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Youth in Philanthropy in Lac du Bonnet, Pinawa

By Arlene Davidson

Students at the Lac du Bonnet Senior School and the Pinawa Secondary School are getting a taste of philanthropy thanks to their local foundations through a Thomas Sill Foundation initiative designed to teach young people about the charitable sector in their communities.

The Youth In Philanthropy (YIP) program was launched by the Thomas Sill Foundation to engage high schools in rural and northern communities to establish youth advisory committees that, in partnership with their local foundation, would be responsible for disbursing grants to community organizations.

Each participating high school receives \$3,500 annually for three years with a commitment from their local foundation to continue the program. Of the annual contribution of \$3,500, \$2,500 is to be disbursed in grants with \$1,000 to be used to cover administrative costs. Students invest the Thomas Sill funds into their local foundation, receive and review applications and determine how the grants will be allocated.

A total of 24 high schools in 21 rural and northern communities participated in the first phase of the YIP program, which concluded in 2013.

The YIP program was re-launched in 2017 and both Lac du Bonnet Senior School (LdBSS) and the Pinawa Secondary School (PSS) received word that



Photo by Arlene Davidson

LdBSS Youth In Philanthropy members Taylor Dufault (standing left), Marina Milne, Payden Schwab, Kaitlyn Mitchell, Larissa Shabaga and teacher volunteer Lisa Gow met with Lac du Bonnet Foundation's Gerry Arbez (seated left) and Mitch Walker to finalize details for grant applications that support initiatives for youth in the community.

they were selected to participate in the second round of the program.

With the recent confirmation of the Phase 2 schools, Thomas Sill Foundation is pleased to report that the initiative has successfully established philanthropy committees in 39 high schools in 35 northern and rural communities with a total investment of \$392,000.

The Thomas Sill Foundation hopes that every student who participates in this initiative will experience personal growth and appreciate the contribution

of the philanthropic sector in their hometown.

LdBSS principal Lonnie Liske was very excited to announce his school was the last in the province to be accepted to participate in this important initiative.

"We have partnered with the Lac du Bonnet Foundation and the Thomas Sill Foundation to form the LdBSS Youth in Philanthropy Committee, and we have \$2,500 to give out to worthwhile groups," Liske said. "We work similarly to the Lac du Bonnet and District Charitable Foundations, except we focus on youth

initiatives, and initiatives that benefit youth in the Lac du Bonnet area."

The three way partnership provides students with an opportunity to learn the methods and techniques that foundations use to support charitable activities in their communities by establishing an endowment and working with members of their local foundations. The students set the mandate and parameters of the grants, develop application forms and provide a means for charities to access funds.

Liske said Lac du Bonnet Foundation president

Gerry Arbez contacted the school and explained the program.

"To us it was a no-brainer," Liske said. "This was something that was easy to get involved with."

Liske noted Mitch Walker, grant administrator for the LdB Foundation, visited the school with Arbez to support the committee and help get them started.

On March 8, the LdBSS YIP Committee met with Arbez and Walker at the school to review the draft grant application form, confirm plans on how the information will

be circulated and how the applications will be received. Walker confirmed that any unused money at the end of the year will go into an endowment fund so the committee can expect to receive the full \$3,500 every year.

The 10 member YIP Committee, comprised of students from Grade 9 to 12, are led by executive members Kaitlyn Mitchell (president), Payden Schwab (vice-president), Larissa Shabaga (treasurer) and Emma Boulet (secretary).

Grant applications can be accessed on the LdBSS website and the committee members are also planning to spread the word through other forms of social media, pamphlets and flyers.

Mitchell and Schwab reported at the meeting that two applications have been received to date and not-for-profit groups providing services to youth are encouraged to submit applications before the March 31 deadline.

A second call for proposals will be made in the fall with a deadline of Sept. 30.

Chris Saunders, president of the Pinawa Foundation reported that the YIP program at PSS is up and running with support from board member Carol Findlay and Lisa Krupka, teacher volunteer.

"They have awarded funds to one project and are receiving proposals now for their next funding cycle," said Saunders. "The projects do not have to be just for youth. The students decide what gets funded."

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