

7 non-profit groups secure federal grants

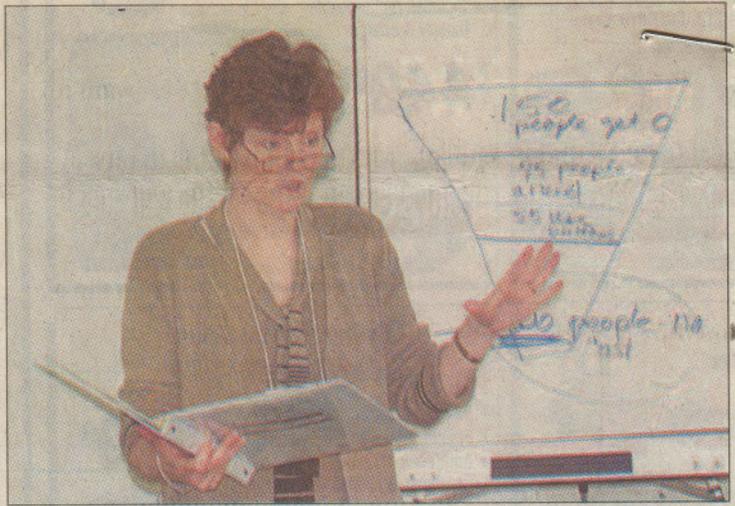
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Seven local non-profit groups got federal grants for various projects after participating in a two-day workshop held in Hazleton.

Representatives of the Rensselaerville Institute, a nationally known "think tank" that helps federal government make grants, was in Hazleton Tuesday and Wednesday to make grants to seven local groups.

The institute, a national expert in providing training in outcome-based planning, gave out federal Appalachian Regional Commission mini-grants for small projects.

In 1998, the Greater Hazleton Area Civic Partnership received such an ARC grant through the same program. That grant was used to begin Greater Hazleton Area Volunteer Center.
The Volunteer Center,



JIM DINO/Standard Speaker

Pam Wilson, of the Rensselaerville Institute, briefs team members of seven local groups vying for federal Appalachian Regional Commission mini-grants for small projects. Wilson led a two-day seminar Tuesday and Wednesday that resulted in each group securing a \$1,325 grant.

which acts as an employment agency for volunteers, was one of the eight groups, which got equal grants of \$1,325.

The other six were:

- The Greater Hazleton Rails-To-Trails Committee, which is creating a hiking and biking trail from Route 93 on East Broad Street to Rockport, near Weatherly.
- The Anthracite Region Center for Independent Liv-

ing, and advocacy group for the disabled.

□ Hazleton First Night, a

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committee setting up a New Year's Eve celebration in downtown Hazleton.

□ The Friends of the Drums Creative Playground, which is trying to take over the playground from the Hazleton Area School District.

□ The Hazleton YMCA/YWCA, for a project to promote ethnic acceptance in the community.

□ The Sister Cities program of Hazleton, for a project similar to the YMCA/YWCA.

Each group presented its case before Institute representatives – as well as “investors” of the community – during a daylong seminar that began Tuesday at 11 a.m. at the Hazleton YMCA/YWCA Youth Center, in the former Jewish Community Center, 99 N. Laurel Street.

The grants were awarded at the end of the seminar Wednesday morning.

Tuesday, teams representing each group were told they had to show why giving them a grant was warranted.

By formulating a plan including targets and milestones, team members were asked to justify how the grant would help them achieve their goal.

The Rails-To-Trails committee said they wanted to attract more volunteers, to help them develop the first leg of a hiking and biking trail from Route 93 to the Ashmore area of Hazle Township.

Sue Nasrani, a spokesperson for the group, said the grant would be used not only to attract new volunteers, but as matching funds for other grants as the group sought to begin construction of the trail.

Hazleton's Volunteers of America chapter, which operates the Greater Hazleton Volunteer Center, wants to use the grant to get more volunteers – but a special kind.

Alice Kender, director of both organizations, said she will use the grant to further develop the student board of directors already begun.

First Night Hazleton is going to use its grant to beef-up attendance.

Since this will be the first time First Night is held, Michelle Patterson, chairman of the event, said the group wants to use the grant to pay for some admissions buttons that will be given away to enhance attendance.

Like Rails-To-Trails, the Friends of the Drums Creative Playground are trying to attract more volunteers to help take care of the playground, as they try to acquire it from the Hazleton Area School District.

The Anthracite Region Center for Independent Living wants to use the grant to help disabled high school graduates either get a job or go back to school – or, in other words, take their place in society.

The Sister Cities program wanted the grant to help enhance cultural diversity. The group will host a visiting contingent from its sister city in Italy later this month.

The Hazleton YMCA/YWCA project is similar to the Sister Cities project – cultural diversity. The YMCA/YWCA wants to establish programs for children to learn ethnic diversity.