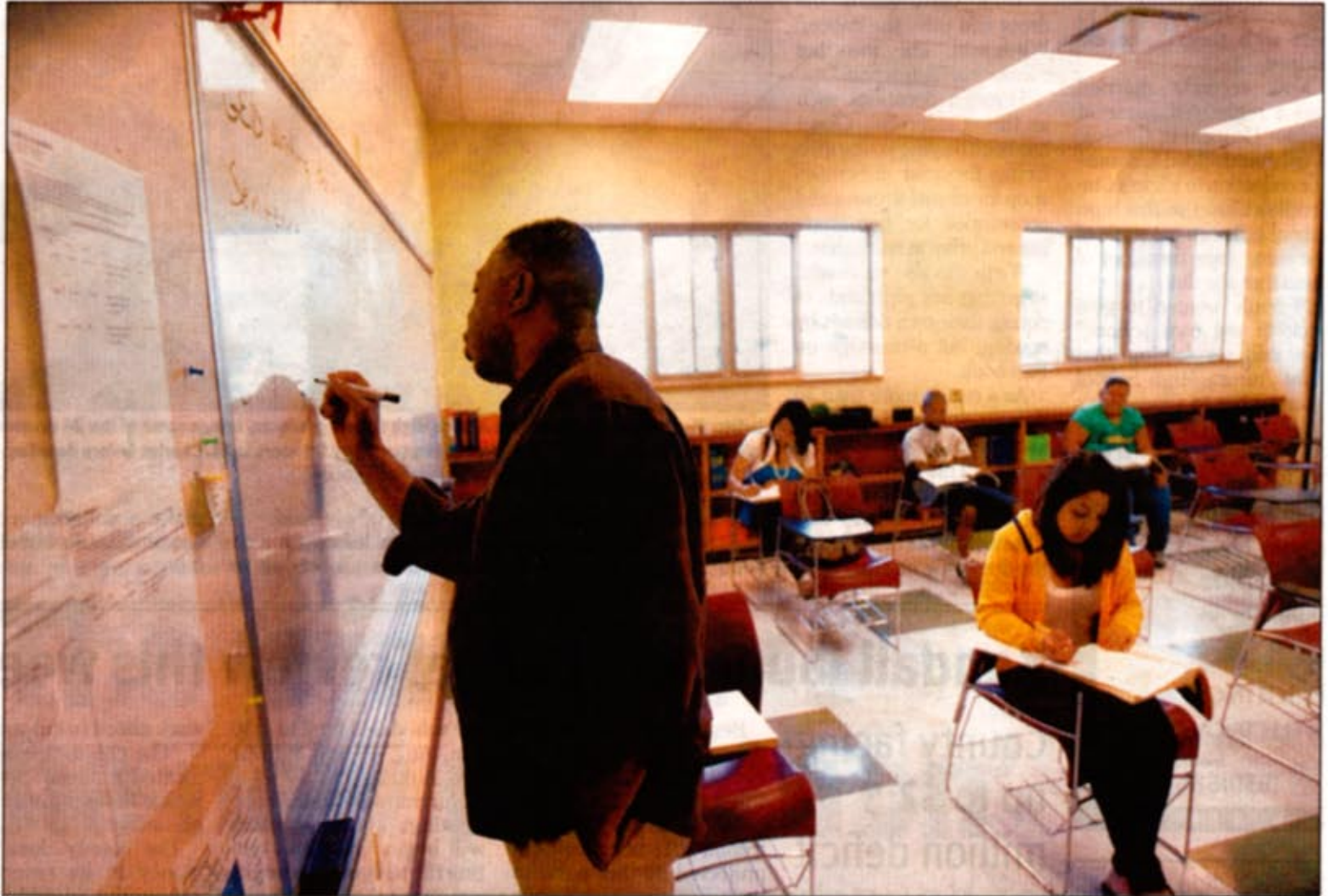


The Beacon-News

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FOX VALLEY PHILANTHROPY



Teacher Eric Simmons preps students for the GED test at the Dunham Center in Aurora. TERENCE GUIDER-SHAW / FOR THE BEACON-NEWS

A FOUNDING FUND

Dunham Fund pushes community toward better ideas **PAGES 6-7**

Dunham's biggest contributions

■ **Waubensee Community College Dunham Early College Academy** — \$1.175 million over three years

The academy allows East and West Aurora high school students to take college-level courses during the school year in order to graduate from high school with nearly a year's worth of transfer college credits.

■ **Breaking Free** — \$1 million over three years

The program provides in-school substance abuse counseling to area teens in the Dunham Student Assistance Centers.

■ **Quad County Urban League** — \$1 million over three years

From the John C. Dunham Educational and Vocational Training Center, the League provides advocacy and support programs like an alternative learning environment and emergency rental assistance.

■ **Dunham Nursing Scholarship** — \$750,000

Many partnering health agencies will implement a nursing scholarship program that aims to give out more than 100 nursing education scholarships in two years.

■ **Communities in Schools** — \$500,000 over two years

The Community Assessment Project will develop a comprehensive, centralized data warehousing system for use by agencies applying for funding inside and outside Aurora.

For more information on other programs the fund supports, visit www.dunhamfund.org.

Source: The Dunham Fund



Students at the Dunham Center in Aurora study for their upcoming GED test. TERENCE GUIDER-SHAW / FOR THE BEACON-NEWS

GIFT KEEPS ON GIVING

AURORA—In less than three years, the Dunham Fund has given away more than \$7 million to local causes — to keep some from going under and to help others get a start.



John Dunham

The \$70 million fund was founded in 2006 according to the terms of the trust of the late Aurora businessman and philanthropist John C. Dunham, and the foundation soon began granting money to area causes. Dunham first established the Dunham Foundation in 1996.

The Dunham Fund's goal is to seek applicants with creative, collaborative ideas that promote education or help people reach new heights of achievement.

Sustainability also seems to be a goal for the fund, both in the community projects it invests in

Organization's millions help some nonprofits stay afloat, get other projects off the ground

and the fund's own philosophy.

"We have more money than when we started," said fund Executive Director Bob Vaughn, who added that the idea is for the money to last forever.

Vaughn said they tend to invest in projects that are unique and have a plan to secure further funding.

"It doesn't do a lot of good to start something and watch it go dry," Vaughn said. "It's a vital thing — (the projects) can't rely on the state — the state's a mess."

The Dunham Fund has also granted \$280,000 in college scholarships.

'A lifesaver'

In what then-director Linda Healy called a miracle, the Dunham Fund made an emergency grant in July 2009 to Mutual Ground, allowing the 24-hour domestic violence shelter to re-open its doors after being forced to close for two weeks.

The fund contained \$350,000, a \$50,000 initial gift from the Dunham Fund, and matched United Way donations for the remainder.

It was the first of 10 grants the Dunham Fund provided to area service agencies to fill holes left by a lack of state funding, fund board President Ryan Maley said in 2009.

Vaughn said that keeping Mutual Ground open was a necessity.

"It's the only domestic violence shelter in southern Kane County," he said. "When they lost state funding, I thought 'we have no option here.'"

The Dunham Fund recently granted more than \$1 million to Breaking Free, which provides in-school substance abuse counseling and prevention programs to area teens, after the organization had significant cuts in state funding.

Breaking Free Executive Director Mike Moran said the group's budget for treatment services was cut nearly in half,

from \$600,000 per year to a little more than \$300,000 per year. The group's prevention services have seen a \$140,000 decrease in state funding, which has resulted in fewer staff and services.

"As a result of the Dunham Fund, we've been able to maintain a presence in the local school districts in particular," said Moran. "It's been a lifesaver."

'A vote of confidence'

The fund has helped local non-profits get some projects off the ground in an environment where more programs are vying for fewer government dollars, too.

The Visiting Nurse Association received a \$250,000 grant from the Dunham Fund, allowing the organization to build and

TURN TO **FUND**, PAGE 7

BY STAFF WRITER STEPHANIE LULAY | SLULAY@STMEDIANETWORK.COM

FUND

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equip the John C. Dunham Pediatric Wing in the VNA's Aurora health center.

Around the same time, the Quad County Urban League wanted to expand its alternative education program, which meant it needed room for more classrooms, according to Angela Thomas, director of development and external affairs at the Urban League.

The Urban League received a \$1 million grant from the fund to build the John C. Dunham Education and Vocational Training facility, which now houses the League's

education and youth services, workforce development and housing divisions. The Urban League supports about 4,000 residents annually.

Thomas said the Dunham Fund's support was a vote of confidence.

"It says, 'we recognize and appreciate the value you bring to the community,'" she said. "Thanks to the fund, we were able to secure the additional financing for a wonderful training center and continue providing much-needed services to area residents."

The fund will announce the next round of grant winners in October, Vaughn said.
