

Bargain Box gives out anniversary grants

To celebrate 50 years, the thrift store invested \$50K back into the community



Josh Reyes/Daily Press Hal Smith, president of the Boys and Girls Club of the Virginia Peninsula, accepts a \$10,000 grant from the volunteers of York County's Bargain Box. The thrift store celebrated its 50th anniversary by giving out \$50,000 in special grants to five different local organizations.

BY JOSH REYES JOREYES@DAILYPRESS.COM

YORK – The volunteers of York County's Bargain Box thrift store celebrated the store's 50th anniversary doing what the group has done year after year – investing the store's revenue back into the community.

Fitting for the 50th anniversary celebration, the Bargain Box, operated by the York County Volunteer Association, gave out \$50,000.

At a ceremony Monday, five organizations received \$10,000 special grants for programs and groups that exhibit high levels of service to the community: the Boys and Girls Club of the Virginia Peninsula, York County Meals on Wheels, York County Professional Firefighters, the York County Public Library and the Lackey Clinic.

Ralph Robertson, medical director of Lackey Clinic, said it took a village to run a free clinic and thanked the Bargain Box for its consistent support from the clinic's earliest days, pointing out that the Bargain Box purchased the land that the clinic now sits on.

Kevin Smith, director of the York County libraries, remarked that the Bargain Box's birthday was the same as the library's. Volunteers 50 years ago started the county's first lending library, which blossomed over time into the system in place today.

The Bargain Box also helped start a Boys and Girls Club in York. Hal Smith, president of the Boys and Girls Club of the Virginia Peninsula, recalled shopping at the Bargain Box growing up nearby on Dare Road.

He said at the clubs across the Peninsula, all the kids are taught to give back when they are able, and the volunteers of the Bargain Box embody that lesson.

While items at the store are priced so shoppers don't break the bank, the store brings in money that can make a major difference. The store helped 960 individuals, families and groups with \$216,683 during the most recent fiscal year.

Assistance usually comes in the form of emergency financial assistance, job training scholarships, grants, gifts during Christmas and summer school tuition assistance.

Anthony Vladu, director of secondary instruction for York County Public Schools, said the work of the Bargain Box has a deep impact for some students that goes beyond helping them financially.

Summer tuition assistance has helped 62 York County students graduate high school. Without the assistance, those students wouldn't be able to afford those classes to complete their diplomas. Completing a diploma leads to a higher quality of life down the road, opening opportunities that one day will benefit the lives of those students' families.

The Bargain Box, 222 Dare Road, is open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and from 1-4:30 p.m. Monday.

Reyes can be reached by phone at 757-247-4692.