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Streetwise: Win-win-win situation for city projects

A food co-op, an urban community garden and a neighborhood revitalization initiative faced off earlier this month with more than \$2,000 in funding on the line and Streetwise is happy to say all three walked away winners.

The inaugural Creating a Stronger Community finals were held Oct. 6 at Becket's Restaurant, 2 Jackson St. The competition gave community groups a chance to pitch projects that would have a positive impact on the community with a chance to win a portion of funds raised by the community-building group Square One, the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh American Democracy Project, the UWO Foundation, the UWO Earth Charter Community Summit, the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation and Becket's.

Participants also got the chance to donate a few extra dollars to sweeten the pot and vote on which project they believed most deserved funding.

After everyone had cast their ballots, the Oshkosh Food Co-op took first and received \$1,700 to help kick-start the effort to establish a co-op in the city. You may recall the same idea was gaining a lot of momentum among Facebook users already, so we're hoping this adds more fuel to the fire.

The other two finalists, Growing Seeds of Change, a UWO student-led project to establish a community garden in the central city, and Habitat for Humanity's Brush with Kindness program, which seeks to beautify low-income homes in concert with the city's neighborhood revitalization efforts, didn't walk away empty-handed.

Growing Seeds of Change received \$500 and Brush with Kindness received \$270.

Now, some may say a little more than \$2,000 won't make the co-op appear overnight, but every little bit helps build momentum behind these projects to improve our community. And Streetwise hopes we can all get behind these sorts of initiatives.

»There's more than a few family businesses in this area and our guess is more than a few of them would enjoy the chance to network and support each other. And it just so happens the Wisconsin Family Business Forum's third annual Family Business Expo does that. From 2-5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, meet forum members, learn about the program, sample a few products and enjoy a few appetizers at La Sure's Banquet Hall, 3125 S. Washburn St.

The event is free, but you have to pre-register by Nov. 23. Contact Donna Nelson at 424-1451 or nelsond@uwosh.edu for more information.
