



Evergreen Rotary Club – Community Service Grants by Larry Caine, Chair, Community Service

Growing up in less than financially secure circumstances, I would often day dream about being a great philanthropist, giving away large sums of money to noble causes, ending world hunger, building schools in third world countries and being the all around good guy. Such a noble dream it was to be able to truly make a difference in the world. While it was a great altruistic cause, the only part I didn't count on was the part of having to amass those mega millions from which I would give to people in need. But after 30 successful years in corporate business, I found a way to give back to those less fortunate than me and that was through the Evergreen Rotary Club.

Community Service is a big part of Rotary, seeking ways to live the Rotary slogan of "Service above Self." Although the mountain communities surrounding Evergreen, Colorado is quite affluent, there resides within a host of deep needs that personal wealth sometimes doesn't address. It is to this end that our club's Community Service committee dedicates themselves to financially improving the lot of worthy causes here on the mountain.

In order to provide grant monies to worthy organizations, you must have a source of funds, and the Evergreen Rotary Club raises funds through our annual event, Wines in the Woods. Every fall our club organizes a wine tasting gala where representatives from major wineries and distributors from around the world present fine wine tasting, joined by area restaurants and caterers to create an evening of wine and food pairings delighting the most sophisticated palates. Tickets sold in advance will raise ample funds that will be given away both locally and internationally through Rotary Grants. 100% of the proceeds over cost are given away to worthy causes. Since the advent of the Wine in the Woods fundraiser 8 years ago, Evergreen Rotary has given away almost \$200,000 to mountain area causes alone. The other major fundraiser we participate in is the Mountain Home and Garden Show. This joint venture with the Conifer Rotary Club generates additional funds that again are distributed to mountain area needs.

While we have given monies to dozens of worthy organizations, a few stand out of particular note. Camp Comfort is run by the Mount Evans Hospice organization. This camp is for children who have suffered the recent loss of a parent or sibling and brings them together with others to help work through their grief. Higher Ground is an Evergreen based organization that provides a weekend location where teens may gather to listen to live music and socialize in a safe environment. The Evergreen Chamber Orchestra sought to bring classical music to young people through a mentoring program and experiences of live, orchestral music. Grants from the Evergreen Rotary Club enabled these organizations to either create or continue these worthy activities.

The Rotary Club's spirit of volunteerism is also what drives us to give back. Each year our club hosts a recycling day where we collect tires, electronics and other difficult to recycle items. Our club also leads the way by ringing the bell for The Salvation Army, joining with other groups to raise over \$36,000 for needy people on the mountain.

We may never achieve such a lofty goal in life as giving away millions of dollars of our personal wealth, but through service organizations such as the Evergreen Rotary Club, the desire *and* means to give back to our community and beyond is not only there, but happens regularly. I guess my youthful day dreams weren't far fetched after all.

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