

## **BOULDER DAILY CAMERA: JULY 16, 2008**

### **Extend the Worthy Cause**

What can you buy for a few nickels?

Some grapes at Whole Foods, maybe? A few jelly beans at Powell's Sweet Shoppe on Pearl?

How about a 12-unit apartment building in Lafayette, to house homeless families? A facility for Dental Aid? An expansion for a emergency shelter for battered women and their children?

In 2000, voters in Boulder County narrowly approved a 0.05-percent sales and use tax to fund capital improvements and new structures for nonprofits. That's a nickel on every \$100 purchase in the county.

In 2003, 60 percent of the voters extended the tax through the end of this year.

Now, voters are being asked to extend it through the end of 2018. The measure, County Issue 1B, or the Worthy Cause tax, would not increase taxes.

The Camera supports the extension of this worthy program.

Eight nonprofits will receive one-fourth of the funds if it passes, including Mapleton Early Childhood Center, Clinica Campesina, Mental Health Center of Boulder County, Special Transit and the Boulder Day Nursery.

The majority of the funds are reserved to be rewarded to nonprofits through an annual request process. The funds go to capital expenditures, facilities and equipment, for nonprofits that offer healthcare, childcare and education as well as food, clothing and services for people who need them.

Here's some highlights of how it was applied in the past:

Attention Homes received \$60,000 for the renovation of the Chase House, which has been home to hundreds of teens in need of shelter. The agency selected Chase House as the facility for a new service for boys with drug or alcohol problems and mental health issues, and experts said the home needed renovation. With the help of the Worthy Cause money -- and \$60,000 in additional funds they raised from churches, more than a dozen businesses, and more than 200 individuals -- Attention Homes completely renovated the home, built a fence, and added a study and recreation room.

The Boulder Shelter for the Homeless received \$255,000 to put toward a new 160-bed homeless shelter. The shelter allowed for consolidation of services, expanded sleeping quarters and a larger kitchen and dining area. The shelter serves more than 1,000 homeless people annually.

Clinica Family Health Services received \$1.4 million toward a new facility in Lafayette and the purchase of the Kaiser building in Boulder. Clinica is a community health provider that serves low-income and uninsured people in the county. The old clinic had 5,500 square feet and could handle 3,500 patients. The new 10,000-square-foot building can handle up to 6,000 patients. The new Kaiser facility is more accessible for people with disabilities, and has a spacious meeting room that can be used for health education.

The Worthy Cause tax, in place since 2000, has proven itself to be a good use of all those nickels. We support the 10-year extension.

-- Erika Stutzman, for the Camera editorial board, 08/27/2008 12:00:00 AM MDT