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Otto Schoitz Foundation announces fall grant recipients

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WATERLOO — The Otto Schoitz Foundation announced the award of \$905,500 to organizations aligned with its mission of improving the health of the Cedar Valley. This announcement brings the total awards given by the Otto Schoitz Foundation since its inception in 2016 to just more than \$3.4 million.

The Foundation's top award of \$200,000 goes toward improving the aesthetics and functionality of Waterloo's Lincoln Park. Lincoln Park, established in 1854 as a primary downtown recreation and gathering place, annually hosts more than 100,000 visitors attending a wide variety of youth programs, festivals, religious and political gatherings and other events.

Improvements will include new lighting, walkways, seating, signage and interactive features, along with other updates.

Other projects funded by the Fall 2018 grant awards will impact an additional 28,000 citizens, with a focus on community betterment, education and development and health and human services including:

- Amani Community Services will receive \$32,750 to provide trauma groups for Amani clients with childhood trauma and health risk behaviors who will be referred to the groups and to smoking cessation programs and/or substance abuse treatment agencies.
- Black Hawk County Health Department was awarded \$51,000 for its project Bridging the Gap: Removing Barriers to Health Equity. Black Hawk County Health Department will commission a needs assessment and do an asset mapping of the Liberian and Congolese communities. Community Health Workers will receive culturally specific training to improve the health of these newcomers.
- Covenant Foundation will receive \$86,000 for the Covenant Medical Center Care-A-Van program, offering free and safe transportation to and from the health facilities to all patients in need of transportation.
- EMBARC Ethnic Minorities of Burma Advocacy and Resource Center was granted \$59,250 for Project REACH (Refugee Empowered Access to Community Health). REACH, an interpretation and community health worker social enterprise, bridges the gap in health care services for refugees by increasing access to linguistic and culturally appropriate healthcare services and information in Waterloo.
- Family YMCA of Black Hawk County was awarded \$100,000 for Project EXPAND (Expanding Physical Activity and New Dimensions). The purpose of Project EXPAND is to provide greater support and education to people with disabilities to support their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. Programming will build health literacy and fitness for both individuals and their caretakers.
- Grout Museum District will receive \$30,000 for the Youth Maker Exhibit Build, a collaborative project that strengthens adult/child mentorships, promotes volunteerism, inspires the study of the sciences, generates an interest in building and trades and creates a new exhibit for the Imaginarium.
- Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity was granted \$50,000 to serve 15 families through the affordable homeownership and critical home repair programs, specifically in two target Waterloo neighborhoods for revitalization projects.

- Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates will receive \$15,000 for its programming to help students facing significant life challenges to overcome obstacles to success, graduate from high school and pursue post-secondary education, training or employment which leads to a living-wage job and economic self-sufficiency.
- Iowa Legal Aid was awarded \$20,000 for the Parent Representative Project, which provides direct assistance and supportive services to low-income custodial parents who are at risk of entering the juvenile court system through, or already have children involved in, a Child in Need of Assistance.
- Jesse Cosby Center was granted \$45,000 for its programming No One With Out A Home (NOWOAH) and Youth Empowerment Services (Y.E.S.). NOWOAH is a self-sufficiency program designed to serve 100 individuals and families; and Y.E.S. is an employment readiness program designed to service 75 to 100 youth in Black Hawk County.
- North Star Community Services, Inc. was awarded \$10,000 for its Inclusion Through Theater project, bringing together people with disabilities and community peers to create quality musical theater, and celebrating diversity and the impact of arts on the community and people with a wide range of abilities.
- Pathways Behavioral Services, Inc. will purchase Naloxone kits and train first responders and community members to use these kits to stop opioid overdose with its award of \$22,500.
- SuccessLink was granted \$20,000 to promote its Success Street operations, connecting students to health-related services directly within the school they attend.
- The Salvation Army of Waterloo/Cedar Falls will receive \$50,000 for its Emergency Housing Services. The Salvation Army provides shelter and care management to those facing the crisis of homelessness with the goal of addressing the physical, emotional, and mental health needs of residents, helping them return to sustainable and secure housing.

- Tri-County Child and Family Development Council, Inc. will upgrade the playground infrastructures at two child development centers, Maywood and Lily, with its award of \$99,000. Tri-County serves 890 children and their families within its Head and Early Head Start programs. Over 190 children from birth to age 4 are provided for at the Lily Ferguson and Maywood centers.
- Waterloo Writing Project was awarded \$15,000 to increase its capacity to serve as a creative sanctuary by providing program support, leadership development, and novel opportunities to youth. Waterloo Writing Project is focused on building the resiliency and communication capacity of the youth.

The Otto Schoitz Foundation's Spring Grant cycle will open Nov. 19, accepting grant requests through Jan. 11. Qualifying organizations may apply for funding via the foundation's online grant management system found on their website at www.ottoschoitzfoundation.org.