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## Youth group raises thousands for Scottsville medical camp

By TESSA DUVALL, The Daily News

At age 14, Caroline Ford doesn't know what she wants to study in college.

But she does know she wants to help people, no matter what profession she one day chooses.

Caroline, along with other members of the Young Artist Alliance, presented a check for \$12,140.87 to the Center for Courageous Kids on Tuesday at the Bowling Green Area Chamber of Commerce.

Last month, the YAA and Drobocky Orthodontics hosted The Showcase for the Center for Courageous Kids. The shows, which were at the Capitol Arts Center, boasted about 25 acts and about 500 total audience members.

The center, located in Scottsville, offers camp programs for seriously ill and disabled children at no cost to the family.

Caroline first got the idea for the benefit showcase when she was in the ALIVE Center looking at various brochures from area organizations - including one for the Center for Courageous Kids.

Caroline admits she didn't know much about the center before looking at the brochure, but once she read it, she knew she wanted to help.

"It really touched me," she said. "It's the perfect thing to do."

Stormi Murtie, communications director at the center, said she is amazed and humbled at everything Caroline has done.

It's essentially "kids helping kids," Murtie said.

The center, which runs solely on donations, needs to raise about \$3 million a year to operate, Murtie said.

"You don't get there with car washes and bake sales," she said.

Instead, it takes grassroots efforts, such as the Young Artist Alliance's benefit, to help the center meet its needs, she said.

YAA member Anna Siewers, 14, of Bowling Green, sang the national anthem at the showcase last month.

"It's great. It's really amazing," Anna said of knowing she helped raise money for the center.

Anna pointed out that the group raised \$4,000 last year, which increased to more than \$12,000 this year, and said the potential to raise even more next year is exciting.

Kate Hahn-Madole, 14, and her younger sister, Sarah Hahn-Madole, 9, both of Bowling Green, also enjoyed performing in the showcase as a way to give back.

Last month's performance wasn't the first time Anna, Sarah and Kate have partnered with Caroline and the rest of the YAA to give back to the community.

After an earthquake and ensuing disaster in Haiti last year, Caroline came up with the idea to form the YAA. By April 2010, the group had put on its first show, raising more than \$4,000 for the American Red Cross relief effort in Haiti.

Then in November, the organization hosted "Will Sing for Food," which collected about 3,000 cans for the American Red Cross food pantry.

Caroline said she has learned so much and been humbled by the experience of putting on these events.

Robyn Ford, Caroline's mother, said she isn't surprised that her daughter has been so successful at such a young age.

Caroline is "very solution-oriented," she said. "It's wonderful that she looks at her talent as an opportunity to give back to the community."

Even after last month's performance was complete, Caroline didn't stop thinking of ways to make it better, Ford said.

On the car ride home, the two started brainstorming ideas.

Caroline said the alliance has several events in the planning stage and that she hopes to make the showcase an annual fundraiser.