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8 projects for kids share \$30,920 in funding

By SANDY STRICKLAND
 Staff writer,

The Southeast Citizens Planning Advisory Committee has awarded \$30,920 to help fund eight projects, including a healing camp for bereaved children, a summer literacy session, vacation Bible schools and expansion of two football programs.

Each year, the city's six planning advisory committees receive up to \$25,000 from the city's general appropriation to the Jacksonville Children's Commission. The commission forwards the grant applications to the advisory committees for evaluation. The advisory committees were formed a decade ago to give residents a forum for discussing neighborhood concerns with city officials.

Amy Wentzel, communications specialist for the commission, said she was impressed with the creativity and variety of the applications received this year.

After awarding only three grants last year, the Southeast advisory committee mounted a campaign to increase the number of applications.

"We went to different church groups and organizations to remind them of how this could benefit them," said Gamal Lyons, who heads the advisory committee's grants subcommittee.

The result was a substantial increase in the number of applications. Twelve were received and eight awarded. Money left over from last year was added to this year's pot.

Lyons said each application was carefully checked, and the projects will be periodically monitored. Other subcommittee members are Christina Fuchs, Betty Wolfe, Kimberly Whigham, Evette Murrill and Angie Vannatter, advisory committee chairwoman.

"We are really very frugal and want to make sure the money's used for a good cause," Lyons said. "We are results-oriented."

The following grants were awarded:

Community Hospice of Northeast Florida got \$3,300 for its "healing camps" to help children adjust to the loss of a family member. About 32 children are in each camp.

Families First got \$1,570 for an 11-week summer camp at Ravenwood Apartments on Old Kings Road. The camp features arts and crafts with an emphasis on literacy.

The Mandarin Football League got \$7,000 to buy football equipment and uniforms so it can add two to three teams.

The Pine Forest Athletic Association on the Southside got \$5,000 to buy football gear and add 50 to 70 children.

San Jose Catholic Church on Toledo Road got \$2,300 for its vacation Bible school, which will reach up to 150 children.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church on St. Augustine Road got \$5,000 for supplies for its vacation Bible school, "SonGames," so it can reach up to 285 children.

Power to Succeed at New St. James Holy Family Church on Sunbeam Road got \$3,350 for its 12-week "Journey into Womanhood" program. The Saturday workshops for girls 12 to 17 cover academics, health/nutrition and personal development and will include guest speakers and field trips. The program is expanding by 15 to 20 participants and bringing in a financial planner to teach such skills as how to reconcile a checkbook, Lyons said.

Renewed Life Restoration Corp. got \$3,400 for its six-week summer camp for kids 5 to 12. The camp, sponsored by Renewed Life Ministries on St. Augustine Road, emphasizes religious, character and enrichment activities.

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