

## Youth-initiated programs receive Libro funding

Libro Financial Group announced over \$350,000 worth of funding for 14 youth-initiated community projects on Wednesday, Sept. 14.

Local recipients of the Corporate Community Builder Grants included Youth Opportunities Unlimited, YOU Made it Café, who received \$88,000 and Future Possibilities for Kids, who received \$20,000. The Sarnia Sea Cadets Nautis Program also received a corporate grant.



London organizations that received local branch grants were mindyourmind.ca and Limberlost Chaplaincy and Community Centre. The Ilderton Agricultural Society also received a local branch grant.

The grants were part of the 2011 Community Builder Grant Program, and totaled \$357,193. Each year Libro sets aside a percentage of profits for the program, the main focus of which is to support youth initiated projects with a goal to establish stronger communities.

"We created the Community Builder program to give people an opportunity to shine," said Theresa van Koeverden, Chair of Libro's Community Investment Advisory Panel. "Libro supports youth leadership development and career skills, we engage them in their communities and their communities are better off as a result. The creativity and passion they bring to these projects pays off now and sets up a future I feel pretty good about."

Future Possibilities for Kids representative Michele Sands said that the funds they received will be used for their Ready, Set, Goal! Program, which encourages kids to set a "goal of contribution" to help someone or something and then make a plan and take action to achieve it, with the help of an adult coach.

"They can experience themselves as leaders now," Sands said.

Local branch grant recipient Limberlost Chaplaincy and Community Centre is going to use their \$9,000 grant for greening and beautification of their facility, which has been serving a publicly-subsidized family housing complex in the North West end of London for 30 years.

Alia Eltayeb, who was one of the Limberlost representatives at the Libro ceremony said that the funds will be used for things such as a welcome sign and a space to post newsletters and information on coming events.

Eltayeb said that it was nice to be recognized, as the community often faces a stigma from being a low-income community.

"There's a lot of potential, but people outside our community fail to realize that," she said. "We're just regular people doing regular things."

The remainder of Libro's community investment funds were disbursed between high school academic scholarships and the Co-operative Young Leaders camp program.

"We've invested \$2.3 million into Community Builder Grants over the last six years," said Harry Joosten, Libro's corporate secretary. "Every dollar we invest creates a slightly better future for the entire region."

Also announced at the ceremony is a new Community Builder Scholarship.

In 2012 Libro will distribute 10 scholarships of \$3,000 each to successful applicants in the program, which is open to youths ages 17 - 25.