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## Two Northside organizations receive grants

March 19, 2015 · Posted In: [Briefs](#), [Latest Northside News](#)

By **Sabrina Romano**

Two Northside organizations recently received grants to help expand programming or renovate facilities.

Gwen's Girls, an organization based out of Allegheny Center that has worked to empower young girls since 2002, received a \$23,000 grant from Duquesne Light. The grant will allow Gwen's Girls to provide informational career programs to disadvantaged girls and prep them to be part of the workforce. Because of this grant, Gwen's Girls will increase its programming to reach roughly 40 more girls from urban Pittsburgh areas.

"Youth living in urban neighborhoods are far less likely to receive work readiness training and professional work experiences that youth in more affluent, suburban areas," Lynn Knezevich, executive director of Gwen's Girls, said.

"Through our work readiness program, we not only teach girls how to find and maintain a job, but also allow them to explore potential careers through workplace tours, job shadowing and career mentoring. These experiences are life changing for a girl who may have never considered a professional career a viable option."

Gwen's Girls established a workforce preparation program in 2009 to assist girls, between ages 15-18 in the Pittsburgh area, in exploring their professional options. In the past, girls involved had the opportunity to tour 14 workplaces and listened to professional speakers from various fields including entrepreneurship, finance and healthcare. Also, Gwen's Girls has paired participants with local employers such as Chipotle and the Frick Art Museum to provide valuable work experience to the participants.

The Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church on 416 W. North Ave. in Central Northside received a \$3,035 grant from the regional Unitarian Universalist District "Chalice Lighters."

The century-old church will update Founders Hall, a social space, making it more accessible and welcoming by installing acoustic ceiling panels, which help eliminate echoes in large rooms.

The church is trying to match the grant with donations, according to a press release.



*Photo courtesy of Greg Blackman*

*From left to right: Ron Smutny, representing the Chalice Lighters; Liz Dell, President of AUUC Board of Directors, and Reverend David McFarland of Allegheny Unitarian Universalist Church at check the presentation of "Chalice Lighters" grant for acoustical improvements to the church Sunday, March 15.*