

By Becky Uehling

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Although a proposed boys group home in Venango has fallen through, seed money for the home will hopefully continue to assist needy children in Perkins and Keith counties, said Henry Potter of Elsie.

Overseen by Potter, the group home would have been located in the vacated school building in Venango, which was purchased in 2005.

Money was raised and plans continued for the home until 2009 when the state of Nebraska notified Potter that group homes, such as the one being planned in Venango, would no longer be used as an option for wayward kids in Nebraska.

The school was sold in 2010 and all debts were paid, with \$16,000 left, Potter said.

A known advocate for children, and a devout Christian, Potter is determined to use the money as it was intended, to help children, but also to share the message of Christ.

With the help of area residents and churches, Potter is setting out to re-classify the boys home corporation and create a different non-profit corporation to help parents of children in Perkins and Keith counties to buy clothes and supplies for school, Christmas gifts, attire for proms and graduations, etc.

Potter said an endowment would be set up, with the principal being retained, and only the interest being used to assist children kindergarten through 12th grade. He projects that a \$100,000 fund will be needed to support the program.

Potter said the program will be administered by area pastors who would give out and accept applications, process them, and present those who qualify to a board of directors for its approval.

Potter is no stranger to the need of many families in the area who need help buying school clothing for their children. For the past two years, Potter and his wife, Pat, have, from their own funds, helped several needy families in Perkins and Keith counties buy school clothes for their children.

"It is amazing what a new set of clothes will do for a child's self-esteem and dedication to school," Potter said.

Potter said children who are helped more than once by the program will be asked to meet certain requirements before they receive assistance. To earn up to 100 percent of the funds given, children will be asked to go to Sunday School, youth group and summer Bible camp.

Potter is in the process of working with the state on how to set up the entity, and is seeking board of directors for the corporation.

Potter is asking the public for their input on the corporation. Those wanting to contact Potter can do so by calling him at 308-530-0441 or emailing him at hppotter@cozadtel.net