

DECIBELS FOUNDATION

Grant will help fund children's program

It's amazing what early intervention can do: for children with hearing loss, it's the difference between entering school with one's peers and needing specialized instruction. The Minute Man Arc Early Intervention Program for Children with Hearing Loss, supported by the Decibels Foundation, ensures that the former happens. And that just got easier, thanks to a grant from the Foundation for MetroWest Youth Action Council (YAC).

This is a case of kids helping kids, right in their own backyard. For starters, there's the Decibels Foundation, an organization committed to supporting kids with hearing loss and their families. Over the past 10 years, the foundation has helped develop an Early Intervention (EI) program at Minute Man Arc in Concord that makes highly trained speech and language professionals accessible to families living outside the city. This program not only gives children with hearing loss access to speech and language during the critical years of birth to three, but also provides an important support group to parents, who frequently feel lost and overwhelmed by their child's disability.

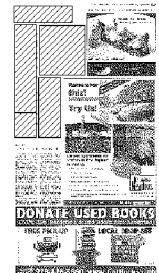
Enter the Foundation for MetroWest, an organization dedicated to raising local money and giving it back to support local community pro-

grams. Even better, their Youth Action Council teaches high school kids how to evaluate programs and make the decisions themselves. To do this, the students visit the various programs, review the applications, and then choose how much to give and where. It's a wonderful way for youth to take responsibility within their community.

- In visiting the EI program for children with hearing loss, the students were impressed by both the quality of the staff and the specialized programming. They also heard compelling testimony from parents who were willing to drive long distances to access a program that is so successful for their children.

The YAC students chose Decibels in part because of YAC's personal goal to impact a large number of children and families over an extended period of time. Their grant of \$3,600 was the largest amount given among the three agencies that received money — money that will no doubt be well-spent helping children and their families in the local community reach their speech and language goals in time to enter school with their peers. And that, in the long run, will save the community money.

For more information on both of these agencies, go to FoundationforMetroWest.org and decibelsfoundation.org.





Just a few of the many babies served by the hearing loss Early Intervention program at Minute Man Arc in Concord, supported by Decibels Foundation. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE DECIBELS FOUNDATION