

Food Bank director gets the Fish Award

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June Munski-Feenan honored for starting and running the best food bank in the state

North Valley Food Bank executive director June Munski-Feenan was presented with the Fish Award by the Whitefish Community Foundation at its eighth annual grants awards event.

Munski-Feenan, who started the Food Bank about 27 years ago, was recognized for her outstanding service to the community. In her usual modesty, Munski-Feenan said others in the community deserved the award more than her.

"Eighty-one years ago, God dropped off a little girl at a ranch near the State Mill north of the Blue Moon, and I've been giving them heck ever since," Munski-Feenan said.

The Fish Award was established in 2004 to honor an organization or individual who has made a substantial and significant contribution to bettering the Whitefish community. The award was last given in 2005 to Carolyn Pitman, the current executive director of the Whitefish Theatre Company.

The Food Bank, which also received three grants during the event held Nov. 6 at the O'Shaughnessy Center, needs more space and is considering moving from its present location downtown, Munski-Feenan said. The Food Bank is also considering making thuringer of all the mountain lions Fish, Wildlife and Parks has hanging in Kalispell to feed people hard-hit by the economic downturn.

More than 150 people attended the event, and more than \$113,000 in grant funds were dispersed to 30 Whitefish area nonprofit organizations. The Foundation's mission is dedicated to fostering philanthropy, building endowments, and helping donors and nonprofits benefit our community.

Since its inception in 2000, the Foundation has provided more than \$2 million in funding to area nonprofits. This year alone, the Foundation has granted more than \$300,000 through its Grants Fund and Donor-Advised Funds.

The awarded organizations applied for grants for programs and services they render in the community of Whitefish. All organizations are nonprofit organizations, and all applications were thoroughly reviewed by the Foundation's Grants Committee. Applications for the 2009 grant cycle will be available in early April.

"In these challenging economic times, it's more important than ever that the Foundation remains strong and able to help local charities through hard times as well as good," said Linda Engh-Grady, the Foundation's first-ever executive director.

"Our endowment fund was \$800,000, now it's a little less," said Paul Johannsen, the Foundation's board president, who MC'd the event.

The Foundation is a leader in building a legacy of generosity to support local nonprofit organizations by fostering health, human services, education, environment, sports, recreation, art and culture.

Individuals interested in making a contribution can contact executive director Linda Engh-Grady at 863-1781 or by e-mailing Linda@whitefishcommunityfoundation.org or by stopping by their office at 214 Second Street West, in Whitefish.

Nonprofit organizations that received grants this year included:

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flathead County — operating expenses

DREAM Adaptive Recreation, Inc. — operating expenses and equipment

Flathead County 9-1-1 Foundation, Inc. — protective equipment

Flathead County Search and Rescue Association, Inc. — radio equipment

Flathead Shelter Friends — operating expenses

Flathead Spay and Neuter Task Force, Inc. — new autoclave

Flathead Youth Home — capital campaign

The Glacier Institute — operating expenses

Glacier Nordic Club — operating equipment and new lights for course

Great Northern Veterans Peace Park Foundation — fencing

Habitat for Humanity of the Flathead Valley — operating expenses and Whitefish houses

Intermountain: Calling All Angels — operating expenses

Montana Animal Rescue League — operating expenses

Muldown Elementary School (Special Services) — structure learning program

N. C. Foundation — mental health counseling

North Valley Food Bank, Inc. — operating expenses and concrete resurfacing /shelving

North Valley Hospital Foundation — patient transfer system

North Valley Music School — operating expenses and music technology software/hardware

Olney-Bissell School — playground equipment

Shepherd's Hand Clinic — operating expenses

Stumptown Art Studio and Ceramics Annex — outdoor classroom and storage facility

The Wave — subsidized membership program

Whitefish CARE — operating expenses

Whitefish Figure Skating Club — operating expenses

Whitefish Lake Institute — operating expenses

Whitefish Middle School - auditorium renovation

Whitefish Rotary Charitable Fund, Inc. —Christmas program

Whitefish School District Band Program — music stands

Whitefish Shines! — operating expenses

Whitefish Theatre Company — PA system and lighting