

'AMBUSH PHILANTHROPY'

5 county nonprofits receive surprise grants

By Daniel J. Gross
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Five Spartanburg County nonprofits were surprised by checks Friday morning as part of the Spartanburg County Foundation's "Just Because" grant program.

First Tee of Spartanburg and Cherokee counties, Carolina Miracle League, Upstate Warrior Solution, HALTER and Trees Coalition were all given \$1,000 in unrestricted funds along with a matching \$1,000 from Spartanburg's eastside Walmart store to support their work.

Spartanburg County Foundation's Just Because program began in 2014 as a way to bring

awareness to area nonprofits that are working to meet community needs.

"We try to leverage dollars behind the missions of these organizations," said Troy Hanna, the foundation's CEO. "We have so many nonprofits doing great things, but not all of them get the attention that others do."

The foundation drove up to the First Tee program at the Woodfin Ridge Golf Club in Inman around 9:30 a.m.

First Tee focuses on providing affordable and accessible golf opportunities to youth who may not have had previous exposure to the game.



The First Tee of Spartanburg and Cherokee counties was one of five nonprofits surprised Friday with a \$1,000 "Just Because" grant from the Spartanburg County Foundation. DANIEL J. GROSS/DANIEL.GROSS@SHJ.COM

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Program director Audrey Church said the grant funding will help support their scholarships that identify students from area schools and pay for their after-school golfing programs.

Sixty-one scholarships have been given out and 900 children overall have

gone through First Tee's after-school open enrollment this year.

"These are the kids that might not be able to have a chance to do this," Church said. "It's been awesome for them to have those opportunities."

Various community partners who have contributed funds to the foundation to help with the grants were on hand to help present the checks.

State Farm agent Beverly Benson came with a bear mascot called a "Good Neigh-Bear."

"State Farm, and my office in particular, we want to reach out and be connected with the community, and decided it takes so little to give so much," she said. "It means so much to the people that we give to."

— Follow Daniel J. Gross on Twitter @danieljgross