,000; to continue communitywide initiative focused on building developmental assets youth need to succeed.
- Floyd County 4-H Corp., \$20,000; to replace wooden bleachers with metal bleachers and replace metal support beams.
- IUS School of Nursing, \$20,000; to purchase medical equipment for both adult and pediatric clinical simulation hospital rooms.

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#### Photos



Ray Day, right, accepts a grant on behalf of Providence High School from Horseshoe Foundation board member Ryan Hammer during Horseshoe Foundations of Floyd County's annual grant presentation. The school received \$20,000 to provide educational tools and design space that will help meet the needs of students with learning differences. Staff photo by Kevin McGloshen



Theresa Duke, principal of Silver Street Elementary, accepts a grant from Horseshoe Foundation board member Kevin Zurschmiede during Horseshoe Foundations of Floyd County's annual grant presentation. The school received \$4,500 for new library books and to help fund student incentive programs. Staff photo by Kevin McGloshen