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Robin,

The prospect of funds from a Rotary grant are very exciting! The primary way in which we would and could really use funds is, of course, the annual Back-to-School Fair. I can't imagine, nor can we easily estimate or determine, what next year's costs will be. Since CONNECT only consists of 3 of us (2 of whom have other full-time, paid jobs), our ability to solicit funds or do any fundraising is extremely limited. The ways in which we could utilize grant money are:

1. The grant funds could be used to pay for school supplies kits. This year, the average cost per school supply kit from EPI is \$37; 1,231 students are registered; so the total cost of kits for the fair is \$43,611.08. The Women's Division of the Grapevine Chamber has raised funds for all but \$10,000 of this expense, which becomes the share for which CONNECT is responsible. This year, our share of the total cost of ordering school supplies packs tripled over last year's share.
2. The grant funds could be used to purchase backpacks for students registered for the fair. This year, we're relying on individual donations of backpacks. We don't have the funds to purchase them or large donation of backpacks from a foundation like GRACE received last year. At an average of \$10 each and approximately 1,200 economically disadvantaged students needing a backpack, the total approximate cost is \$15,000.
3. The grant funds could be used to provide students with new athletic shoes at the beginning of the school year. At an average price of \$25 per student and 1,200 students in need, this cost equates to about \$30,000. Both school counselors and GRACE administrators have said that athletic shoes are a huge need for students in all grades.

Do you know whether these grant funds are unrestricted and can be used for any of CONNECT's efforts, or whether they're restricted and have to be targeted in a specific area? If the Back-to-School Fair isn't an area that would fit the use of the funds, we could definitely give Rotary more information on other areas in which we use money to help students. Our counselors and CONNECT campus representatives constantly call on us year-round to help students and families with clothing and shoes, food, school supplies, transportation, field trip scholarships, even a graduation cap and gown. We have spent approximately \$2,000 this year on miscellaneous requests. If you would like to put someone at Rotary in touch with me directly, please don't hesitate to give them my contact information. I would be happy to visit with them and/or assist in preparing a grant application.

We're so thankful for the support of this community! Please share our gratitude with this group.

Carolyn Ann

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