

Youth Inspired for change at Rural Philanthropy Days



SOUTHEAST COLORADO
RURAL philanthropy DAYS

La Junta, CO—October 16, 2014—Southeast Health Group

Over 70 Youth from six counties of southeastern Colorado attended the Rural Philanthropy Days Youth Track event on September 25th in Trinidad. Rural Philanthropy Days is a statewide program, initiated by the Community Resource Center and the Anschutz Family Foundation, which increases access to high quality resources and funding opportunities for rural nonprofits. It is held every four years in the Southeast region.

“This was the first time we held Youth Track as a component of the bigger event,” said Nancy King, member of the RPD Steering Committee. “The response from our local young people exceeded our wildest expectations.”

The day started with “Minute to Win It” games led by Sarah Voigts and Bo Tamir, employees of Southeast Health Group. They warmed up the crowd for motivational speaker, Dr. Sally Spencer-Thomas, Psy.D., who inspired the kids with stories of successful youth fundraising and community improvement projects from her work with the Carson J. Spencer Foundation. Later, the youth formed groups based on their hometown, and planned projects that would improve their communities.



Over 70 Youth from six counties attended Southeast Colorado Rural Philanthropy Days Youth Track in Trinidad September 25th



Lori Hammer, Lamar Hope Center, and Nancy King, Southeast Health Group, served as Steering Committee members for Youth Track

“We saw projects ranging from road repairs in Walsh, to new computer equipment for Trinidad High School, to an expanded community center for Eads,” said King. “It brought tears to my eyes to see the compassion and concern these young people shared. One of the projects was to create an afterschool program for at-risk teens, run by peers who have overcome hardships like bullying and neglect. It gave all the adults in the room a lot of hope for the future.”

A theme that kept emerging throughout the student presentations was the need to give youth opportunities for work and recreation in their communities to prevent drug use. “The youth see the big picture,” said King. “They have a lot of

hometown pride, and they know they need to create jobs and build stronger communities, because that's where they want to live and raise their families as adults."

During an evening reception, funders had the opportunity to view the youth project displays and leave comments and encouragement. The funders were impressed by the amount of thought and planning each group put into their projects. "I have never been in a room full of so many respectful, thoughtful, compassionate young people in my whole life," said King. "It was a privilege to spend the day with them and watch their ideas grow."

For more information about Rural Philanthropy Days, go to www.crcamerica.org.