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The Apostle Islands Area Community Fund, an affiliate of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, announced its 2015 annual grant recipients. Eleven nonprofits and agencies received a total of $30,302 in grant money to help each organization better the lives of our neighbors on Madeline Island, Bayfield and Red Cliff.

The charities and programs receiving grants this year:

**AIACF Unrestricted Fund**
Ashwabay - Youth Programs and Scholarship Initiative
Northland College - Summer Camps for Native American Youth 9th-12th Grade*
Wilderness Inquiry - Bayfield School and Little Sand Bay Collaboration*
Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua - Native American Community Connection Series with Brule/Airo*
Red Cliff Band - Mino Bi Ma De Se Win Community Farm Project
Red Cliff Band - Early Childhood Outdoor Forest Classroom Project
Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve - Summer Lecture Series
Red Cliff Band - Red Cliff Library Project

**Madeline Island Grutzner Fund**
Town of La Pointe - Ice Rescue
Wilderness Inquiry, Bayfield School - Little Sand Bay Collaboration*
Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve - Summer Lecture Series*

**Human Rights Fund**
Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua’s Cultural Community Connection Series - Brule/Airo*

**Animal Assisted Fund - In Memory of Cordelia Anne Brinton (Donor Advised Fund)**
North Country Ride
Horse Spirit for Returning Soldiers

**Peter M. and Betty W Rogers (Donor Advised Fund)**
Wilderness Inquiry, Bayfield School - Little Sand Bay Collaboration*

(*Partial funding from each field of interest fund and Pete M and Betty W Rogers donor advised fund)
This year, the community fund awarded many of the grants to youth programs: Ashwabay, Wilderness Inquiry, Red Cliff Early Childhood Outdoor Forest Classroom, Northland College Summer Camps

In addition, both AIACF donor advised funds; Demaris Brinton and Theron O’Connor awarded a grant to youth programs from the Animal Assisted Fund-In Memory of Cordelia Anne Brinton to North Country Ride. The North Country Ride program offers animal assisted therapeutic activities to students facing mental, emotional and psychological challenges. Peter M and Betty W Rogers Fund awarded a portion to Wilderness Inquiry.

“In the Apostle Islands area, many local parents work in and outside the home, especially during the peak summer employment surge. Since we do not have the typical teen and tweens “hang out” locations like malls and multiplex cinemas, we see a need for productive and healthy outdoor activities like Wilderness Inquiry, Northland College, Red Cliff Outdoor Forest Classroom and Ashwabay. The AIACF youth grants help the nonprofits serving financially disadvantaged families in the Bayfield School District. The Bayfield School District is our service area. This year, the Bayfield School has 100% free lunch programs. The Federal income eligibility guidelines are students in a household of four with income of $31,005 per year or less to qualify for free school meals.” said Madelaine Herder, DSACF Affiliate Officer.

The Ashwaybay grant will expand its existing Scholarship Program, Friday Night Youth Out-Reach Program, and new Jr. Ski Patrol initiative. It also purchased snowshoes, enhancing programming from skiing to other winter life-long outdoor activities.

The Northland College Summer Camps will prepare Native American high school students for college and careers emphasizing decision-making, group leadership, self-empowerment and community service using traditional teachings and activities. The Ojibwe Cultural Immersion Camp integrates Ojibwemowin (Ojibwe language) into activities, instruction, and recreation. It is coordinated through a partnership including Northland College's Indigenous Culture Center, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, and the local Tribal Conservation and Environmental.
Greg Lais, executive director of Wilderness Inquiry said the grant his organization received “will help bring the Bayfield school districts kids of Madeline Island, Bayfield and Red Cliff area outdoors to introduce them to the wonder and beauty of the Apostle Islands. These experiences help build teamwork, leadership, and outdoor skills, as well as a connection to place.”

Outside of the youth grants, the crucial role of environmental education was also recognized through the grant awards with the Red Cliff Early Childhood Outdoor Forest and The Madeline Island Wilderness Preserve (MIWP).

“We received funding for speakers to give free educational and entertaining lectures on Wednesday evenings throughout the summer. The funds help with our three-pronged Wilderness Preserve’s mission: preservation, education, and advocacy. We started with preservation, and now own about 2600 acres for the public with hiking and cross country skiing trails. The education component is our public lecture series. We advocate for environmental issues, addressing the serious issue of woody invasive species, specifically buckthorn and barberry. If left untreated, they have the capacity to alter the understory of the entire island in a very short time.” Said Victoria Erhart, MIWP President.

“These grants are so needed by our area’s nonprofits that provide critical services and make the Apostle Islands area such a great place to live,” said AIACF Chair Eric Grutzner. The sentiments were echoed by MIWP President, Victoria Erhart in a statement, “We are extraordinarily grateful to the Community Fund. Dollars are finite and needs and opportunities are infinite. The Community Fund helps bridge that gap now and in the future.”

The Apostle Islands Area Community Fund is one of six affiliates of the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation (DSACF). Our affiliation benefits from assets of over $54 million. Since its inception in 1983, it has distributed more than $40 million in grants and scholarships and currently administers over 370 different funds, each with its own charitable purpose. To find out more about donating to the Apostle Islands Area Community Fund or additional information on our grant awards, please go to our website at www.dsacommunityfoundation.com.