SEPTEMBER FOUNDATION NEWS

SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCED

The Ervin and Sybil Schafer Memorial Scholarship was announced at the LATI scholarship luncheon in September. The Schafer’s bequest to the Watertown Area Community Foundation will enable $40,000 in scholarships to be awarded annually to Florence and Watertown students entering an ag-related field at LATI. Pictured are: Tracy Hlavacek, LATI Foundation executive director; Betty Erickson, Sybil’s sister; and Jan DeBerg, WACF executive director.

Group Identifies Opportunities & Threats

The 2019-2020 WACF Youth Council held its first meeting of the school year in September at the Foundation office. The group identified the following “opportunities” and “threats” facing area teens.

OPPORTUNITIES:
- Extracurricular activities like sports, Karing Kapers, Town Players.
- Beacon Center
- Church/church activities
- High School Clubs
- Boys & Girls Club
- Homework assistance
- Park & Rec programs
- 4-H
- Dual credit/AP courses/ LATI and NE Tech/On-line courses

THREATS:
- Underage drinking, drugs, vaping even in Middle School (this also was ranked top threat in 2018)
- Poor mental health; kids don’t know how to handle things/ask for help
- Sex trafficking (lack of awareness)
- Phones - social skills don’t develop, video games/phones may be a part of the mental health issue. Video game addiction - don’t participate in other things/don’t do homework.
- Divided culture/cliques....students intimidated and don’t feel welcome to join others.
- Poor diet - too much junk food and not knowing how to take care of themselves.

Council members and WACF staff will use this information to help plan guest speakers as well as during the grant review process. With that in mind, the group plans to visit with a School Resource Officer and tour the Beacon Center.

This year’s Youth Council members are: Gracie Ebsen, Tessa Holien and Alison Kluver, seniors; and Amber Block, Abby Carlson and Joey Noeldner, juniors.
Foundation Among Those Recognized

The Watertown Area Community Foundation won the Spirit of Watertown award at the annual celebration and dessert auction of the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce. Jan DeBerg, WACF executive director, received the award from Tim Sheehan, Chamber president and CEO. DeBerg thanked the Chamber and the community for its continued support and noted the Foundation’s growth over its 40-years of “Looking Forward and Giving Back.”

“The Watertown Area Community Foundation was the first community foundation in South Dakota and one of the first in the Midwest,” DeBerg told the crowd. It has grown from its original $3,000 to more than $20 million in assets and has awarded roughly $7 million in grants thanks to its donors. The Foundation looks forward to the next 40 years, she said.

Other honorees recognized at the event were: Cameron Buri, Volunteer of the Year; Jessica Starr, Coteau Chic, Rookie Business of the Year; Larry’s Lumber, Family Business of the Year; Chris Schilken, Watertown Development Company, Businessman of the Year; Dr. Melanie Weiss, Businesswoman of the Year; Benchmark Foam, Manufacturing Business of the Year; Midwest Ag, Ag Business of the Year; Todd Syhre, Watertown Airport manager, Chairman’s Award; Dakotaland Federal Credit Union, Chamber Business of the Year.

Congratulations to all the honorees and thank you Chamber of Commerce for this wonderful honor.

MILITARY, VETERANS, FIRST RESPONDERS HONORED - The 6th annual Watertown Veterans’/First Responders’ Appreciation Day Event was held recently at the BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center. Here Michael Cartney, Colonel, USAF (retired) addresses the group. The project of the Watertown Police Department is held each year in coordination with the Watertown Sea of Goodwill. On behalf of the Watertown Area Community Foundation, thank you military, veterans and first responders for your service.