



Local nonprofit hands out year-end grants

DON CRINKLAW Forum Publishing Group
10:53 p.m. EST, February 20, 2014

The Campbell Foundation, a charitable group operating out of Fort Lauderdale, focuses its largesse on HIV/AIDS research. But the foundation also hands out end-of-year grants to nonprofits that "work in the trenches, serving the HIV-positive community on a daily basis," said the foundation's program officer Ken Rapkin.

Five of these are in Fort Lauderdale, helping "people that every single moment need medical and dental care, things they cannot afford," Rapkin said. They provide food, too, and transportation and even clothing and housing, and help for families and friends struggling as caretakers.

Twenty such groups each received \$2,500 as "a year-end hug and a thanks" from the Campbell Foundation for "fighting to keep these people alive," he said. The groups are nationwide with recipients in Portland and Cincinnati.

Fort Lauderdale recipients are groups like the Poverello Center, a food pantry on Dixie Highway, and Broward House, the only residential site where people with "full-blown AIDS" can live. And Children's Diagnostic and Treatment Center, which treats children with AIDS.

The Campbell Foundation was created by chemist and entrepreneur Richard Campbell Zahn, who invented, manufactured, and sold a lip balm called Herpecin L. After his death from complications of AIDS in 1995, his company was sold and the money went to the foundation that funds "Madam Curie in a closet," Rapkin said.

"Researchers working on new things that the government would never have gotten involved in," he said.

A surplus at the end of its first year led the foundation to seek local organizations dedicated to dealing with the agony of what Rapkin calls "the crafty, quick-changing bug called HIV. Progress has been made, but there are still strains out there that we have no way to deal with."

Year-end giving has been a tradition ever since.

"The Campbell Foundation's end-of-the-year grants have helped tremendously in the provision of HIV services and support to children and families living with HIV," said Dr. Ana Calderon, the Children's Center's executive director.

Dr. Ana Puga, principal investigator in the center's research department, said that they've benefited as well from the foundation's primary role: subsidizing research.

"A project we did in California involving papillomavirus received \$100,00 from Campbell. It's 'pilot research,' that would not get funding from any other source," Puga said.

Poverello, another beneficiary of Campbell's year-end largesse, served, with the foundation's help, "more than 1,400 individuals last year," said Director of Development Ron Wudnarsky. "They rely on us for their food every day. And the individuals we serve are disabled, some requiring legal, dental and medical help as well. We have a wellness center that provides alternative care. And a thrift store and a food pantry," he said.

"Their audience is people so sick they can't work," Rapkin said.

While the primary focus of the foundation is medical research, Wudnarsky said, "they have ancillary interests. That is, they support services that provide health and wellness to the community."