



NEWS RELEASE

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Dunham Fund Responds to the Diverse Needs of our Community

The fund supports two educational programs for the Aurora area's diverse population

The Dunham Fund recently awarded program grants to Mutual Ground and Dominican Literacy Center. "Since the private foundation began operation in 2006 after the death of area businessman and philanthropist, John C. Dunham, it quickly became apparent to the Fund's Board of Advisors that the community had needs for educational programs that addressed the unique challenges experienced by a diverse population.", said Bob Vaughan, the Fund's Executive Director. "Who better to respond to those challenges than those long-established social service organizations with proven records of success through innovative and collaborative programming?"

For many years, Mutual Ground, a local domestic violence shelter, has annually provided sexual assault and domestic violence prevention programming to over 40,000 students in the Aurora school districts. Regardless of race or ethnicity, some of the children touched by these school programs live in sexually abusive and violent family environments and this may be the first opportunity for them to hear that these behaviors are not the norm. Children are taught ways to identify and defuse these behaviors in their own homes. They are given the courage, information, and outside resources, necessary to report to and seek assistance from law enforcement and social services in the Aurora area. "The empowerment of youth can break the cycle of violence.", said Linda Healy, Mutual Ground's Executive Director. "This \$25,000 grant from the Dunham Fund comes at a critical time when state funding for social service programming has been dramatically reduced."

The Dominican Literacy Center, an ESL (English as a Second Language) program for women in Aurora, is a community-based literacy program sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Illinois. The program, developed in 1993, is for women who cannot speak, read, and/or write English. The Center, located on Aurora's near east side, seeks to help break the cycle of illiteracy by providing one-on-one tutoring from volunteer mentors to more than 150 women annually who are deficient in basic English skills. The program is essentially a "springboard" program, preparing women with little or no confidence or skills for further educational experiences in group ESL, GED, or workplace literacy programs. In addition to basic literacy skills, the program at the Center has grown to include an increased focus on job skills like workplace vocabulary, interview skills, and appropriate workplace customs. The Center also offers a basic computer program, a Spanish GED program, and computer-assisted ESL instruction. Citizenship instruction is also provided. The Dunham Fund's \$35,000 grant will provide the funding for expanded classroom space and additional staffing at the Center.

"Along with seeking new and innovative program concepts, the Fund will continue to support nonprofit agencies that have a history of successful service in our communities.", said William Skoglund, Dunham Fund Board President. For more information about the Dunham Fund grant making program, visit the foundation at www.dunhamfund.org.

The Dunham Fund is a private foundation established in 2006 to honor the legacy of John C. Dunham, businessman and philanthropist, through grants to Aurora, Illinois area organizations that have the vision and programs to help fulfill Mr. Dunham's dream of "making the world a more comfortable, safer place for mankind to live and prosper."

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For more information visit the Dunham Fund at www.dunhamfund.org



At the Dominican Literacy Center, Volunteer, Kathy Wass, and Sr. Lucia Lietsch, RSM, help center students improve their spoken English.