



December 2022 Update



H.E.Y! members, Markella Nacoupolis and Gianna Stewart delivered new toys for the after-school program at Booker T. Washington Center. The children received new coloring books and crayons, squishy figures, fidgets and arts and crafts supplies. Plenty of smiles to go around!

Photo credit: Mabel Howard

Another holiday season brought another opportunity for members of Hear Erie's Youth! (H.E.Y!) to give back in support of over 100 children and families with the annual 12 Acts of Kindness campaign. This service-learning project identifies 12 youth-serving organizations across Erie County, with HEY! members working with those organizations to identify greatest needs for families they serve or opportunities to participate in holiday or year-end celebrations.

This year's campaign was special as it was the first time in three years that members were able to personally deliver donations and gifts to the nonprofits, previously restricted due to COVID-19.

H.E.Y! members begin working with their specific organizations in early November, purchase the requested items or assist in planning an event and complete their projects beginning in mid-December up. If you are a nonprofit or know of a nonprofit who would like to participate as a recipient organization, please reach out by October 22nd to Rachel Cacchione at The Erie Community Foundation at rcacchione@eriecommunityfoundation.org.

HEY!'s 4th Annual 12 Acts of Kindness Campaign Brings Joy to Families During the Holidays



Some last minute organizing as H.E.Y! members get ready to spread some holiday cheer! The Erie Community Foundation's conference room was transformed into a large-scale gift wrapping operation in preparation for the coming week!

Photo credit: Rachel Cacchione



Children from the Barber National Institute's child care program were very surprised by the delivery of Paw Patrol and Spiderman activity books, matchbox cars, Squishville characters and lots of other goodies courtesy of H.E.Y! members Asheen Udgiri, Tanvi Udgiri and Genelia Kang.

Photo credit: Mabel Howard



Spring 2023 Update

In April, Hear Erie's Youth! (H.E.Y.!) awarded its annual grant to two deserving youth-focused nonprofits. After reviewing 14 submitted applications and interviewing three finalists, Community Shelter Services and Career and Dreams, Inc. were selected to each receive \$5,000 grants for projects that will take place over the course of a year. CSS will use its funding to assemble welcoming bags for any teen that enters emergency shelter. The gym bags will contain hygiene items, feminine products, journals, hair ties, undergarments, socks, chargers, ear buds, school supplies and bus passes. The teens can take everything with them when they leave the shelter. "Being awarded this grant will give teens something they can keep with them and hold onto even during the most difficult part of their life, says CSS Development Director, Fontaine Glen. "It truly is an amazing feeling having this opportunity to have an impact on our youth's lives."



The second award of \$5,000 supports Career and Dreams' Community Career Pipeline program, offering opportunities for minority students to explore unique career fields in media content development, underwater welding, culinary and emergency services. Students will connect with local businesses to better understand the educational requirements and skills necessary for successful employment. Entrepreneurship and financial literacy will also be components of this program.



TRUSTING THE PROCESS AND THE MAKING OF GRANTS

HEY! members undergo months of preparation prior to making the final grant decisions. Many meetings give members a chance to explore some of the most prominent issues facing youth in our community, through research and discussion. Interfacing with nonprofits during the 12 Acts of Kindness campaign provides opportunities to interface directly with youth-serving nonprofits, learn more about their programming and impact on young people throughout the county.

Early in January, members dig deep into the nuances of grantmaking, participating in a grant simulation activity that prepares them for the type of decision-making they will soon encounter. Members also identify three key issues for further education and invite nonprofits addressing those issues to present during a panel discussion prior to releasing the group's request for grant proposal in March.

Once all proposals have been submitted, the group narrows down to three finalists, who are invited for in-person interviews. After thoughtful discussion, the grant recipients are selected, although the decision is never easy.

