



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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UNITED WAY AWARDS SPECIAL CAPACITY-BUILDING GRANTS

United Way of Monroe County's Board of Directors recently awarded \$28,868.50 in capacity-building grants to eight member agencies. "United Way's member agencies are our partners in ensuring that the most critical human service needs in our community are addressed today and that we are making the investment now to reduce those needs in the future," said Barry Lessow, United Way Executive Director. "Each of these grants allows our exceptional agencies to pursue their missions more effectively and comprehensively." This funding is for special projects in addition to the allocations all 26 member agencies receive monthly.

The capacity-building grants will support a variety of initiatives viewed as priorities by the United Way Board and its volunteer Vision Council. Stone Belt was awarded \$5,620. According to Stone Belt CEO Leslie Green, "The purchase of manufacturing equipment supported by the United Way capacity-building grant gives Stone Belt the opportunity to "marry" its Leather Works and Art & Craft Studio product lines and, in the process, to create even more client-produced merchandise for sale. We will now have the capacity to make new product lines such as mouse pads, coasters, ornaments, belts and much more. These items are embossed or printed with popular client created art images that are selling in our other art product lines. In addition to work opportunities for our clientele, the Leather Works and Art & Craft product lines have proven to be a powerful tool in changing public perception about the potential of individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, income from both product lines helps to provide independent revenues to support Stone Belt programs, which are largely dependent on government funding."

Rhino's Youth Center received \$4,200 to enhance its media programs. Brad Wilhelm remarked "This capacity-building grant will not only enable youth in Rhino's after-school programs to upgrade rapidly aging technology, but also assist Rhino's youth volunteers in producing media and promotional materials for other United Way member agencies, thereby doubling the effectiveness of the grant in keeping with the spirit of United Way."

Options, the lead agency in creating the Karst Playscape, received \$2,500 to match other funding. Executive Director Susan Rinne explained "This funding will enable the dream to become reality. The Playscape will be a unique place where all of us can have fun together including the over 70 children with disabilities Options supports, their families and more... what better way to support our mission and build an inclusive community."

Other agencies receiving funding were:

- Big Brother Big Sisters of South Central Indiana: Technology allowing them to better service Big/Little matches, enhance program evaluations, and enable case managers to conduct work on-site: \$6,500
- Catholic Charities – Bloomington: Furnishings to increase the efficiency of their space, permitting additional family therapy during peak hours: \$3,750
- Community Kitchen: Multi-unit telephone system (partially sponsored by Perry Township Trustee) and computer equipment that will enhance their workflow and run accounting software; : \$3,936.50
- Hoosier Hills Food Bank: Startup supplies to help the newly created position of development director raise resources to accommodate the increased food demand and to support the "25 for 25" campaign: \$2,022

- Monroe County United Ministries: Heavy-duty tables for the childcare program playground to help children safely develop fine motor skills: \$1,340

United Way of Monroe County is a nonprofit organization that improves people's lives by addressing critical needs today and working to reduce those needs tomorrow. Through its Community Care Fund, it allocates resources to 26 member agencies that address the most pressing human service needs in Monroe County. You can find more information at www.monroeunitedway.org.

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