

Hometown Civitan Club To Give Nonprofits Over \$13K in Grants

The funding comes from what club members earned in 2020 through their Adopt-a-Precinct event.

By MADDIE CUTLER
Daily Sun Senior Writer

The Villages Hometown Civitan Club will support seven local organizations with more than \$13,000 in grants.

That money comes from the more than \$40,000 the club earned in 2020 from working at the election polls for its Adopt-a-Precinct event, when they get paid as poll workers but donate that money to charity.

Publicity director Laura McLaughlin said the group had around 30 members working at two polling stations for the primary and general elections, as well as early voting.

"We have given away that money throughout the last two years, but we still have a substantial amount," McLaughlin said. "We aim to support local nonprofits with it."

McLaughlin, of the Village of Collier, is the group's Adopt-a-Precinct team leader. She said before the group gives away the grants on Sept. 6, they must prepare for being at the polls for the Aug. 23 primary election.

Sumter county supervisor of elections Bill Keen said he loves seeing groups like Civitan step up and work the polls. Keen said Civitan members are the only people who raised their hands to work during early voting.

"We get a lot of groups who want to help work during



Submitted photo

The Villages Hometown Civitan Club gathers to discuss the 2020 Adopt-a-Precinct event. Thanks to the event they gave away more than \$13,000 in grants to local nonprofits.

elections, but not like Civitan," Keen said.

Keen said in order to work at a Sumter County election site, you must be a resident of Sumter County, which can pose an issue for some groups.

"Luckily for us we have a lot of our members in Sumter,"

McLaughlin said. "And I'm really looking forward to all of the help we can do with our donations."

McLaughlin said the club often has guest speakers from other groups visit during club meetings, and these nonprofits can explain why they should be chosen for grants.

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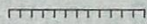
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LAURA MCLAUGHLIN

Publicity director



"It's informal, but they sort of present why their nonprofit needs the grant," McLaughlin said. "And then we choose how much to give to who."

Diane Seymour, of the Village of Gilchrist, said members chose the seven groups during their meeting Aug. 11, and they will notify

the groups soon.

"It feels like we get to do something important," Seymour said. "It's a win-win scenario for everyone involved, because we help during the election, and we can take the money we earn and put it back to our communities."

Arlene Kaplan, of the Village of St. Charles, is the project leader director for Civitan, and she said she cannot wait for the day the group gives the donations.

"We are not currently saying who we selected, in an effort to keep it a bit of a surprise," Kaplan said. Kaplan said all the groups are local charities.

"This is something we've done for years and years," Kaplan said. "But it never gets old, helping others do good, recognizing those who make a difference."

For more information about The Villages Hometown Civitan club, visit its website hometowncivitanclub.com.

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