

Tahoe Fund awards \$5,500

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The South Lake Tahoe Fund, a component of the El Dorado Community Foundation, recently awarded \$500 each to 11 organizations at the South Shore.

Connecting people who care with causes that matter is what the El Dorado Community Foundation does for the area - bringing thoughtful citizens together to improve the quality of life to everyone who calls El Dorado County home. El Dorado Community Foundation was created in 1991 by a group of El Dorado County residents who wanted to ensure a permanent source of funds for local charitable organizations. Individuals, families, corporations, and nonprofit organizations have since created funds to support a variety of causes. The money is pooled, invested, professionally managed, and overseen by community volunteers with financial expertise. The earnings on these endowed funds (now totaling nearly \$8 million) are used to award grants each year to many of the humanitarian, educational, and cultural organizations in the area. The first year that the foundation made grants, 1994, it gave away a total of \$5,750. To date, that figure has grown to more than \$2.5 million.

The first community foundation was established in 1914 in Cleveland. Today, more than 650 community foundations exist throughout the United States. All community foundations share common attributes, but each is shaped by local goals, needs, traditions and culture. Each foundation works to know changing needs within its geographic service area. This knowledge allows El Dorado Community Foundation to adapt to shifting economic, social, and demographic conditions within the region.

Over the past several years, thoughtful individuals who care a great deal for South Lake Tahoe created a fund at the Community Foundation called the "South Lake Tahoe Area Fund." It is a permanently endowed fund that will benefit the residents of South Lake Tahoe. The local South Lake Tahoe cabinet and the foundation's board of directors select a focus for the awards each year. Nonprofit organizations, schools, churches and service organizations serving South Lake Tahoe are invited to apply for awards. To date, more than \$180,000 has been granted to more than 30 organizations serving South Lake Tahoe from various funds at the Community Foundation. Grants have ranged from several hundred dollars to many thousands of dollars. The first awards from this fund were made in 2005.

Each of the following 11 organizations have been awarded \$500 because they clearly matched the funding focus - organizations or programs that support or enhance the educational enrichment opportunities for children in our local public schools. As so often happens, the foundation was unable to make awards to all organizations that applied, and the cabinet worked hard to recommend organizations for funding that most closely met the focus.

The organizations are Soroptimist International of Tahoe Sierra, Elementary Arts Program, WorkAbility I - South Tahoe High School, South Lake Tahoe Women's Center, H.E.R.O. Scholarship Fund, Boys & Girls Club of South Lake Tahoe, Tahoe Arts Project, South Tahoe Middle School Club Live, Tahoe Heritage Foundation, American Association of University Women, and Blue Lake Aikido.

Local volunteers, who were recruited to serve on the South Lake Tahoe Cabinet to provide the El Dorado Community Foundation with a local voice representing this geographic area of the county, are Mark Acri, Wendy David, Terry Finney, Karen Houser, Bob Novasel, Gene Rasmussen and Doug Rosner.

Jim Grant / Tahoe Daily Tribune/
Cabinet members of the South Lake Tahoe Area Fund, a component of the El Dorado Community Foundation, congratulate award recipients. From left are Wendy David, Steve Healy, Judith Hansen, Paula and Michael McGrath, Karen Houser, Gina Stowell, Ron Yokotake, Leanne Wagoner, Millie Donahue, Dee Petrell, Jennifer Saunders, Larry Lambdin, Peggy Thompson, Mark Acri and Bob Novasel.



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Common attributes of Community Foundations are:

- n Builds permanent funds from a broad range of donors;
- n Works to improve the quality of life in a specific geographic area;
- n Is governed by a local board of directors representing the community;
- n Make awards to local organizations to address emerging or ongoing community needs;
- n Serves donors by matching their gifts with causes they care about;
- n Builds community partnerships to solve critical community issues.

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