

YIP sends kids to summer camp

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By Cameron Fullam

Staff Writer

Prince and Princess Odai, 8-year-old twins from West Chester Twp., had never been to a Boys and Girls Club before this summer, but they both hope they can come again next year.

"I like playing in the sandbox and playing games," Princess said.

"I like that they have art rooms, and I like to get on the computers and play foosball," said her brother.

The two join 15 other children from West Chester and Liberty townships five days a week for a summer enrichment program at the club in Hamilton on East Avenue.

Their families pay nothing for them to attend the program, thanks in part to a grant from Youth in Philanthropy, a charitable board of Lakota high school students that raises money throughout the year to benefit local youth.

They play sports in the gymnasium, swim in an outdoor pool, play table games and board games, learn computer skills and participate in accelerated reading programs.

"In West Chester, some kids whose parents work may be left home alone. We wanted them to have the opportunity to meet other kids from their community," said YIP Treasurer Nick Reinel.

This summer is the third year residents of West Chester and Liberty townships have participated in the program. It is also sponsored by Butler County Success, a partnership between Lakota schools and nonprofit organizations.

Josh Lay, 16, a senior at Lakota West, works for the club teaching computer skills. Lay is no stranger to the Boys and Girls Club, attending one in Salem, Ore., from the age of 5.

When he moved to West Chester Twp. in October, he soon connected with the Hamilton club to volunteer his services.

"I like working with children," Lay said. "It provides youth with an extracurricular activity that keeps that out of negative situations."

YIP gave \$1,300 to the Boys and Girls Club for the program, in conjunction with \$1,436 from the Community Foundation of West Chester/Liberty.

The youth organization also gave \$400 to the West Chester Friends of the Library to purchase zoo books and \$1,300 to Parachute to support the training expenses for court appointed special advocates from West Chester Twp.

"YIP is excited to give back to these great programs supporting our peers in West Chester and Liberty townships," said Grants Committee Chairwoman Jourdan Weller. "It is a great way finish off the school year and reward some local programs with funding from our event proceeds and donor contributions."

The group has given more than \$6,000 in the past year.

Community Foundation giving

The Community Foundation recently awarded more than \$11,000 in grants to local programs, bringing the year's total giving to more than \$21,000. They are:

\$2,200 to the Friends of West Chester Library for its summer reading program. Funding will support the purchase of a new sound system and reading incentives for children participating in the program.

\$6,300 to the Mother Teresa Catholic Elementary School to support the purchase of a portable school sound system and the construction of a theatrical stage.

\$1,500 to Parachute: Special Advocates for Children of Butler County to support the recruitment and training costs for court appointed special advocates from West Chester and Liberty townships.

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