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**Community Foundation hands out \$36,536
to community groups
*\$25,383 in designated grants also dispersed***

Medicine Hat, Alberta (December 1, 2009) – After one year in which no community grants were dispersed, the Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta today rewarded nine local charitable organizations with a total of \$36,536 in funds.

Because of a harsh financial climate and decreased investment portfolio performance, the Community Foundation was unable to continue its normal grant cycles after the spring of 2008. With a slowly improving portfolio, however, the foundation was able to recommence its grant program again this September.

“It was very exciting to once again start the application process this fall,” said Community Foundation executive director Mike Christie. “Although we had been working as hard as ever in the office, we missed our twice-yearly community grants cycles. Giving out community grants is one of the best parts of our job, and the board and staff didn’t feel as fulfilled without it.”

Dozens of applications were received by the foundation in mid-September; a volunteer-based grants committee then met several times to decide which groups would receive the funds.

“It was hard this year in particular because we all knew what a tough time these charities are facing,” said Christie. “There were many worthwhile applications. Our volunteers worked diligently to find the right groups to award with funds, and we hope that Southeast Alberta will be an even better place with the funds going to these groups.”

The Community Foundation also announced today \$25,383 in designated grants, making the *total grants given today to \$61,919*. These are pre-determined grants that benefit the region each year.

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The largest grant of this cycle will be given to Grasslands Regional Family and Community Support Services Society. The society will receive a grant for \$13,500 for the “Energize! Educate! Empower!” project. This non-profit/voluntary sector training project will support building of organizational capacity in the Brooks area.

“We’re absolutely delighted to partner with the Community Foundation,” said Lynn Pye-Matheson of Grasslands Regional FCSS. “The grant will provide the opportunity to support the voluntary sector in these changing times through workshops, education and training.”

Christie said the project was the perfect chance for the foundation to spread seeds that will help develop an even better community.

“This is a grassroots project that will build capacity and strengthen leadership in the local voluntary sector,” Christie said. “The foundation is happy to support efforts such as this that will strengthen Southeastern Alberta a thousand times over by training more community volunteers.”

Today’s grants announcement brings the Community Foundation’s grant giving tally to 553 grants totaling \$2,676,073.

“We have a proud history of grant giving at the foundation,” said board chair Dr. Shann Snedden. “Today’s announcement of \$61,919 going to worthwhile causes in our region is a big boost to that. We continue to encourage people to become involved with the foundation and support our mission in whatever way they can.”

Grants are made possible by donations from community members. The funds are then invested and the grant disbursements made from the interest earned on the donation. The initial donation is never used and is endowed in perpetuity.

The next grant application process will begin in February 2010, with a deadline of March 15, 2010.

A complete list of grant recipients is attached. For more information, please contact Mike Christie at (403) 527-9038.