

Family Service Society reaches fundraising goal

By Sean Douglas

Despite the cancellation of their second biggest fundraising due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Family Service Society, Inc. exceeded expectations, collecting 125 percent of their fundraising goal with their “Roll With It” campaign.

The 16th annual Circle of Friends dinner was slated to be held on August 18 at the Barnes Student Center on the campus of Indiana Wesleyan University. The event usually hosts about 225 people, and is meant to be an opportunity of fellowship and networking, as well as learning about what the Family Service Society does for both Marion and Grant County as a whole. However, due to gathering restrictions, the event was cancelled.

“We had to cancel [the event], which really stinks, but we get it,” Family Service Society, Inc. Marketing and Development Director Iris Brunner said. “We understand our role and our responsibility, and we weren’t going to put anyone in harm’s way.”

However, despite the hand they were dealt, Brunner and the rest of the team at FSSI developed a new plan, pursuing a general fundraising



campaign to raise \$43,500.

“We just pivoted from an event,” Brunner said. “We still had sponsors that said [they] wanted to be a part of this, and we did a campaign where we just did a call for fundraising. We just asked folks to give, essentially.”

With that, the “Roll With It” campaign emerged. A humorous take on the toilet paper shortage that occurred back in March and April, FSSI sent a roll of toilet paper to each donor that gave a gift.

“We had people doing funny videos and having a great time with the TP theme, not to mention the TP fairy,” Cindy Fortney, FSSI Board Vice Chair and Development Committee Member said in a statement. “Thank you to all the donors who realize that the need still exists, even more so in this difficult time. We are eternally grateful.”

At the closing of the campaign on August 31, the “Roll With It” Campaign raised a grand total of \$54,575.

The money raised will go directly go into programs and services that teach par-

ents how to parent, enable children to accept that abuse is not their fault, build protective factors into children, provide support for teachers in the schools, help youth recover school credits in a safe and nurturing environment, and provide critical psychological testing for children who need it.

“Our community showed up for us,” Brunner said. “We actually made more this year than we did at the event

last year. It’s so refreshing and so awesome, and I’m just grateful every day for the folks in this community that are so generous and care so deeply. They still care about the work we are doing. They want to empower our agents to see the change that they want to have in this community. That’s huge.

“This gives us the opportunity to push forth and continue the work that we are doing.”

FSSI plans for the Circle of Friends event to return next year. The tentative date is set for August 17, 2021 at the Barnes Student Center.



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The News Herald

Rural broadband grants awarded to local companies

Three local rural broadband projects were recently awarded funding through the second round of the Next Level Connections Broadband Grant Program, said State Sen. Andy Zay (R-Huntington).

Mercury Wireless is awarded funding for a project that will connect 130 households and five businesses in portions of Allen, DeKalb and Whitley Counties. The requested grant amount is

match of \$348,460, for a total project cost of \$458,500.

Eastern Indiana Wifi is awarded two grants. The first will serve 12 households and one anchor institution in eastern Grant County. The requested grant amount is \$31,983, with a local match of \$8,502 for a total project cost of \$40,485.

The second grant will serve 103 households and 28 businesses in Monroe and Jefferson Townships in Grant County. The requested grant amount is \$251,756, with a local match of \$66,922, for a total project cost of \$318,678.

“This is a great next step toward investing in Indiana’s future, but there’s more we should do,” Zay said. “The COVID-19 shutdown significantly exposed rural Indiana to the essential need for connectivity when everything from schools to businesses went virtual. Indiana needs to join the 18 states investing CARES Act Relief funds in broadband. This investment would not only show a commitment to Hoosiers today, but would also meet the needs of the economic demands of tomorrow.”

The \$100 million Next Level Broadband Grant Program is the largest single state investment in broadband. In total, rounds one and two of the program have awarded more than \$79 million for broadband infrastructure for more than 21,900 homes and commercial locations in 41 counties.

Family Service Society, Inc.



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