

# Girls Club receives grant

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BRISTOL — A representative of a new Bristol Boys & Girls Club fund at the Main Street Community Foundation presented a check for \$7,000 to the Club this week.

Samantha Rajotte, scholarship and program officer at the Main Street Community Foundation, said the check was presented Wednesday evening. Susan Sadecki, president and CEO of the Main Street Community Foundation, presented it to Jessica Killean and Jon Rulkowski of the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol.

Members of the SMART Girls program were also present for the check presentation. The program is a “leadership and confidence building program for young women and girls,” Rajotte said.

“This grant was the inaugural grant awarded from a new fund – the Ann Gudegast Fund for the Bristol Boys & Girls Club,” said Rajotte. “Ann, a lifelong Bristol resident, established this fund because she spent much of her youth at the Bristol Girls Club and the experiences there shaped who she is today. In establishing this fund, she wanted to provide



Samantha Rajotte

**At the check presentation to the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol Susan Sadecki, president & CEO of Main Street Community Foundation, center, presents the check to Jessica Killean and Jon Rulkowski of the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol along with participants of the SMART Girls program.**

the same help and opportunities to young women and girls that she was given when she was growing up.”

Gudegast said that at the Boys & Girls Club she developed friendships, attended summer camp, and learned to cook and sew.

Both of her parents worked, so living close by to the Club gave her the opportunity to benefit from the many programs they offered.

“Of all the things I’ve been grateful for in my life, one of them would definitely be the Girls Club,” said Gudegast.

The Ann Gudegast Fund for the Bristol Boys & Girls Club will provide an annual grant to the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol in support of

programs and services that will assist young women and girls in developing healthy lifestyles.

These include programs for nutrition, self-confidence, financial literacy, education attainment and participation in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning opportunities.

The first grant will support programs like the BGCB’s “SMART Girls: Giving Girls Confidence Program.”

“This program welcomes girls ages 8-12 to participate in 10 sessions of activities and experiences that equip them with critical knowledge and skills in the areas of physical health and wellness, mental health,

self-esteem, academics, careers, and building positive relationships,” said Rajotte.

“In addition to the small group sessions that encourage the girls to express their individuality through discussions, hands-on activities, and role-plays, the girls also get to enjoy specially selected field trips that explore opportunities that would benefit youth participants.”

Rajotte said that programs like SMART Girls are “integral to helping young girls find purpose and confidence.”

“Thanks to Ann Gudegast’s generosity, the Boys & Girls Club of Bristol will be able to ensure programming,” she said.

