

DCF | Making a Difference for Families

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Dallas United Methodist Church

Creation Vacation

Ahhh, vacation. A time to rest, rejuvenate and spend time with your family. You've been working for a long stretch, months in fact, looking forward to some much-needed vacation time. With everyone on busy schedules, the family rarely seems to have much time together.

But what if you couldn't get that time away? Vacations cost money. And if you have other financial challenges, it may be impossible. Without a break, the constant stress can wear on the family, affecting their relationships with each other and their interactions with others in the community.

With support from the DCF, the Dallas United Methodist Church offered 13 low-income families an opportunity for a much needed respite through a program called Creation Vacation. Applicants accepted into the program spent 3 days at Camp Magruder on the Oregon coast, enjoying all the opportunities the camp had to offer and above all, spending quality time with each other, away from the constant burdens at home.

The participant families are in the West Valley Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency Program. Accountability is a key goal in the program. Families must be very committed to following a plan designed to help them rise out of the situation they are in. Sheri Beehner, the program caseworker, explains that the community building that happens during Creation Vacation has helped her families be more successful in achieving self-sufficiency. "Over the last three years I have seen the families that attend Creation Vacation respond to my requests of reporting, working on their goals and trying to "pay-it-forward" in the community that they live in."

One participant notes, "My husband works full time at a very physically demanding job and Creation Vacation is



his only vacation from his job and so it's very special for him. But I have to say the kids enjoy it even more. At our current income level we couldn't give our boys a trip that would be anywhere near comparable to Creation Vacation; it is a true blessing for our family."

Each family was assigned a trained adult mentor, known as a 'family friend' that accompanied them at camp. These volunteers were there as a support presence, helping where needed. At camp, the families had the opportunity to do all the variety of activities camp has to offer – beach time, boating, swimming, fishing, archery, ropes course, wave jump and Magruder's infamous 'big swing'. Additionally, there were crafts and activities designed specifically for kids. Families ate together in the dining hall and enjoyed evening campfires on the beach with s'mores.

By the end of camp, the families had developed relationships with one another and with their family friends that continue back home. Rev. Jeremy Hajdu-Paulen, pastor at the Dallas United Methodist Church reflects on how he now recognizes these people in town, at the store, or at Summerfest. "I now know these people who would otherwise be strangers," he says. "This whole experience builds a greater sense of community."

The DCF is pleased to give a hand up to these 22 adults and 41 children through this unique experience. As one family friend commented, "Programs like Creation Vacation show that society cares about people who are less fortunate. It shows these families that people do care about them, and want them to be successful."

2014 Grant Applications Now Available

The Dallas Community Foundation is now accepting applications for the 2014 grant distribution. The Foundation is seeking to fund projects that benefit the people of the Dallas area, with preference given to projects that serve urgent needs and have a broad and meaningful impact on the community. This year, a portion of the funds available will come from the Proal fund; these funds will have an additional emphasis on projects that benefit senior citizens. Applications are currently available by contacting the DCF office. 501(c)(3) organizations or other qualified tax-exempt entities that serve the Dallas area are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is January 31, 2014.

“Creation Vacation is a blessing that cannot compare to anything else. The structure that it provides gave our family the opportunity to play together in a way we could not have done on our own. The chance to have time together in a beautiful stress free environment where we are loved by everyone around us is priceless. The charity we were shown given this experience is not just because it is something we could not afford alone. It is also the kindness we felt surrounded by family friends and staff who saw and treated us as special and of value. What a rare gift.”



Here's a story you missed...

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Sometimes it's just a little that makes a lot of difference, and sometimes you can't really put a dollar figure to the impact you make. The Willamette Valley Food Assistance Program provides a weekly food distribution to clients. Turns out, the program does more for their clients than just provide food. In addition to being clients, an elderly couple also volunteer for the program. Well, at least one of them initially. The gentleman was a regular volunteer. His wife came along, but sat in the car all day while he volunteered. She had come from an abusive background and as a result, had long suffered from social anxiety and avoided situations where she would encounter a lot of people. This went on through the first year, but slowly, they coaxed her out of the car, little by little. They gave her some desk work, away from the noise and people. It turns out that she was a whiz with computers, and had a talent untapped.

This very smart lady has since grown through her talents and now works at the intake desk, greeting hundreds of clients each week. She has an invaluable role, maintaining the computer programs essential to the success of the program. Needless to say, her self-esteem has greatly improved; she feels comfortable in this safe environment and the experience has positively impacted both her and her husband.

We have some great stories to share from local organizations we support. Be one of the first to know. Go to www.dallascommunityfoundation.com and subscribe to our e-news updates. Periodically, you will receive email highlighting grant projects and other DCF news.



WHY I GIVE

Rusty Morrill

Rusty Morrill has called Dallas home for nearly 21 years. He is a dentist, operating his practice here in town. He was drawn to Dallas for its small town atmosphere. “You drive through a neighborhood and people wave.” He has enjoyed getting to know people through his work, church and civic involvement. He appreciates that it can take a while to get through the grocery store, stopping to chat with all the people he knows. Dallas is a great place to raise a family.



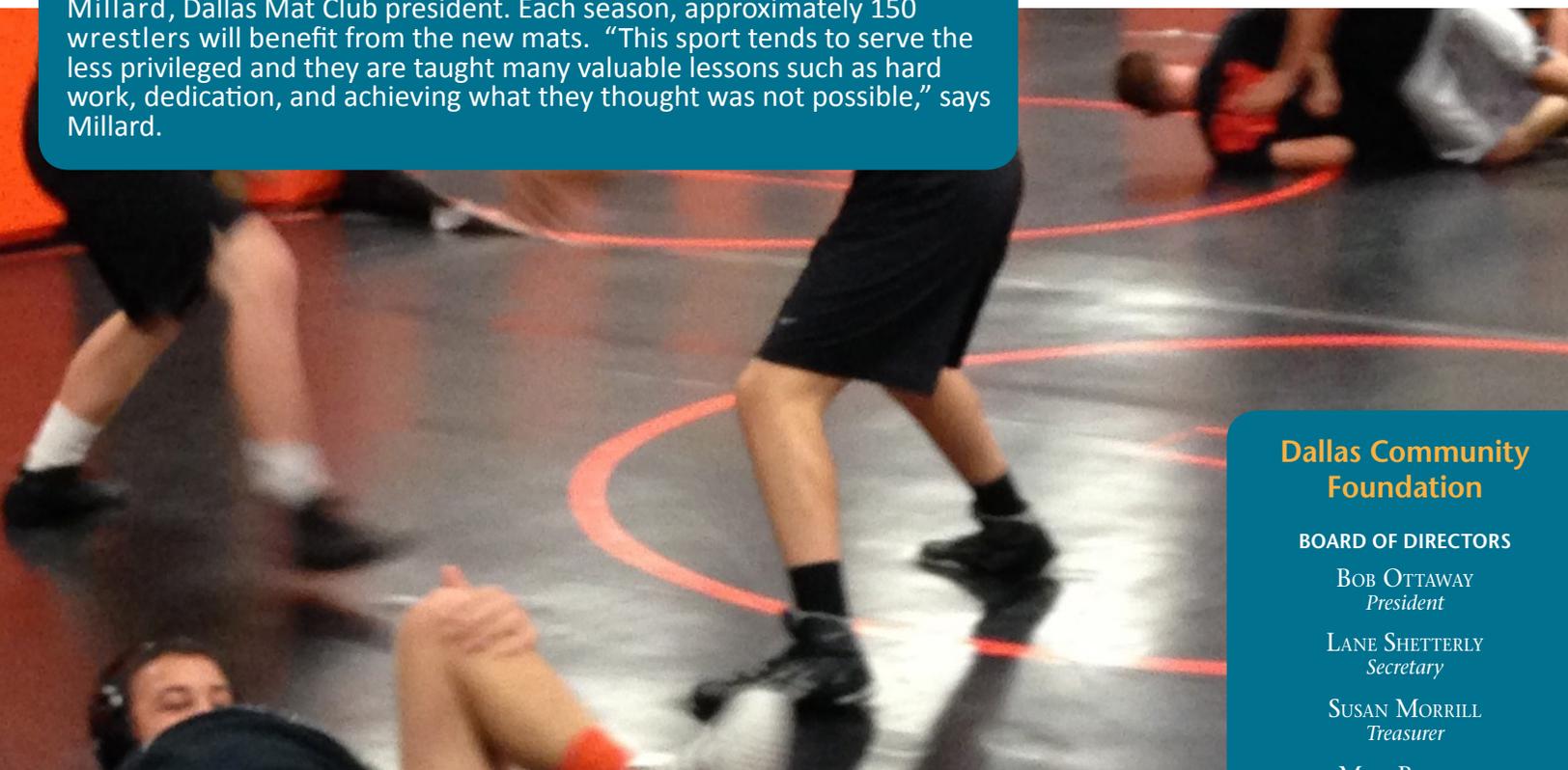
Rusty is very supportive of youth in Dallas. “Those in need, they need an advocate,” he says. He believes opportunities for youth such as the Young Artists Playtrium are a bright spot in the community. Sports programs are also important and necessary outlets for youth. Rusty is inspired to give to Dallas Community Foundation because he likes to help the community that means so much to him. “There are many needs in the community and while I may not always know how to help, I know I can trust that the Foundation will find a way to help. I know the money will be well spent.” It is that trust of the Foundation's financial stewardship and decision-making that has been critical to its growth and ability to make a difference in Dallas. “The Foundation is a wonderful organization that people should help promote because it can help those in our community.”

GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Dallas Mat Club

The wrestling mats at Dallas High School had been in use for 25 years. The aging porous mats were contributing to ringworm and staph infections. These serious skin conditions passed from wrestler to wrestler, and would cause wrestlers to miss 1-2 weeks of participation. The mats had been repeatedly patched and repaired, and had reached the point where they were simply beyond repair. To top it off, the mats did not properly fit the mat room. Where the mats joined, gaps contributed to ankle injuries. The Dallas Mat Club stepped in and began raising funds to purchase new mats. In addition to a grant from the Dallas Community Foundation, the club contributed their own funds, and obtained funding from the Mid-Columbia Bus Company and the Dallas Booster club. The school district covered the remaining cost.

“It was much easier to obtain matching grant funds because of the first grant received from the Dallas Community Foundation,” explains Tina Millard, Dallas Mat Club president. Each season, approximately 150 wrestlers will benefit from the new mats. “This sport tends to serve the less privileged and they are taught many valuable lessons such as hard work, dedication, and achieving what they thought was not possible,” says Millard.



GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT

Dallas Education Foundation

This year, the DCF awarded a \$2,000 grant to the Dallas Education Foundation (DEF) in support of education projects in the Dallas School District. The DEF contributed \$2498 to make a total of \$4,498 available for their annual grant program. After receiving 26 applications, 12 were selected for funding in November. The projects addressed a number of needs, including books, scientific calculators, Ipads, and science and engineering supplies. These books and supplies will enhance the learning experiences of students at Dallas High School, LaCreole, Morrison and Oakdale schools.

Dallas Community Foundation

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