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## Community Foundation of Johnson County to award \$130K to 41 area nonprofits

Despite a sour economy and a roller coaster stock market, The Community Foundation of Johnson County had a great year funding projects for local nonprofit agencies.

The foundation announced that it will award more than \$130,000 to 41 area nonprofit organizations at its annual luncheon Jan. 13 at the Iowa City Sheraton Hotel.

Foundation Executive Director Mike Stoffregen said that the foundation's endowment — the investments that generate the money granted to area nonprofits — grew by 30 percent this year. Most of that growth didn't come from riding the waves of the stock markets, however. Investment growth for the foundation is only in the 6 percent to 8 percent range, Stoffregen said.

The bulk of the growth came from donations to the foundation, Stoffregen said. Donations have gotten a shot in the arm in recent years thanks to the Endow Iowa tax credit program, which gives a state income tax credit equal to 25 percent of a qualifying gift to a community

foundation. The Community Foundation of Johnson County is one of 16 such foundations in the state.

Stoffregen said this year's grants run from from as little as \$500 to as much as \$10,000, with the average grant running at about \$3,000. Funded projects range from a family literacy program at the Coralville Public Library to operational support for the Table to Table food program.

Grant committee chair Kristin Summerwill said in a news release that the foundation received 58 applications requesting more than \$335,000.

One beneficiary is the Johnson County Salvation Army, which will use a \$1,600 grant from the foundation to supplement its Evening Meal program. While food donations support most of the program, which serves meals every night of the year except Thanksgiving, it is a challenge to make sure the meals are well rounded. Fresh fruits and vegetables are especially hard to come by, but they are essential to

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a square dinner.

"For many, it's the only meal they'll have all day," said the Salvation Army's Lia Pontarelli.

In the 10 years since its founding, the foundation has amassed an endowment of more than \$8 million, plus bequests of \$5.45 million.

Stoffregen said the group deliberately avoids competing with other nonprofits for donations, focusing instead on older, wealthier families looking to give back.

"We're getting the investment-savvy person who sees the combination of endowment and tax credit who see it as a great way to help their community foundations," he said. A second focus area for the group is "planting the seed" of philanthropy with up-and-coming donors.

The foundation also has a lean administrative budget, using just more than 1 percent of its income to fund its operations, far below the charitable national average of 15 percent to 18 percent.

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