

Community Foundation holds annual gala

Event raises nearly \$20,000 for charitable contributions

By Caitlyn May
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A room full of donors and dreamers gathered on October 26 to celebrate the annual Community Foundation Gala.

It was a night of success stories, bolstered by contributions to the foundation and opportunity afforded to organizations and individuals throughout the community.

"All kids are our kids," South Lane School District's Garrett Bridgens told the crowd. It's a mantra he fell on after speaking with his older brother the weekend prior to the gala. Both Bridgens and his brother are graduates of Cottage Grove High School and after completing his education, Bridgens returned to Cottage Grove to teach; a common theme among recipients of foundation funds.

Magnolia Gardens' Carmen Young detailed the stories of three students who received financial support to attend nursing school and now work in RiverBend locally in the labor and delivery and emergency departments.

While the foundation gives to individuals—including a high school senior taken in by Bridgens and his wife Heather—it also lends a hand to community projects and organizations. Pete Burrell spoke of the foundation's support in obtaining new computer stations for the community library this year noting that 10 to 20 children use the stations daily. The equipment

was purchased with funds from the city, a support group for the library dubbed Friends of the Library and \$1,000 from the Community Foundation.

According to its website, "The Cottage Grove Community Foundation is governed by an entirely volunteer board. It was formed in 1991 with the purpose of supporting the community and citizens of Cottage Grove by receiving, holding, investing and administering contributions and gifts for the benefit of the community. The Foundation established a scholarship program by which donors can donate to the Foundation with the purpose of providing scholarships annually in the name designated by the donor. A total of \$6100 was awarded to eight recipients in the first year and in 2017 over \$98,000 was awarded to eighty recipients. A community grant program was also established by which foundation funds may be used in support of other non-profit corporations. The grants in 2017 was almost \$16,000 and awarded to fifteen organizations helping children, families, the environment, business and culture important to the health and well-being of area residents."

A paddle raise held Thursday night raised approximately \$18,000 including a \$10,000 donation from Frank Simpson.

The Sentinel donated \$200.

GALA—The Community Foundation holds its annual gala on Thursday, October 26. The event raised nearly \$20,000 for the foundation which helps both organizations and individuals in the community. Top: South Lane Mental Health Director Tom Wheeler, Gail Hoelzle and Jim Harrison. Bottom right: Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Travis Palmer. Top left: South Lane School District's Garrett Bridgens and Superintendent Krista Parent. Bottom left: Lane County Commissioner Gary Williams, Cottage Grove Councilman Jake Boone, Frank and Pamela Simpson. Photos by Greg Lee.



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