

Foundation hands out grants

By Juan Antonio Sison

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The Community Foundation of Mississauga (CFOM) granted more than \$720,000 to 31 charitable and community groups on Wednesday night.

With Chappell House at The Riverwood Conservancy serving as the backdrop, CFOM distributed cheques to a wide range of groups including ErinoakKids Foundation, United Way of Peel Region, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel, Salvation Army Canada and the Mississauga Arts Council.

CFOM was unable to deliver any grant money last year, due to the recession. But what a difference a year makes, officials say.

"Just because of the downturn in the economy last year, we were not in a position to make any grants," said CFOM president Steven Offer. "We knew we were going to come out of this. And this evening is a testament to that."

CFOM, which is part of Community Foundations of Canada, passes on financial endowments from donors to charities and other community groups in Mississauga.

The Mississauga foundation has granted more than \$1.6 million since its inception in May 2001.

ErinoakKids Foundation president Anissa Hilborn said the \$30,000 that group received will help its drama program, which was in dire need of funding.

ErinoakKids Centre for Treatment and Development is the largest of 19 such centres in Ontario, helping some 9,000 children and their families each year. The children face a range of physical and developmental disabilities.

Hilborn said she was, "extremely excited when we got the news. There was a celebration in my office and then we called the program staff. They were over the moon, just thrilled."

The United Way of Peel Region received \$24,000, which put it over the \$1 million mark this year.

"This is so important to our community to meet the great social needs that exist. We're looking forward to being able to go back to the community and tell them about this gift," said United Way of Peel chief executive officer Shelley White.

The grant ceremony was Offer's first official public event as CFOM president. He succeeded Ray Lessard.

"Ray really had a great hand in building the foundation to where it is now," said Offer. "I can only hope to follow well in his steps. He's done a tremendous job."



Showing the money. Community Foundation of Mississauga handed out cheques to 31 charitable and community groups at the Riverwood Conservancy on Wednesday night. *Staff photo by Rob Beintema*

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