Heels Together uplifts women by investing in local programming

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Local organizations are celebrating on the heels of good news they received from a group of investors with a vested interest in projects to uplift women and girls.

The Community Health Clinic and Hardin County Schools’ Family Resource and Youth Service Center were awarded grants Thursday from Heels Together, an angel investment group of Central Kentucky Community Foundation.

The Community Health Clinic presented the Pink Dot Program, where the agency will partner with churches, grocery stores, pharmacies and local doctors’ offices to establish drop off locations for feminine hygiene products. The products will be distributed through other organizations, including the clinic, to women in need.

The idea originated with Dr. Shannon Holt, a doctor of obstetrics and gynecology with a practice in Elizabethtown, and Heels Together Core Team Member Marnie Clagett brought the idea to Dailey.

“I just kind of ran with it from there,” Dailey said, adding she leaped at the possibility of getting the project funded. “To me the credit goes to Holt, because it was her idea, her experiences, her background that brought the program to life. I just put it on paper to present it.”

Dailey said when their organization was announced, she didn’t hear the first part and was shocked to learn they won a fully funded grant at $15,000.

“It’s a program worth the time,” Dailey said. “We are so grateful for the funding.”

Dailey said she and Holt are looking forward to implementing the program within the coming month and said businesses and organizations that want to be a drop off location can call the clinic at 270-763-9589 or email her at directorchc.etown@gmail.com.

The second program awarded funding was First Connections: Teens as Parents Group with Hardin County Schools’ Family Resource and Youth Service Center.

Presenter Leslie Hall, North Hardin High School FRYSC coordinator, said the program will help young mothers who are students in the system’s high schools navigate pregnancy while completing their degrees.

“We will utilize it the best we can to help teen moms secure and strengthen their own families and their pride and confidence in moving forward into their adult lives outside of high school,” Hall said, who said she was excited to implement plan and parent educator McKenzie Sullivan is “raring to go.”

“For the moms that we will have in the program, I think it will have an impact that will last years, not just for them but for their children and their families,” Hall said. “Finishing your education, completing that degree, even moving on into either the workforce or higher education is all steps to having a better foundation for your family.”

The program was awarded their full request of $9,833.

With the awards presented Thursday, Central Kentucky Community Foundation President and CEO Davette B. Swiney said the group has granted more than $200,000 in the last nine years and has grown an endowment equal to that amount.

“As we’ve heard, we made awards to 20 different projects to 17 organizations and I think that speaks to the variety of things we’ve been able to fund,” she said, adding they’ve paid for programs that address building leadership skills in girls to helping adult women on their education journey and supporting women in all phases of life. “It’s just inspiring to see every year women in our community come together to make these decisions.”

Each investor donates $1,000, of which $500 is immediately invested into grants for the current year and the remaining $500 is invested into an endowment to grow the impact of the group, Swiney said.

“The more investors, the more grant dollars we can make an impact and the more we’re growing the long-term ability of Heels Together to support women and girls, because we know there’s always going to be that need. It’s going to look different and it’s going to change over time, and that’s the beauty of the annual grant making because it lets us hear from the community what those needs are now.”

At the banquet, the investment group had a call for more members to join as Swiney said the group isn’t exclusive and welcomes anyone willing to make the $1,000 investment in causes that affect women in Hardin County.

“I think it’s easy for people to think that it’s just for other people or certain people, and what I love about Heels Together is we have younger women and some of us that are getting a little older and everyone in between who just come together with a passion to help women and girls,” she said. “It’s $85 a month or a one-time check of $1,000 for the year, and everybody does it in a way that works for them. For a lot of investors, it’s a decision they make because it’s important and meaningful for them to do.”