Basketball court project will turn underutilized area into community showpiece

The largest project the Howells Community Fund has tackled so far will also be another joint endeavor with the Howells Community Club.

This project addresses one of the most popular requests noted in community surveys that have been conducted in the past – the desire for better facilities that will benefit Howells’ youth and young adults.

After investigating several possibilities, the groups have decided that rather than looking at a series of smaller projects, they could do more good if they pooled their resources and worked on something more significant.

Initially, the groups considered renovating the basketball court in Memorial Park in downtown Howells. The groups looked at the site and considered its location and potential for long-term improvement.

Unfortunately, due to the current condition of the concrete and the position of the embarrassing east side of the court in the existing tennis courts at Memorial Park, the area would need extensive site work before construction could begin.

Another location the group began to explore was the currently under-utilized tennis courts located just west of the Howells Ballroom. With some slight modifications, the group learned that the area could be redeveloped into an area that both basketball and tennis players could enjoy and the location would be far enough away from homes so that activity at the courts would be minimally disruptive.

The plan that the groups have developed will convert the east tennis court into a basketball court. The groups are asking for the use of the area and they would like to see the east side (top of diagram) be retrofitted with an interlocking rubberized grid that will be placed over the existing concrete.

The benefit of the second plan is that the area is more visible and can be utilized more often when there are events at the courts. The new court also provides an additional area that can be used by Howells-Dodge students and high school athletes.

The project cost is roughly $25,000. The Howells Community Club has pledged $8,000 from the BBQ & Brew receipts and the Howells Community Fund has pledged an additional $8,000 raised through their spring garage sale and investment earnings.

The groups are asking for the public’s help to raise the balance of the project cost. Initial work will begin in the fall with the remainder of the work concluding in the spring.

When completed, the new basketball court will revive a nearly forgotten area of Howells and offer local basketball enthusiasts a modern, outdoor area to play. The court will be marked/lined with basketball lines. The new court surface will be made up of an interlocking rubberized grid that will be placed over the existing concrete.

The Howells Community Fund as well as the Howells West Point Fire and Rescue, computers for a local school, and a new Howells sign on Hwy 32. We are currently developing a plan with the Village of Howells to build basketball rims/backboards in an investment base which would yield benefits for this community lasting well beyond our lifetimes to fulfill the dreams for the future of Howells.

To date our projects have included a speaker system used at the Ballroom, bathroom improvements at the west park shelter and new park benches. We have also worked with other local organizations to help provide new backpacks for the Howells West Point Fire and Rescue, computers for a local school, and a new Howells sign on Hwy 32. We are currently developing a plan with the Village of Howells to build basketball rims/backboards in an investment base which would yield benefits for this community lasting well beyond our lifetimes to fulfill the dreams for the future of Howells.

We are encouraging everyone to make a habit of using their time, talents and treasure to give back to the community that has been an important part of their lives. We are using philanthropy today as a tool for building a prosperous future for Howells.

The Howells Community Fund is honored to be an affiliate of the Nebraska Community Foundation An Affiliated Fund of the Nebraska Community Foundation November 2016
UNL Innocents bring lunch to local seniors

12 members enjoy morning spent in Howells

The Howells Community Fund hosted 12 members of the Innocents Society in February for a service project they call the IVAN – Innocents Volunteering Across Nebraska. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln students carried on the group’s tradition of stopping at 13 different towns throughout the state of Nebraska to undertake 13 different service projects in three days.

The Innocents Society, founded in 1903, is the UNL Chancellor’s Senior Honorary. Every spring 13 juniors are selected for membership based on their unparalleled leadership, selfless service and superior academic excellence.

The group contacted the Howells Community Fund in December of 2015 looking for a project they could do here in Howells. Fund members thought of many things to work on, but most were outdoor painting or freshen-up tasks around the community. This would not work with February weather concerns.

So they came up with the plan to deliver lunches to senior citizens in and around Howells. Starting with a base list from the monthly Community Potluck Lunch, they built the delivery list to over 80 people. With the help of Russ and Kathy Pickhnik and cook, Joyce Pickhnik of the Owl Café, a meal menu was decided on and food ordered and prepared.

Early on the morning of February 20th, Fund members and family volunteers gathered at the Owl to make sandwiches to include in the meal boxes. The 12 UNL students arrived around 9:30 a.m. and after introductions, they immediately started packing the boxes and pitched in to help.

Cars were packed with food, loaded with teams of Fund members and students, and headed out in all directions in a scramble to strike while the soup was hot. It was a great time to learn about the students and their backgrounds.

It was also a learning opportunity for them as most of the students were from Omaha and Lincoln. It was great for them to hear about the benefits of living in a small town, and a few myths about Nebraska and agriculture were hopefully dispelled. They all really enjoyed meeting the people on their delivery routes.

The teams regrouped at the Owl for a pizza lunch and were buckling with stories about the Howells community and the people they had visited. It was a great morning with fun memories, but they soon had to load up their van and move on to their next stop and their next weekend service project.

The Howells Community Fund would like to thank all those who welcomed this team of students to their homes! It was a great opportunity to show off Howells!

The Howells Community Fund and the Howells Community Club hosted a Community Garage Sale held in April. The wide variety of items always brings a large crowd of shoppers to the sale.

Howells residents again generously donated their gently used items for the annual HCF Community Garage Sale held in April. The wide variety of items always brings a large group of shoppers to the sale.

The Howells Community Fund (HCF) sponsored their annual Community Garage Sale on Saturday, April 16, in the Howells Ballroom. Residents of Howells cleaned out their homes, garage and storage areas and dropped off their gently used donations at the Ballroom from April 12-15.

A large team of volunteers were on hand each evening to sort and price items in preparation for the garage sale on Saturday. By the time the sale closed on Saturday afternoon, Howells residents helped raise more than $2,700 for the Howells Community Fund.

The unsold clothing items were donated to the Orphan Grain Train and all remaining items were donated to the Salvation Army. The proceeds from the garage sale will be used for a community project. Howells Community Fund members met last week to review the garage sale and discuss possible ideas. That group selected one major project – the new basketball court near the Howells Ballroom. See Page 4 of this newsletter for more information.

The Howells Community Fund donated $250 to the Top Shot 4-H club. The new group will use the funds to purchase targets, bows and arrows.

The Howells Community Fund and the Howells Community Club, a new sign points the way to Howells on the corner of Highway 32 and 2nd Road north of Howells. The new, highly-visible sign replaces the old, faded and worn out one. The new, highly-visible sign replaces the old, faded and worn out one. The new sign was installed by the Howells Community Club.

The Howells Community Fund hosted 12 members of the Innocents Society in February for a service project they call the IVAN – Innocents Volunteering Across Nebraska. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln students carried on the group’s tradition of stopping at 13 different towns throughout the state of Nebraska to undertake 13 different service projects in three days.

The Innocents Society, founded in 1903, is the UNL Chancellor’s Senior Honorary. Every spring 13 juniors are selected for membership based on their unparalleled leadership, selfless service and superior academic excellence.

The group contacted the Howells Community Fund in December of 2015 looking for a project they could do here in Howells. Fund members thought of many things to work on, but most were outdoor painting or freshen-up tasks around the community. This would not work with February weather concerns.

So they came up with the plan to deliver lunches to senior citizens in and around Howells. Starting with a base list from the monthly Community Potluck Lunch, they built the delivery list to over 80 people. With the help of Russ and Kathy Pickhnik and cook, Joyce Pickhnik of the Owl Café, a meal menu was decided on and food ordered and prepared.

Early on the morning of February 20th, Fund members and family volunteers gathered at the Owl to make sandwiches to include in the meal boxes. The 12 UNL students arrived around 9:30 a.m. and after introductions, they immediately started packing the boxes and pitched in to help.

Cars were packed with food, loaded with teams of Fund members and students, and headed out in all directions in a scramble to strike while the soup was hot. It was a great time to learn about the students and their backgrounds.

It was also a learning opportunity for them as most of the students were from Omaha and Lincoln. It was great for them to hear about the benefits of living in a small town, and a few myths about Nebraska and agriculture were hopefully dispelled. They all really enjoyed meeting the people on their delivery routes.

The teams regrouped at the Owl for a pizza lunch and were buckling with stories about the Howells community and the people they had visited. It was a great morning with fun memories, but they soon had to load up their van and move on to their next stop and their next weekend service project.

The Howells Community Fund would like to thank all those who welcomed this team of students to their homes! It was a great opportunity to show off Howells!