



# SUPPORTING WINONA'S YOUTH



## BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS

Big Brothers Big Sisters was very fortunate to receive funding from the BK 5K Youth Fund Grant in 2011. The money that Big Brothers Big Sisters received went towards purchasing new computers, prepaid cell phones, and supplies for our school-based programs. These items have made a huge impact on our agency.

The use of staff time is critical for non-profit organizations, and the implementation of the new computers has noticeably improved time management around the office. Staff members are able to complete tasks in a time effective manner and are no longer waiting for slow computers to respond. Because of this, employees are able to allot more time to making and supporting matches.

The pre-paid cell phones have been incredibly helpful because parents and volunteers often wish to speak with staff outside of normal work hours. The cell phones have increased our availability and parents/Bigs have enjoyed being able to reach staff when needed.

The grant also allowed us the opportunity to buy new supplies for our school-based programs. Many of the games/toys that the matches played with at the schools were broken and worn down. We now have new toys that the Bigs and Littles use on a weekly basis.

Big Brothers Big Sisters is very grateful for the funding that we received. It has truly impacted this organization.



## MINNESOTA YOUTH SKI LEAGUE

The local Minnesota Youth Ski League's (MYSL) focus and mission is exposing young kids to the sport of Nordic skiing. The goal of our program is to provide equipment, coaching and a fun environment for the kids to experience Nordic skiing with the intent for them to create and develop a life-long sport they can participate in during the winter. The grant money from the BK 5K Youth Fund has helped us make this possible for many area youth. As you can see from the pictures, we really focus on having fun on skis and that's evident in our large snow pile we created this past year in our practice facility. The kids spent many hours going up and down that large snow pile. What you don't see in the pictures is the number of kids participating on any given week. We had over 75 athletes the past two years in this program. That jumped from 6 athletes 4 years ago to 75 athletes the past two years. A key enabler to getting that large increase in kids participating is the low cost of entry into our program. We charge only \$20 for the entire season to rent equipment. This low fee is critical in getting families the ability to participate in a sport where an entry level equipment package can cost upwards of \$175. This gets really expensive if a family has many siblings and they are growing fast. We used the BK 5K grant to purchase a seed base of over 100 pairs of equipment (skis, boots and poles) so equipment didn't become a barrier to trying the sport. It was a wild success as attributed with the dramatic growth in participants.

We really appreciate the support we received from the BK 5K Youth Fund and look forward to many years of success and partnership with this program.

The Cotter High School Concert Choir is very grateful for the BK 5K Youth Grant Award in 2011. With our grant in 2011 we were able to purchase three choir robe cabinets from Wenger Corporation.

We had previously been stuffing all 100+ of our choir robes into 3 cabinets (twice the amount that should go into a cabinet), and a homemade pipe hanging unit. Now that we have the correct amount of cabinets, all the robes fit into them as they should. Having the correct number of robes hanging in each cabinet helps keep the robes hanging properly and not getting as wrinkled or dusty, plus the choir students can identify and find their choir robe more easily when we are preparing to sing for a concert. We use our choir robes for 2-3 concerts per year and also for Large Group Music Contest and graduation.

The contest judges always comment on how great our choir robes look, and with these cabinets they will stay looking great for a long time to come!



## COTTER HIGH CONCERT CHOIR



The Winona Park & Recreation Department has been the recipient of two grants from the BK 5K and because of these grants we have been able to more effectively reach our mission of "Enhancing Community Through People Parks and Programs".

The first grant we received was to purchase canoes and kayaks for the Lake Lodge Recreation Center water craft rental program. This has been a well received offering to the community and to our visitors. The first year of the program we had just over 5,000 guests go out in a boat, in 2011 that number rose to just short of 9,000. For the current year we opened the watercraft rental program on April 16th and have had over 600 people participate already this year. Because of this service we are connecting people to nature and providing positive leisure time options. Since the grant was issued we have added 6 rental bikes, 3 stand up paddle boards, 4 liberty boats and 4 child size kayaks to meet the needs of the community. Thank you!

The second grant we received was used to make improvements to our East End Recreation Skate Park. This grant enabled us to create a larger space and include more elements for a larger variety of skate boarders, bikers, scooter riders and roller bladers. It not only enabled us to physically improve a well-used facility and create a positive space for kids; it also sparked a sense of community and purpose. Two of our regular skate-minded employees worked hard during the winter on building features to stretch every dollar as far as they could, and since spring has arrived they've kept the ball rolling with the help of other employees, volunteers and skaters. In short, it created an environment where the employees and users of the park are working together on making the space better – a reward we hadn't anticipated when we received the grant! Thank you!

## WINONA PARK & RECREATION



# THANK YOU TO OUR BK 5K SUPPORTERS



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## YMCA YOUTH RUNNING CAMP

The funds from the BK 5K in 2011 helped offset expenses for the YMCA youth running camp. The fee to register for the four day camp was only \$12.00 and included a t-shirt. This low fee made it very affordable to everyone in the community. The BK 5K also purchased some equipment that was used by our running camp and track camp participants which included batons, balls, cones, fitness stations, Frisbees and hula hoops. A total of 112 kids enjoyed the camps. This would not have been possible without the generous support of the BK 5K Foundation.

## RIDGEWAY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Funds from the BK 5K Youth Fund helped Ridgeway Community School construct Phase I of its Fitness track. The preschool to 5th grade charter school that serves 120 students and their families began construction of the 960 foot track that circles the outside of the school's athletic field in the fall of 2010. This spring with the assistance of additional funds from the Winona Community Foundation and the school's annual Miles for Smiles Fun Run fundraiser we were able to pave the track with 9 feet wide expanse of asphalt. The track is being used by students during recess, physical education classes and an after school track and field club. It is also being used by community members as they enjoy the fitness opportunities it affords while their children are playing on the school's playground.

## WINONA FAMILY YMCA

With the funds that the Winona Family YMCA received from the BK 5K this past year we were able to purchase additional equipment for our Family Fun Center. This is an area where families and children can play together in a safe environment.

We were able to purchase a thirty-five piece module block set which can be used to build structures that provide creative play. The other soft shapes and tumbling purchases are designed to improve vestibular stimulation, coordination, motor planning, and body awareness issues for children, including those with special needs.

The large cargo net we bought will help to develop upper body strength and aid children in feeling a sense of accomplishment. All of the items that we purchased have helped many children and families continue their mission of leading healthy, happy lives. Thanks BK 5K!

With the 2011 BK 5K grantee funds, Boy Scout Troop 13 purchased life jackets and paddles to replace worn equipment. They have been used for canoeing practice in the summer and at the fall camporee when we paddled the Root River. Additional tents were also purchased to have an adequate supply of tents to use on the monthly campouts.

Because the troop was able to use funds from the BK 5K grant for these large capital items, the scouts were able to use 100% of their popcorn, wreath, and plant sales for their personal account for summer camp and high adventure trips-like Philmont and Sea Base.

Troop 13 thanks the BK 5K committee for the opportunities the scouts enjoyed and will remember for a lifetime!

## BOY SCOUT TROOP 13

## WINONA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL/ COTTER HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC SKI TEAM

Winona Senior High School/Cotter High School Nordic ski team has been a recipient of grants from the BK5K which have helped the team in many ways. Dry land training equipment, roller skis and poles, have been purchased to support the team in early season practices until the snow arrives.

The team trailer has also been equipped with team skis and poles for first year participants to try the sport and ease into the purchasing of their own equipment.

The team needed to be self-funded for two seasons, from 2009 2011, and the BK 5K grants helped to support that effort.

Lastly, with the grant dollars the team was able to buy enough new uniforms so as to have all 52 participants in the same uniform this past season. All of this helped to build the program into a successful program with double the participants that it had eight years ago.

## WINONA AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Thanks in large part to a donation by the BK 5K fund, the Winona Area Catholic Schools was able to offer 11 Saturday STEM sessions for its students this school year. Despite our students being involved in many Saturday activities, we had anywhere from 18 to 48 students attend each Saturday. All the offerings were in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math fields, and most involved two or more at the same time. The program was for students in grades 4-6. Our students gained many valuable skills throughout the program, none more valuable than learning how to work together in teams. Parents were encouraged to come to the last 15 minutes of each session to see what the students had learned. All of our STEM teachers were volunteers and we received tremendous support from Winona State and St. Mary's University, along with Cotter Schools and the community at large. The program was a huge success on many levels, particularly in helping students to take their knowledge and apply it to real projects.

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