

Yavapai County Education Foundation renews efforts to attract, retain teachers

Attracting and retaining teachers is at the root of the Yavapai County Education Foundation's efforts.

When teachers leave their district or school, the job of educating the students they leave behind gets harder, said Tim Wiederaenders, YCEF board president. It taxes resources and continuity, among other things.

"Teachers are essential to the welfare and progress of Yavapai County," Wiederaenders said, adding that "retaining and attracting quality teachers to Yavapai County is of utmost importance to the YC Education Foundation."

The YCEF board sees its part in stemming that tide as helping teachers and schools where it matters most – their budgets, and honoring the best and most innovative teachers.

The Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that works year round to assist teachers in the county with money for their classrooms, recognize teachers for their outstanding work, and inform the communities of the work the schools and teachers are doing to promote education in the county.

The organization recognizes outstanding teachers in various categories of K-12 education at its annual Teacher of the Year celebration. This year the TOY banquet will be April 28 at the Prescott Resort.

Twice during each school year the Foundation also provides as many grants as possible to schools and classroom teachers who apply. "All funds go to help retain and assist the outstanding teachers we have in the county," said Tim Carter, Yavapai County superintendent of schools and the board's treasurer/secretary.

Examples of previous grants include classroom materials, computer equipment, and funding for field trips or projects.

Each grant cycle, the board is able to fund about 80 percent of the grant applications that are filed. Carter said the board would like to award as many grants as possible. As a result, the Foundation is launching an effort to contact businesses and organizations throughout the state and Yavapai County to increase its ability to assist teachers in classrooms and schools.

"This past year, Lamb Chevrolet of Prescott committed \$20,000 to the Foundation's efforts. We are hoping others will join us as well," Wiederaenders said.

To find out more about the Yavapai County Education Foundation, call 928-442-5139 or visit www.ycefoundation.com.