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Sandy Springs Society hosts annual meeting

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Staff / Nathan Self

From left, Sandy Springs Society outgoing president Peggy Stapleton, and incoming president Valerie Love.

The Sandy Springs Society, a grant-making "pass-through" group, announced last week it has raised more than \$2.2 million since its inception in 1989.

"Our job is to raise the money for people whose feet are on the ground," outgoing president Peggy Stapleton said about nonprofits serving local residents.

Stapleton spoke at the society's annual meeting Wednesday at the Cherokee Town Club in Buckhead, where about 160 attendees voted unanimously to approve a slate of 17 nonprofits as recipients of this year's proceeds of \$14,750.

The Community Action Center received the biggest increase over 2010, from \$8,000 to \$11,000, while Heritage Sandy Springs continues to command 35 percent of the society's budget at \$29,000.

New grantees added this year are Abernathy Arts Center and English for Successful Living at \$2,000 and \$2,500, respectively.

However, Stapleton said the society will have to try harder to benefit its five focus areas of arts, education, the environment, heritage and social services.

"We're going to have to expand our fundraising efforts," she said. "The secret is loud and wide communication of knowledge. The world must know who we are and what we do."

In her final report, Stapleton said the society began using social media like Facebook, joined the Sandy Springs/Perimeter Chamber of Commerce and conducted other outreach efforts.

"We boldly marched into the cyber world," she said.

New initiatives for 2011 under incoming president Valerie Love include the Elegant Elf, an upscale holiday market set for Nov. 10 through 12 at the Hitson Center in Sandy Springs.

In other actions, the society bestowed its Blue Ribbon Award for rookie member participation to Carol Anne Hendrix, while Fran Farias won the Spirit of Sandy Springs Award.

"The final selection is the embodiment of the society and what we do," presenter Sylvia Hennessy said.

Recipients of Farias' volunteerism include Habitat for Humanity, Rotary Club, the Sandy Springs Woman's Club, Drake House and Woodland Charter Elementary School.

She donated her \$1,000 honorarium to Franklin Pond Chamber Music, another society grantee.