

Keowee Key group has raised nearly \$400K for charities

BY RILEY MORNINGSTAR
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SALEM—A private Salem community group is closing in on nearly \$400,000 in donations to local charities in Oconee County.

Keowee Key Community Partnership chairman Jon Bachman told The Journal last week the group that works to help nonprofit organizations in the area has raised more than \$345,000 from September 2018 to September 2020. Bachman said he is hoping donations will exceed more than \$400,000 by the end of the quarter.

"I'm thrilled with it," he said. "I jokingly said to the guys on my committee, 'Someday we could reach half a million dollars — wouldn't the impact to Oconee County be spectacular?' I believe we'll exceed that next year. It's beyond my expectations."

The group started two years ago to raise awareness between residents in the Keowee Key community and encourage them to focus on donating to charities in Oconee County. Bachman said Keowee Key residents volunteer more than 100,000 hours a year to community service work in the area.

Bachman said the group

asks for quarterly reports from about 20 partners regarding the cumulative amount of money received from the community and how many donors there are.

Some of the partners include BabyRead, Collins Children's Home, Fostering Faithfully, Golden Corner Food Pantry, Habitat for Humanity, Our Daily Bread, Our Daily Rest, Purple Heart Homes, Ripple of One and the Oconee Memorial Hospital Foundation.

"Everything we do is focused on Oconee County," Bachman said. "We will publicize them to our residents and encourage them to make donations. In return, they commit to use all the money they receive from Keowee Key exclusively in Oconee County."

The group's first partner

was Tri-County Technical College. Over time, the two have worked to establish a partnership with the Tri-County Technical

College Foundation to create a scholarship fund that recently covered two semesters of study for a nursing student. An endowment fund is also

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being worked on to eventually self-generate scholarship amounts. To date, the school has awarded six scholarships from the Keowee Key Community Partnership Scholarship Fund, with three of them being awarded to Keowee Key employees or family members of an employee.

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