

PEOPLE

John's Island Foundation always succeeds in meeting needs

BY MARY SCHENKEL
Staff Writer

Ever generous, the John's Island Foundation recently announced that it was providing \$750,134 in grants to 26 agencies, roughly one-third each to agencies focused on health, education and financial stability.

"Our sole focus is on giving away grants to the community. The interesting piece is that the grants we give away are totally for capital needs," said Emily Sherwood, board president, adding that funding is derived solely through written annual appeals. "That was the way it was founded by Ellie McCabe 20 years ago. She saw a need in the community and that need is still very much there."

"That's what makes us kind of unique and kind of special at the same time," agreed Pat Brier, VP and grants chair. "We're kind of a silent group here; we're silent but strong within the community."

"We have the most incredibly gen-

erous philanthropic community in John's Island. The outpouring of support that we get for those with needs in our county is incredible," said Sherwood. Commenting that their 20th anniversary starts June 1, she said, "We're in the planning stages of ways to shine a spotlight on what the foundation does through these capital gifts."

By funding capital needs rather

than program or operating budgets, Brier said, "We are able to provide them with infrastructure for their programs."

Sherwood said Warren Schwerin recently pointed out that by funding kitchen equipment at Dasie Hope Center, children would not only get a nutritious meal every day, but they would also learn how to prepare healthy meals for themselves. She also stressed the far-reaching import of funding vans to take children to and from afterschool programs, transport patients to medical appointments or take people living in shelters to job interviews or school.

"Another one of the biggest needs is affordable housing," said Brier. "We helped St. Francis Manor (low-income senior living) build nine units, and we helped Every Dream Has a Price build a veterans' house."

Other grants have helped to build or renovate facilities, or to purchase items such as technological equipment, computer systems, furnishings and playground equipment.

"Although the items we give don't sound particularly exciting, when

you think of the actual concrete usages of them, it is," said Sherwood.

"The needs for capital improvement are growing every year," added Brier. "This is an older community and the buildings and equipment are getting older. This year alone, our requests were for over \$1 million."

Sherwood said the foundation often funds capital expenses at the same time that the John's Island Service League is funding programming.

"The magnitude of these gifts, when you look at what the two organizations in John's Island are doing, is almost mind-boggling," said Sherwood. "The league and foundation are providing close to \$2 million in support to this community. And it really just comes out of the generosity of John's Island residents. They see the needs and they respond; they really do open up their hearts."

As with other funding groups, the grant process is an arduous one, especially considering the foundation is a small 11-person board.

"Even though we only fund capital, we look at the health of the agency as a whole. We want to make sure they're financially stable, they've got good leadership and strong programs that have measurable outcomes," said Brier.

Commenting on the devotion of individuals who work at the non-profits, she added, "Their dedication to the people they serve is unbelievable. It's like nothing I've ever seen. I've lived a lot of different places and this place is special; it's very, very special. Everybody is trying to do their best. We're all working together and together we can do great things," said Brier. ■



Back: Steve Trooboff, David Harris, Bill Saylor, Don Kittell, Andy Nickel and Jim Daly.
Front: Pat Brier, Emily Sherwood, Margie Wheeler and Lila Stillman. PHOTO: DENISE RITCHE

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