

Valentine's gala raises \$50,000

Yk Community Foundation supports wide range of projects

by Daron Letts

Northern News Services

The Yellowknife Community Foundation is no longer the best kept secret in town, according to board president Daryl Dolynny.

On Saturday night the charitable organization held its first annual Valentine's Gala. The black tie event filled the Explorer Hotel with guests eager to support its plans with more than \$50,000 offered in donations, Dolynny said.

"The gala was an incredible success for us," Dolynny said. "And now the community is aware of the stuff we do."

The foundation formed in 1993 with a mandate to support community-based projects enhancing the quality of life in Yellowknife through the Community Fund.

Tax-deductible donations to the foundation, which oversees more than \$2 million in donations, are placed in a permanent capital fund. About \$100,000 is invested back into the community every year.

This includes grants for local registered charities that address poverty, sports and recreation development, educational programs, medical services and arts and cultural organizations.

On Monday morning, the foundation announced a new educational scholarship being awarded later this year.

The Elaine Whitford Scholarship was established by the family of NWT Commissioner Tony Whitford in support of Northern social work and nursing students.

The fund honours the memory of Whitford's late wife, Mary Elaine (Sweet) Whitford, whose dedication and compassion were known throughout the North.

"She'd always had a desire to get more people working and trained in the field of social work," he said. "She encouraged a lot of people."

The program is designed to



NWT Commissioner Tony Whitford has established a scholarship in support of Northern social work and nursing students through the Community Fund in honour of his late wife, Mary Elaine (Sweet) Whitford, who died in 2003.

assist mature students with an award of \$1,000 towards their second or subsequent year of post-secondary study. Priority will be given to aboriginal students who are returning to school while raising a family. The deadline to apply for the inaugural scholarship is May 15.

"Long after I'm gone and my sons have grown and had children their children will still see this scholarship in their great-grandmother's name," Whitford said.

Heart of ceramics

The Yellowknife Guild of Arts and Crafts received a grant of \$4,500 from the Community Fund last year for the purchase of a new kiln for the pottery workshop in Kam Lake.

"This is really tremendous," said guild member John Argue. "Kilns are the heart of the ceramics operation. If you don't have reliable kilns, you can't produce good artwork."

About 100 people use the guild's three kilns each month. The new kiln is quicker and more reliable than the temperamental old machine it replaced.

"The firing time is shorter with the new kiln and there is a consistency of heat between the shelves," said ceramic instructor Wendy Stephenson. "The new kiln is an energy saver, as well. We're all very grateful."



Daron Letts/NNSL photos

Yellowknife Community Foundation president Daryl Dolynny opens the new kiln purchased for the Yellowknife Guild of Arts and Crafts. Founded in 1946, the guild is the oldest registered charitable organization in Yellowknife.