

Selkirk and District Community Foundation – the ultimate re-gifter



Walter Whyte School students' show-off Eagle Garden carving

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I guess you could say the Selkirk and District Community Foundation is the ultimate 're-gifter'.

The months after the holidays are perhaps the best re-gifter times of the year, as people pass on that sweater that didn't quite fit or the perfume that irritates their nose. But at SDCF, the re-gifting never really stops. After all, the

Foundation has been re-gifting money given to it by generous folks who want to see good things happen in their community since 1997.

The premise is simple – you give money to the Foundation, the Foundation invests your funds and gives the interest earned to worthwhile causes in Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements.

Foundation chairman Gord Henrikson said some people re-gift in secret, but not the Foundation.

"We're more than happy to take the generous donations of kind hearted people, add them to our various endowment funds and give back in the form of grants, to organizations that will make the most of them," Henrikson said.

"That's the premise of any Foundation, and without those gifts, we couldn't reinvest the money in our community's most valuable resource – its people."

The year 2017 was another great re-gifting year. The Foundation gave out just over \$81,000 to 15 different organizations last fall, and in 2016/17, gave almost \$250,000 in total.

Walter Whyte School was re-gifted in the fall with \$10,000 from the Foundation for its outdoor classroom and principal Gloria Juvonen said the money directly benefits the students who attend the school, as well as the community.

The Eagle Garden is the Grand Marais school's outdoor classroom, and the third and final phase of a plan developed in 2014-15 to make on-going improvements into the school.

Juvonen said she collaborated with Grade 6-9 Leadership Students and came up with three goals – adding six pieces of equipment to the elementary playground,

adding three pieces of fitness equipment to the junior high outdoor space and creating an outdoor classroom.

The first two are completed, and the Foundation grant allowed the school to really invest in the classroom, named the Eagle Garden at the suggestion of a Grade 3 student.

Juvonen said the grant allowed them to hire local artist and parent Rick Howard to create eagle carvings for the entrance to the space, situated amongst the beautiful trees outside the school.

Robert Smith School was also on the fall re-gift list and received \$2,436 to purchase Northern Spirit flutes for its music program.

Teacher Katherine Lapp said the school was also able to purchase other resources along with the flutes.

“The flutes and resources allow the students at Robert Smith School to learn and perform Aboriginal flute music,” Lapp said.

“Students will enhance and improve their music skills through the learning of a new instrument.”

Lapp also said learning the music will help students learn about and feel connected to cultural perspectives in new ways, which will help them develop a positive sense of self.

The Interlake Co-op Nursery was re-gifted \$2,171 by the Foundation to purchase furniture and equipment for their off-site child-care programs at William S. Patterson School.

Director Cheryl Longley said they run a Before and After School program and Kindercafe at the school, and since they receive no funding, the Foundation grant is essential to improving services they provide to young children.

“Without the Foundation we wouldn’t be able to put on as good a program,” Longley said.

“We rely 100 per cent on parent fees that come in to fund the program, and everything goes back into it.”

She said the school has been fantastic, and allows them to bring in items that improve the program. They bought some cabinets and buckets for storage with the Foundation grant.

“The purchase allows the staff to organize better and be more prepared for the kids and families that use the program,” Longley said, noting that almost half of the families whose children attend William S. Patterson make use of the Co-op’s two programs.

The re-gifting will continue. Deadline to apply for grants through the Community Grant and Western Canada Games Legacy Fund granting programs is Feb. 28. Contact the Foundation at 204-785-9755 or selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca. You can also download an application at sdcf.ca.

For more information:

Contact SDCF Executive Director - Bev Clegg; 204-785-9755 or selkirkfoundation@shaw.ca

The SDCF: Here for Good was founded in 1995. It has \$8.9 million in assets and provides grants to community organizations from the interest off the assets. Since incorporation the interest has allowed the SDCF to give \$2.1 million to over 125 local non-profit organizations throughout Selkirk, St. Andrews and St. Clements. The SDCF creates different ways for people to donate by offering a range of different funds that support everything from books for babies to furniture for palliative care patients. SDCF also helps connect donors with community wishes and dreams by allowing families and organizations to create their own endowment funds dedicated to a specific service, issue or project they care about and want to support for a long time. In 2017 SDCF granted \$249,506 to 44 organizations, ensuring that the funds touch a lot of people.