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The first round of Children's Auction grant recipients gathered at the Belknap Mill on Friday morning, receiving a total of \$151,500 less than a week after the auction's close. (Adam Drapcho/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

Money raised by Children's Auction already at work in local communities

BY ADAM DRAPCHO
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — Less than a week after raising a record-breaking \$603,032, the Greater Lakes Region Children's Auction has already put about a quarter of that amount to work in the community, awarding

\$151,500 to 17 local nonprofit organizations who provide basic needs for children.

The balance of the money will be awarded later, to organizations that work to eliminate or mitigate the need for basic services to children, to improve the lives of children or enhance other agencies' ability to

deliver their services, or to agencies that provide an educational or recreational opportunity that local children may not otherwise be able to afford.

"I want to thank you all for all the fantastic things you do in the community," Jaimie Sousa, president of

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LACONIA CITY HALL

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A weekly summary of civic news

Inauguration, open house await

BY RICK GREEN
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

LACONIA — The inauguration of Mayor-elect Andrew Hosmer and the Laconia City Council will be held 7 p.m. on Jan. 9 in the Belknap Mill.

Mayor Ed Engler did not seek re-election, and Hosmer defeated Rep. Peter Spanos to win the post.

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the Children's Auction board, said on Friday morning to a small group of people representing organizations that each walked out with a check ranging from \$2,000 to \$30,000.

Those dollars will be put to immediate use, to provide food, clothing, Christmas presents or emergency medical care.

"You have no idea how many smiles you put on kids' faces, all year long," said Nora McNeil, a captain with the Salvation Army, which operates a food kitchen and homeless shelter in Laconia.

A new recipient this year, Dawn and Dave Longval from Isaiah 61 Café received a \$5,000 grant. The café provides a hot meal, a place to gather and feel welcomed, and other basic services every weekday for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Dawn Longval said the money will be used for food, operating costs and Christmas gifts. Their organization serves about 20 children — and counting. "It's increased so much," she said, "and it just seems to be growing."

Ellen Young, a recently retired school nurse, accepted a gift of \$3,000 for Got Lunch Ashland and Holderness, which provides local children with lunches during the summer, and vouchers for milk, bread and other basics at a local grocery store during vacations.

"Thank you, this has been so great," Young said.

Paula Ferenc, executive director of the Belknap House, said the \$5,000 grant they received would be used to provide winter clothing for the fami-

lies that come to stay in the year-round homeless shelter.

"We have five families right now," Ferenc said, adding that the shelter was at capacity almost immediately after opening its doors. "And we've been getting calls daily... The support that the Children's Auction is offering us has been huge. They don't have snowpants, they don't have jackets, they don't have boots," she said of her clients. "The Children's Auction has been very generous to the Belknap House, we've been very grateful for the help."

Warren Bailey, a board member and founder of the auction, turned the gratitude right back to the people gathered for the ceremony.

"It just is amazing how many lives you touch, you do all the heavy lifting, God bless you for what you do," Bailey added, "It's amazing how much a community this size comes up with. It's because they care, there's a lot of love in this community."

Other recipients include:

- Christmas Village, \$5,000
- Gilford Got Lunch, \$2,500
- Got Lunch Campton-Thornton, \$2,000
- Got Lunch Interlakes, \$7,000
- Got Lunch Laconia, \$30,000
- Hands Across the Table, \$2,000
- Interlakes Christmas Fund, \$7,500
- Santa Fund of the Greater Lakes Region, \$25,000
- St. Vincent de Paul, \$20,000
- The Pass Along Project, \$5,000
- The Salvation Army, \$15,000
- Tilton Northfield Christmas Fund, \$5,000
- Twin Rivers Interfaith Food Pantry, \$7,500

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