

# Donations Keep Program Going

By Liz Mineo/Framingham Tab Staff Writer  
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For Iris Carroll, founder of a small non-profit organization that enables adults to recover from mental illness to achieve success in life, receiving donations to keep the program going means a lot.

But receiving a \$2,500 donation from local corporation Boston Scientific means a lot more.

"It's wonderful to receive a donation from a highly respected corporation that has done so much for health care," said Carroll, founder of Programs For People. "It's a recognition of our efforts and the importance of helping people become part of the workforce."

Programs For People serves low-income people who have experienced mental illness by teaching them coping skills and helping them obtain employment to get back on track. It currently serves 215 clients in the MetroWest area. Boston Scientific, headquartered in Natick, is known worldwide as a developer, manufacturer and marketer of medical devices.

An independent and self-supporting agency, Programs For People funds its operating budget through Medicaid reimbursements for the services it offers to its clients. To cover the total costs of those services, donations from individuals, civic groups and local firms are necessary. The group raises money throughout the year, but it launches a fundraising campaign during the holidays through letters that arrive in mailboxes of friends and supporters.

So far, the agency has raised \$35,000 of the \$50,000 it hopes to collect for fiscal year 2005... Most of the contributions it has received have come from local companies and individuals, Carroll said, but this past year the group started sending grant proposals to corporations...

They know that a lot of employees have to deal with stress on the job, and that people need some help coping with it to perform well on the job. They understand the value of helping people deal with these issues."

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, about one in five Americans suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. Among those mental disorders are depression, bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, autism, social phobias, and eating and anxiety disorders.

Contributors to Programs For People this past year include Bose Corporation, Wal-Mart and a handful of local firms, civic groups, churches and individuals. Many donors also send goods, supplies, and services to the organization. Some clients also send donations.

"There is a fellow who sends us a donation every year," said Carroll. "We helped him develop work habits and get a job, and he has been promoted twice. He sees us as having changed his life. His donation means a lot to us."

J.B. Dowd, a senior clinical research associate at Boston Scientific, said the grant awarded to Programs For People was well deserved. Dowd coordinates Boston Scientific Foundation's Employee Community Team based in Natick and Watertown, which reviews grants for local organizations.

"It's a great fit for our group," said Dowd. "The primary objective of the foundation is to support programs in the areas where our employees work and live, with an emphasis on health and education. It's a great program that helps people learn how to develop skills to live a self-sustaining life. It doesn't help a person just one day, but to continue living a good life."

The donation to Programs For People was one of 14 grant proposals approved this year by the foundation, said Dowd. The total amount of grants awarded by the organization was \$100,000.

Dowd is pleased Programs For People received the total amount requested.

"In many cases, we grant a portion of what people request," said Dowd. "It was nice that Programs For People didn't need a huge amount of money so we could support them."

Carroll, like many officials at the helm of small non-profit organizations, thinks about fundraising all of the time. Donations represent not only a means to help carry out its mission, but also an appreciation for the services the organization provides to the community.

Those interested in making donations can call Iris Carroll at (508) 879-3230.