

Published on Wednesday, November 2, 2005

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Grants invest in services for Valley
By JESSICA WAMBACH
YAKIMA HERALD-REPUBLIC

Nine Yakima Valley health, education and social service groups collected their share of \$200,000 in grants from a new local foundation Tuesday.

The Yakima Valley Community Foundation's grant amounts ranged from \$6,000 to the Yakima Valley Museum for sound equipment to \$40,000 for health programs at Yakima Neighborhood Health Services and Yakima Valley Community College.

At the museum Tuesday, the nine organizations received their awards gratefully.

"This is an investment that's going to benefit all of us for years to come," said Anthony Beebe, YVCC's vice president for instruction and student services.

He said the foundation's grant ends YVCC's struggle to fund the restoration of a former Grandview Safeway store into a medical training center for the college.

The grants are the first ever given by the foundation, which formed last year with the roughly \$8 million donation Providence Health Systems made from the sale of its nonprofit hospitals in Toppenish and Yakima to for-profit Health Management Associates of Florida. HMA also agreed to give the foundation an additional \$1 million a year for 10 years.

The Community Foundation, one of about 700 in the United States, will give grants each year from the earnings made on its investments. Instead of holding fundraisers, it will rely on individual or agency gifts to support its endowment and provide funding to local programs.

Directors expect the foundation's future allocations to be higher, though demand will likely outstrip supply for some time — requests from the 68 agencies who applied for grants this year totaled \$1.6 million.

Robert Ozuna, chairman of the foundation's grants committee, said the committee concluded that distributing a few large grants, rather than numerous smaller ones, would ultimately make a greater impact on community services. Though no organization received the full amount it requested, most received at least 80 percent.

The committee tried to enhance programs in all areas of the Valley, supporting education, health, community development, social programs and humanities.

The Friends of the Buena Library, which hopes to bring a community center to the unincorporated town, will work toward all of those ends with its \$35,000 grant.

"This is overwhelming and what it allows us to do is provide a needs assessment and architectural design for the community center," said Virginia Obert, president of the organization.

The community center the library group envisions would host the library, health care screenings, after-

school programs and other basic services Buena lacks.

Ozuna told recipients that in reviewing applications such as the one from Friends of the Buena Library, the committee gained a better understanding of the work ahead of the foundation.

"We know more about all the needs of the Yakima Valley, from down in Grandview to up in the Upper Valley," he said.