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Grant money helps youth give back

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Looking to make a difference in their community, Boston Blazers 4-H club submitted a grant application to the Indiana 4-H Foundation. Their leader Sara Day asked the group if they would like to apply for the grant money and what community service project would they want to do.

Member Samantha Bowers said the first choice was to make blankets for the women's domestic violence shelter, but after Day talked to Connie Benson, director of the shelter, she was told another group already does that.

A need that they did have, however, was school backpacks with supplies for children who arrive at the shelter. Day said after being jerked away from their homes in a moments time, children often have nothing but the clothes they are wearing. This way they have something of their own. In their application, they said, "Most of the time they (kids at the shelter) are starting in a different school district with no school supplies because they left their past home with very few of their possessions. We feel this will give the youth that are in the shelter some stability."

The \$1,000 YES grant that the club received will be used to buy three different sizes of backpacks and they will fill them with supplies fitting children in kindergarten to third grade, fourth and fifth graders and middle school students.

Bowers, a tenth grader, said, "Not everybody has as much as we do or the money to buy supplies." Natasha Butler added, "It (receiving the backpack) will make them happy."

Benson also mentioned that once in awhile, someone that is homeless will stop by asking for assistance and it would be nice if she had something to give them. With the leftover funds they have, the club has decided to make up blessing bags. They will have hygiene products, and some non-perishable food items. Member Alyssa Krebs said, "There will be water, blankets and socks, too."

Bowers said, "There are so many positives to giving back."

Day was notified that her group had received the grant in early June, so she wanted to wait until the 4-Hers were done with fair before they got started. They ordered the supplies and backpacks in early July and assembled them on July 30. They plan on delivering them to the shelter before the start of school.



Photos by Lana Hamilton

Starling Nice was with her dad, Bobby Nice, at the Boston Blazers 4-H club meeting on Friday, July 30. The club received a grant from the Indiana 4-H Foundation so that children who come to the Womens' Domestic Shelter can have a backpack and school supplies. Here, she counts rulers to make sure there are enough for each backpack.

Day said, "I hope the 4-H youth will know that they have shown a caring attitude and it will build self-esteem among club members and encourage them to be future leaders in the community."

YES grant: 4-H members understand the importance of philanthropy — of giving our time and offering our help because it's the right thing to do. Our goal is to create opportunities for youth to take the lead in making their own communities a better place for all. The YES grant is intended to give these projects the financial boost they need to get off the ground and start making a difference.



Boston Blazers 4-H members Natasha Butler and Alyssa Krebs fill backpacks for first graders. The group applied for and received a grant from the Indiana 4-H Foundation to provide backpacks and school supplies to children who come to the Womens' Domestic Shelter.



Samantha Bowers unpacks backpacks in preparation for filling them with school supplies. Members of the Boston Blazers 4-H group met recently to pack the backpacks and make them available to children who come through the Womens' Domestic Shelter. The group also made a few blessings bags for the homeless.

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