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Southern Indiana YMCA exceeds 100 Grand goal

By Jenna Esarey • Special to The Courier-Journal
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With a fundraising goal of \$100,000, the Southern Indiana YMCA used 100 Grand candy bars as the theme for its annual Strong Kids Campaign celebration luncheon Friday at the Floyd County YMCA in New Albany.

The wrapper was removed from a giant replica of a 100 Grand bar to reveal the campaign total — \$155,071.37.

“That was the total when we had it **printed**,” campaign co-chairman Bob Kleehamer said. “This morning it was \$158,000, and money is still coming in.”

The Strong Kids Campaign pays for the Clark and Floyd YMCAs to provide programs and membership services for families that can't afford the full fee. The Y provides before- and after-school child care and camps during school breaks, along with other programs for everyone from youth to seniors.

“Unfortunately, many people still think of us as a gym and swim. We do so much more than that,” said Sandy Sorrells, the YMCA's communications development director.

“About 6,700 individuals used **financial** assistance for some program or another. We give

out more in value than what we raise,” said Joe LaRocca, CEO of the Southern Indiana YMCA. “Our challenge is to reduce that gap.”

The campaign kicked off in mid-February with about 50 volunteers soliciting funds from businesses and individuals. Each of the 26 donors making a \$1,000 contribution was recognized with a banner hanging on the wall of the gym where the luncheon was held.

The total included just more than \$13,000 raised through events such as a book sale and Harvest Homecoming parking fees.

Volunteer Amanda McMonigle was recognized as one of the top 10 individual fundraisers, for which she received a 100 Grand candy bar.

“I just asked my friends and people that I knew who are members,” she said.

Kleehamer and co-chair Diane Baumann Thomas kept a grant from the Horseshoe Foundation secret until the luncheon.

Just before it was revealed, foundation Executive Director Jerry Finn presented the co-chairs with half of a 100 Grand bar, reflecting the fact that the foundation's \$50,000 grant was half of the organization's goal.

He expressed the foundation's appreciation of the Y and its open-door policy.

“We recognized there was a challenge putting the Y downtown. They make sure nobody gets

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turned away," he said.



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Event co-chairs Diane Baumann Thomas and Bob Kleehamer get an assist from Bobby Sorrells as they unveil the fundraising total at the Strong Kids Campaign Luncheon Friday at the Floyd County YMCA. (By Jenna Esarey, Special to the Courier-Journal) April 16, 2010.

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