

Alumni group donates to Willingboro youth groups

By: ROSE KREBS
Burlington County Times

WILLINGBORO - An alumni club for Willingboro and Kennedy high school graduates donated \$2,500 on Friday to groups that serve youth in the township.

Kennedy Willingboro Alumni United presented monetary gifts to the Afro One Dance and Drum Theatre, the SJ "Boro" Blitz and Emerge basketball programs, the Food Bank of South Jersey's Willingboro branch, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, and the Willingboro High School marching band and performing arts department. The donations were given to representatives from the organizations at a ceremony at Burlington County College's campus at the Town Center.

SJ "Boro" Blitz and Emerge were awarded \$250 each; the others received \$500 each.

A last-minute gift was verified just before the money was divvied up. Destiny Metropolitan Worship Church in Atlanta, a church attended by a 1979 graduate, matched the \$2,500 in donations, doubling the amount to be received by all five groups.

Anthony Ray Phillips, chairman of the alumni group and a 1977 graduate of Willingboro High, said money is raised at a Thanksgiving Friday celebration open to alumni of Kennedy and Willingboro high schools.

"The spirit of community service witnessed by Willingboro youth during the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s was such a significant ingredient to the successful lives that many members of KWAU are living now," Phillips said. "Our aim is to continue that spirit and annually support the individuals and organizations that are in the trenches serving the township's youth today."

Phillips, who lives in Camden, said the alumni group was founded two years ago. The first two alumni celebrations were held at the Foster Military Lodge on Charleston Road in Willingboro and a firehouse in Burlington City. This year's event will be Nov. 26. A location has yet to be determined.

According to the group's Web site, the idea to start the organization grew out of discussions among several alumni as they approached age 50. They decided, rather than get together for birthday parties, to hold an event for everyone.

For more information, visit www.kwau.org.

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February 22, 2010 01:20 AM



Happy community recipients with their checks from the Kennedy Willingboro Alumni United are (seated, from left) Mario Partee of the Food Bank of South Jersey Willingboro, Curtis Bell and Chrystal Walker, representing Willingboro High School's marching band and performing arts, Lisa Tunstall of Boro Blitz Basketball and Winifred Chain of the National ALLiance on Mental Illness. Standing are (from left) Anthony Ray Phillips, chairman of KWAU, Eric Bowman of Emerge Basketball and Greg Staton representing Afro One Dance and Drum Theatre Inc. NANCY ROKOS / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER