

# Giving Back 365 continues to grow

By Julianne Korkow

Watertown Area Community Foundation

It's that time of year again.

By now you're probably cheering on your favorite football team. For many fans that means a "love-hate" relationship depending on how a team does. No matter what team you follow, you know that regardless of how many star players a team has, if the whole team doesn't work together, it typically comes up short.

Whether you're a team, a family, a community or a foundation, much can be learned from Aristotle's



quote: "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

The \$3,000 that the Watertown Area Community Foundation began with in 1979 didn't become \$21 million and give more than \$7 million in grants without teamwork among donors, foundation board, staff and trustee representatives and others who come together to make the whole

Giving circles such as the foundation's Women & Giving and Giving Back 365 programs are also about accomplishing more together.

When the foundation introduced Giving Back 365 to the community in 2012, it was embraced by many and continues to grow. To date, Giving Back 365 donors have awarded more than \$85,000 to local nonprofits. Each donor is giving \$1 a day to make



A girl reacts to her bedroom after it was remodeled by the Watertown non-profit organization My Happy Place, which is supported by the Watertown Area Community Foundation's Giving Back 365.

the community better. Together, those \$1 bills become thousands and the impact truly makes a difference.

"This program is as much about the donors as it is about the nonprofits they support," said Jan DeBerg, WACF executive director.

At \$365 for an annual membership and \$500 for the "Above and Beyond" level, almost anyone can be a philanthropist. Half of the donation goes toward grants in the current year and half is placed in an endowed fund that supports grants in future years.

"One of the neat and unique things about Giving Back 365 is that as a donor, you have the option to participate in the annual grant-making process," explained DeBerg. "Of course, the more members in any given year, the more dollars there are to award in grants."

Donors Jason and Beth Hanson said Giving Back 365 an easy way to give back to the community

"We like the fact that donors decide which projects to fund each year," they said. "It's a hassle-free way

to contribute to things the foundation supports including education, recreation, human services and arts and culture."

Other donors echoed that sentiment

"It's such an easy way to help promote our community and we feel we are part of its progress," said one couple. "Donating \$1 a day seems like a small sacrifice to support the community I grew up in and where we continued to raise our family," said another.

"Giving Back 365 is a way for everyone to participate in doing good for the community no matter what their age or income," from former WACF Board member Dale Christensen and his wife Diane.

Late each year, nonprofits apply for Giving Back 365 grants. The donors are sent the applications/narratives so they can review them and vote. Last year, that meant a total of \$17,550 to various organizations in our commu-

nity. Grant recipients were: Boys and Girls Club, Divine Providence of South Dakota, Habitat for Humanity, Joy Ranch, Lake Area Child Protection, Lake Area Zoological Society Wildlife Warriors, My Happy Place, PACH, Watertown Area Transit, Watertown Artwalk and the WPD Camp Chance program.

For more information on the foundation's Giving Back 365 program, please call 882-3731 or email: [foundation@iw.net](mailto:foundation@iw.net) or go to [watertowncommunity-foundation.org](http://watertowncommunity-foundation.org).

