The Glacial Lakes Humane Society and PACH are two local organizations that received an early Christmas gift this year thanks to an essay contest promoting local nonprofits.

Watertown High School students Meredith Erickson and Kennedy Tietz won first and second place respectively in the Watertown Area Community Foundation’s annual Thanks for Giving Essay Contest. Erickson’s essay won a $500 WACF grant for the animal shelter and Tietz’s, $250 for PACH.

As a volunteer for the Humane Society, Erickson wrote a heartfelt essay about the organization and its needs. "I have witnessed the wonder on a child’s face when looking through the bars of a cage and meeting a new friend for the first time," she writes. “The staff of the Humane Society is small, with only minimal help by volunteers. Food is on low supply and kennels where the animals are kept are not large enough for every animal’s needs.

"Without help, we may lose a valuable asset to our community that helps enrich the lives of others," Erickson continued. “It is without doubt that the Humane Society deserves a helping hand after helping so many.”

Tietz also had experience volunteering for her chosen organization, People Against Child Hunger (PACH). "An efficient assembly line is made in order to get this important job done. It honestly shocked me to find out how many people are in need of these meals within Watertown alone," she writes. Of the 3,743 students in the Watertown School District, 1,184 are on free and reduced meals.

"Through PACH, kids who may not be given these meals at home are able to receive them. Not only does PACH fill children’s bellies, but it also influences their development in physical and mental health."

Many deserving organizations were written about by approximately 40 students in WHS teacher Kris O’Brien's class. Special thanks to Mrs. O’Brien for coordinating the contest and the WACF Youth Council for judging the essays.

During this season of giving, consider a gift to the Watertown Area Community Foundation. Whether your donation is in honor or in memory of a loved one or to meet the community’s most pressing needs, your gift will make a difference.

- Give any amount - any time. Gifts donors give to the Watertown Area Community Foundation become part of a permanent endowment, which means they will help the Watertown area forever.
- Give real estate, stock or other property.
- As always, your gift is tax deductible.

The mission of Watertown Area Community Foundation is to invest in the vitality of Watertown by supporting community priorities, responding to human service needs and enhancing recreation, education, arts and culture.
These photos are representative of just a few of the 2015 grants awarded by the Watertown Area Community Foundation, including the Youth Council, Women & Giving and Giving Back 365 programs. A total of more than $400,000 in grants was awarded to many deserving organizations and projects including: Boys & Girls Club of Watertown, Watertown Area Transit, Beacon Center, Lake Area Technical Institute, Lake Area Zoological Society and Interlakes Community Action Partnership.

The grants’ positive impact will continue to make a difference by:

- Increasing safety by supporting the purchase and installation of cameras on transit busses.
- Supporting an annual scholarship luncheon to help raise funds for scholarships for deserving students.
- Helping area needy children receive the dental care they need.
- Supporting SD Public Broadcasting to ensure high quality programming to locations across the state.
- Supporting our Veterans whether that be for a trip to the national’s capital or help in purchasing a vehicle for Veterans’ group transportation.

Whether a grant assists with Watertown ArtWalk or enhancements at the Bramble Park Zoo, provides financial support for new floor covering in a shelter, or supports a program that boosts young boys’ and girls’ self-esteem – that positive impact is happening all around us thanks to you.
We regret any errors or omissions.

Endowed Memorials

A Memorial Gift

An inscription in the Foundation’s Book of Memory is a beautiful and lasting way to celebrate an anniversary, other special occasion, or remember a loved one. Commemorations with a gift of any size may be made to the general endowment fund or designated to another fund by the donor. This enduring tribute is presented in a leather-bound volume and displayed in the lobby of the Watertown Area Community Foundation. Memorials become part of the Foundation’s permanent charitable endowment, the earnings from which are used to meet the growing charitable needs of our community. A memorial gift, therefore, keeps giving year after year.

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The following are gifts included in the 2015 Book of Memory (at the time of this printing)

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