

AYS receives \$7.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment

Funding will benefit nonprofit's financial future, help Central Indiana kids 'go further in school and life'

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AYS, Inc. has received a grant of \$7.5 million under Lilly Endowment Inc.'s latest round of financial sustainability grants to central Indiana human services agencies.

More than \$6.7 million from this award will be placed in an endowment fund to provide AYS with the necessary resources to support strategic initiatives that will enable the organization to continue its mission. The remainder will be used to fund critical strategic projects primarily to be completed by the end of 2020.

A nonprofit, AYS is a leading provider of out-of-school time programs, including before- and after-school and summer programs, for children in central Indiana. This year, more than 3,000 children will benefit from fun, safe and engaging activities provided by AYS at its 42 sites, all within school buildings. At AYS, children have time to work on their homework with assistance from staff, enjoy a healthy snack and participate in a variety of staff-led activities and free play opportunities.

"This funding will allow AYS to move forward on critical initiatives to ensure our sustainability in the long run as the operational budget continues to focus on giving kids a fun, safe and enriching environment outside of the school day," AYS President/CEO Chrystal Struben said.

AYS will be able to draw interest from the endowment fund annually, which will ensure the organization is able to move forward and adapt to an ever-changing world while focusing revenue from fees for service and fundraising on operational needs to run its programs. In the short term, the grant will allow AYS to invest in needed technology upgrades, employee recruitment and retention efforts and site-level quality improvement to ensure consistency and equitability across all AYS sites.

The AYS grant is one of 10 grants from Lilly Endowment totaling \$48 million that are designed to help agencies that serve vulnerable individuals and families enhance their long-term impact by building stronger financial futures.

This financial sustainability grant and the grants to the nine other agencies complement Lilly Endowment's regular support of human services organizations through direct grants and grants to the United Way of Central Indiana. The organizations, which provide critical services to vulnerable individuals and families, are undercapitalized for the scope and volume of services they are called upon to provide. Although many of them receive substantial public sector support, they all rely on private dollars to make ends meet in providing vital services.

"The grants are designed to help these valuable organizations build long-term financial strength and resiliency," said Rob Smith, the Endowment's vice president for community development. "The grants are not intended to fund ongoing operating support that is essential for these organizations to meet the day-to-

day needs of the children, families and individuals they serve. In fact, we hope our grants help these agencies more effectively attract additional support for their critically important work.”

“Afterschool and summer programs can play such an important role in a child’s future success. In fact, research¹ has shown that programs like ours can add 1,080 hours of academic enrichment to a child’s year – the equivalent of 144 school days,” Struben said. “We are grateful to Lilly Endowment for this opportunity to ensure children in our community continue to have access to the highest-quality out-of-school time programs possible, helping them go further in school and in life.”

This is the fourth group of grants the Endowment has made since 2015 that support the long-term sustainability plans of charitable organizations based in central Indiana. Through this effort the Endowment has made grants totaling \$328 million to 49 organizations.

Lilly Endowment Inc. is an Indianapolis-based private family foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family – J.K. Lilly Sr., and his sons J.K. Jr. and Eli – through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While these gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders’ wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.

1. Source: The Indiana Afterschool Network’s (IAN) The Power of Afterschool in Indiana, citing the Hechinger Report (2013).