

Giving a lot and getting even more back

Writing about the good they do enabled 100 volunteers to make a financial contribution to their favorite organizations.

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The sharing continued Tuesday evening at Phillippi Estates Park when winners of the Selby Foundation Community Essay contest were honored with an ice cream social, checks and a tree dedication.

It was another event in the 50th anniversary of the foundation entitled Celebrating a Tapestry of Giving.

"Mr. and Mrs. Selby made a lot of great stuff happen and every one of us should be thinking 'What am I doing to help great stuff happen?' I want people to get a feeling of giving and sharing," said Debra Jacobs, president of the foundation. "Because you're doing good and because your essay got chosen, you now get to do good for somebody else."

Of the 100 winners, 10 received a \$1,000 check to give to a nonprofit organization of their choice. Venice resident Keith Backhaus and Osprey resident Laura Echstenkamp were two of the top 10 win-

ners. Several more people from Venice were included in the group of 90 winners who received a \$100 prize at the presentation.

The essay contest was open to all residents of Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties. Winners were chosen using a panel of judges who picked 100 of the most meaningful essays sent in.

The question each essayist had to answer was, "How I am sharing my talents to make our community a better place?"

"More people will say, 'Well, gosh if he can do that, then I can do that,'" Jacobs said. "That's the part that will make the community prickle. They might say 'Gosh I could go read at the library or I could go down to the theatre and stuff bulletins. Sometimes people need a little push of imagination.'"

The foundation worked with the county park system to plant a path of 100 trees for the ceremony at Phillippi Estates Mansion by the water with a bronze plaque to rec-

ognize the winners. A barbershop quartet performed while the winners enjoyed an ice cream social. The winners' checks were also presented to the appropriate organizations.

"It is sure to be a heartwarming and heartfelt community connecting event that I know will make you smile," said Debbi Benedict, the Selby 50th Anniversary coordinator.

Funding learning

In 1955 William G. Selby and Marie Selby set up the foundation with \$3 million. A year later Mr. Selby passed away and his assets went to Mrs. Selby. She lived until 1971, spending 16 years with the foundation. When she died \$16 million went into the foundation.

From those two gifts the foundation has thrived and will continue to do so well into the future. Since its inception the foundation has been able to give away \$76 million.

According to the foundation Mr. Selby made his fortune in gas and oil drilling in Oklahoma and Texas and saw the limitations of the men in the oil fields due to their lack of education. The Selbys felt strongly that education was important for helping future



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Education Foundation of Sarasota County Executive Director Dorothy Stuart, far left, and South County Youth Adult Center Executive Director Ed Eagen, far right, receive \$1,000 checks from Selby Foundation essay winners Lauren Echstenkamp and Keith Backhaus Tuesday evening. The Selby Foundation's essay contest, "How I am sharing my talents to make our community a better place," was part of its 50th Anniversary Celebration.

generations.

They started the foundation in 1955 to save taxes and to ensure that their assets were used in a manner that fit their values and priorities. Because they didn't have children, Mr. and Mrs. Selby wanted to benefit future

generations. Mr. Selby died before witnessing the generous work of the foundation, but Mrs. Selby contributed to the foundation until she died in 1971.

The focus of the foundation is to enhance the quality of life in Sarasota County and

its bordering counties.

Students from local high schools are given scholarships and grants every year so they can attend college.

The foundation also provides grants for many brick and mortar projects throughout the five counties it serves.